

## 1 What is more Precious?

- Or how to know if you have microscopic faith.

## 2 Scripture

- See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.
- But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.
- We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.
- As it has been said:
  - "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." [See Exodus 17:1-7]

## 3 Scripture

- Who were they who heard and rebelled?
  - Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt?
- And with whom was he angry for forty years?
  - Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert?
- And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed?
- So, we see that they could not enter because of their unbelief.

## 4 What is an Asset?

- An asset is a useful or valuable thing, person, or quality that provides security, wealth, and well-being.
- If someone were to ask you what is your most important asset, what would you say?
- Some people may say things like:

- Cash in the bank.
- House, automobile, or other tangible possessions.
- Investments (i.e., stocks, money markets, bonds, and etc.).
- Intangible possessions (i.e., education, skills, family, and friends).

## 5 What is an Asset?

- But according to the Bible, what is our greatest asset?
  - According to 1 Peter 1:7b, this asset has greater worth than gold (refined and purified gold) (1 Pet 1:7 NIV)
  - It is so important to us that God even allows trials to come into our lives so that it can grow and be more valuable and helpful to us.
  - One day, Jesus' disciples asked for more of it,
    - but Jesus turned them down cold.
    - He told them to use what they had, and more would be given.

## 6 What is our Greatest Asset?

- Again, what is our greatest asset?
  - Just a little bit of this commodity has the power to not only move mountains but also
    - Open the eyes of the blind,
    - Make the lame walk,
    - And bring us into eternal glory.
  - So then, what is this important asset that is worth more than precious gold?

- Is it not our faith?

## **7 What is an Asset?**

- You're probably not going to want to hear this . . .
- But, I will assert tonight that this precious commodity is so neglected by most Christians that we don't nurture it as we should.
- In fact, I will point out that most of our problems are both the result and effect of not nurturing our faith.
- In other words, what business do we have going to God in prayer if we don't believe in God in the first place?
- Show me someone who truly believes in God, and I'll show you someone who seeks the Lord with all their heart.
- In other words, prayerlessness is a sign of weak or non-existent faith.

## **8 Finding Faith**

- According to the Bible (Rom 10:17 NASB), ...
  - faith comes from hearing and
  - hearing by the word of Christ.
- In other words, faith comes when we hear what God has done for others.
- So when we read in the Bible ...
  - all the great things God has done for others,
  - we grow in our confidence that God can do the same things for or in us.

## **9 Finding Faith**

- The same thing happens when we hear testimonies.

- It gives us confidence that the same thing can happen in our lives and through our prayers.
- Faith is not something that is mystical but simply our confidence that God will do what he has promised.
- Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. (Heb 11:1 NLT-SE)

## 10 Finding Faith

- According to the secular society we live in, Faith is a belief or trust in something that is not necessarily based on proof or evidence.
- Or, to put it another way, faith refers to a strong belief or trust in something or someone, often without needing concrete proof or evidence.
- So then, according to many, faith is nothing more than wishful thinking because it is not based on concrete or absolute evidence.
- If this is the case, then all criminal trials would be invalid as they, too, are not based on absolute evidence but on sufficient or adequate evidence in which people can make a reasonable judgment.

## 11 Finding Faith

- To put it in plain English . . .
  - Faith is
    - a confident, well-grounded assurance,
    - based upon adequate evidence
  - that something God has promised will happen.
- It is a conviction (strong belief) of the reality of things we hope for, which we cannot yet see because it will take place in the future.

- Therefore, if we have faith, we wait patiently without complaining or losing hope.

## **12 Finding Faith**

- So where do we find this confident assurance?
  - When we read the Bible.
  - When we fellowship with other Christians and hear their stories and testimonies.
  - Meditate and remember the previous times when God's goodness and faithfulness manifested themselves in our lives.
  - When we use what faith we already have and put it into action.
  - When we don't give in to fretting, complaining, and unbelief.
  - Keep a clean conscience with God and with others.

## **13 The Importance of Faith**

- The reason why faith is so important is because it is so powerful.
  - I tell you the truth: if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain,
    - 'Move from here to there,' and
    - it will move.
  - Nothing will be impossible for you." (Matt 17:20 NIV)
  - "If you can?" said Jesus.
    - "Everything is possible for him who believes." (Mark 9:23 NIV)

## **14 Faith Heroes - Hall of Fame**

- In Hebrews chapter 11, there is listed a "Heroes of Faith - Hall of Fame."
- Listed are Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and undisclosed others who through faith
  - Conquered kingdoms,
  - Administered justice, and
  - Gained what was promised.

## 15 Heroes of Faith

- The writer goes on to say as well that these "heroes of faith."
  - Shut the mouths of lions,
  - Quenched the fury of the flames,
  - Escaped the edge of the sword,
  - Whose weakness was turned into strength, and
  - Became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.
- Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses (in history), let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. (Heb 12:1 NIV)

## 16 Faith Small Than a Mustard Seed

- In Matthew 17:20, Jesus tells his disciples that if they have faith as small as a mustard seed, . . . they can move mountains.
- But do you remember the context of this teaching?
- "O unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied,

- “How long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you?”
- Bring the boy here to me.”
- Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment. (Matt 17:17–18 NIV)
- Then, the disciples came to Jesus privately and asked, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?” He replied, “Because you have so little faith.” (Matt 17:19–20 NIV)

## 17 Microscope Faith?

- For us to see “mountains moved” in our lives, all we need is faith the size of a mustard seed, which is a very small seed.
- However, our faith may be so small that it is smaller than a mustard seed.
- It may be so small that only a microscope can pick it up.
- If this is the case and we need God’s help, shouldn't we be investing in our faith?
- In other words, could the reason why our prayers are not being answered, and the devil is making a monkey out of us is simply because we’re not spending time nurturing our faith.

## 18 Throw Off and Rid Ourselves

- According to Hebrews, we need to throw off everything that hinders the growth of our faith.
- In other words, we must rid ourselves of spiritual slothfulness and compromise.
- Again, if faith comes by reading the word and mustard seed size, faith moves mountains. Shouldn’t we be making the growth of our faith a very high priority?
- So, feeding our faith with the stories of what God has done for others (great clouds of witnesses) builds our faith.
- What God has done for others, he can do for you!

## 19 The Problem of Compromise

- One of the other things we need to throw off, according to the writer of Hebrews, is the sin that so easily entangles.
- The problem with temptation is that if we're not careful, it will cause us to sin.
- This creates guilt, and guilt is toxic to both our soul and spirit—even our faith.
- It is hard to pray believing God when guilt and shame hang over our heads.
- We must first deal with that sin, and the best way to do that is through confession and repentance.
- We may even need to make restitution and seek reconciliation before our confidence in God can be restored.

## **20 Shipwrecked Faith**

- In the Apostle Paul's first epistle to Timothy, he admonished Timothy to fight the fight of faith.
- According to the context, Timothy was to fight the good fight, holding on to faith with a good conscience. (1 Timothy 1:18-19 NIV)
- Unfortunately, two Christian leaders by the names of Hymenaeus and Alexander somehow were not keeping a good conscience before God and had thus shipwrecked their faith!
- So dangerous and toxic was Hymenaeus and Alexander's faith that the Apostle Paul handed them over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme (1 Timothy 1:20 NIV)

## **21 The Importance of Motives**

- According to the Apostle James (James 4:2-3 NIV),
  - You do not have because you do not ask God.
  - When you ask, you do not receive because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.
- However, according to 1st John, when our highest priority is to honor God, we should have confidence before God.



- This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.
- And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him. (1 John 5:14–15 NIV)
- We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will. (John 9:31 NIV)

## 22 Guilt and Faith

- Remember, we don't need to be perfect to have a right relationship with God and have our prayers answered.
- However, we do need to be blameless.
- We are blameless before God when we're innocent of wrongdoing.
- We are innocent of wrongdoing when
  - we walk according to God's commands and
  - seek His forgiveness when we stumble.
- So then, when we do unto others what we would want them to do to us and keep ourselves from being corrupted by the world,
  - we should have confidence before God and
  - receive from him anything we ask;
  - we obey his commands and do what pleases him. (1 John 3:21-22)

## 23 Guilt and Faith

- According to James 1:2-3 and 1 Peter 1:6-7, God allows us to face trials of various kinds so that our faith, which is more precious than gold, is exercised where like a muscle; through use—it will grow bigger and be strong where we can run and finish the race marked out of us.

- However, when trouble comes, we often choose to fret, complain, grumble, and point fingers instead of nurturing our faith and circling the promises of God.
- This is how we know if we have microscopic faith. When trouble comes, we act just like the children of Israel in the desert, who, full of unbelief, fret, complain, and grumble.
- With this kind of attitude, like them, we might never see the promised land.
- This is why the Scripture says,
  - Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. "Make level paths for your feet," so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed." (Heb 12:12–13 NIV)

## 24 Summary

- Our faith is more precious than gold because it can move mountains.
- All it has to be is the size of a mustard seed.
- But what happens if the size of our faith is smaller than a mustard seed and is, in fact, microscopic?
- We probably have no one to blame except ourselves.
- Therefore, let us make the growing of our faith the most important goal of our lives.
- If we do, there is no telling what God has in store for those who believe.

## 25 Conclusion

- So then, Let us throw off . . .
  - All attitudes of unbelief and self-pity, where we spend more time complaining and grumbling than anything else.
  - All bad habits that keep us from spending quality time

- reading and studying God's Word,
- encouraging ourselves in the promises of God, and
- fellowshiping and praying with other believers.
- All compromise and moral slothfulness that cause us to withhold our love for our neighbor—even our enemies and do things that corrupt our body, soul, or spirit.
- Instead, let us draw close to God, for he will draw close to us!