

CALL to PRAYER -

Ask God to increase your faith – strength & amount

Intro - This is our fourth message defining faith. Initially we dissected faith and noted the three essential ingredients in *saving faith*. Then we observed what *true faith* looks like as opposed to a *false faith* and distinguished between *saving faith* & one that doesn't save. Last week we focused on the origin of *saving faith*. Faith is not something a sinner can conjure up by his own will; it is "*not of ourselves it is the gift of God.*" Jesus is the Author & finisher of our faith. God enables us to believe; He grants belief as a gift of His grace. If you have faith then you need to thank God for the ability to believe. Today we explore the practical question of "*how do I get more faith?*" We need faith and we need more of it. And lest you think we can be passive in this and say "*Well, if it is a gift of God then maybe God didn't give me very much.*" Well even if that is so - a little goes along way. Just a speck can accomplish spectacular things. Believers have the responsibility to use our faith, grow our faith & exercise our faith...all the while asking God for more faith. The passage I am about to read records an instance where the disciples ask Jesus for more faith. As we learn what our *most holy faith* requires of us...it will show us our need for more faith.

Luke 17:1-10 - Definitions 9 - Increasing Your Faith**THE NEED FOR MORE FAITH**

- Our environment, requirement, and enslavement demonstrate our need for more faith
 - Environment - (Luke 17:1-2) the inevitability of sin
 - Requirement - (Luke 17:3-6) giving personal forgiveness
 - Enslavement - (Luke 17:7-10) as Christ's slaves we must serve
- Forgiveness
 - Jesus tells His disciple the Christian requirement for personal forgiveness
 - Rebuke your brother...forgive your repentant brother...7 times a day!
 - When they hear this, they ask for more faith - Luke 17:5
 - Christian standards should make us clamor for more faith
 - we need faith to live & forgive in this sinful world. We are sinners who sin and are sinned against
- Enslavement Luke 17:10
 - We need more faith to fulfill our duties as Christ's slaves in this sinful world

HOW DO I INCREASE MY FAITH?

- Ask for it Luke 17:5
 - Jesus is the *Author* of faith ^{Heb. 12:2} so we should ask Him for more of it. (James 4:2b)
- Cultivate it Jesus compared faith to a seed
 - Luke 17:6 Plant it....water it....give it plenty of SONshine. Cultivate it!
 - Don't use the excuse that the faith God gave you is small (limited)
 - God has given you a measure of faith - Rom. 12:3 Use it - Rom. 12:6
 - A little goes a long way. Just a speck can be spectacular - Luke 17:6

- We can learn to cultivate faith by examples Jesus called out as *great faith or little faith*
 - Where Jesus pointed out “*great faith*” is where we find out how to cultivate faith
 - Emulate great faith
- Matt. 8:5-9
 - This soldier understood *Authority* and *Giving Orders* to servants
 - The centurion acknowledged that sickness is but a servant of Jesus. Jesus is Lord!
 - Jesus said that was great faith - Matt. 8:10
 - An opposite example is given in Matt. 8:25-27 (little faith)
 - Jesus rebuked their thinking that the storm operated independent of God
- Do you acknowledge Christ’s sovereignty over sickness and storms?
 - Great faith = Christ commands them Little faith - they operate independent
 - Belief in God’s sovereignty will cultivate your faith
- The more we know the more we can grow - 2 Peter 3:18
 - We cannot and do not limit God...but a limited view of God will limit our faith
 - Omniscience (if only God knew) Omnipotence (if only God could)
 - Omnipresence (if only He were here) Sovereignty (God doesn’t govern)
- Matt. 15:28 (15:21-28)
 - This desperate mother dug deep for her faith...and it was great
 - Jesus gave her a hard saying...insulted her - Matt. 15:24-26
 - She accepted His hard saying and applied faith to it Matt. 15:27
 - “Yes Lord! I am a dog but even the dogs get some crumbs, can I have a crumb?”
- How do you handle the hard sayings of Scripture? Accept or reject?
 - Some of God’s words are a *deal breaker* for some people. (they won’t plant/cultivate)
 - Jesus’ teaching on salvation offended many. John 6:60, 65-66
 - Is there a passage of scripture you are prejudiced against? biased against parts of Bible
 - Jehoiakim’s scribe knife (Jer. 36) He cut out the part he didn’t like
 - Many people do the same with Biblical history....morality...&... theology
 - We may not understand it (struggle with it) but should not reject it - John 6:67-68
 - The Bible steps on all our toes. Do we move toes or move Bible?
 - If you want to grow your faith, then you need to believe some hard things
 - Hold it in tension...but don’t deny it or be ashamed of it (Mark 8:38)
- Trials are the training ground for your faith
 - Your faith is exercised when it pushed. (no pain no gain)
 - Faith muscles only grow under pressure...and strain...and consistent use
 - James 1:2-4 (1 Peter 1:6-7) God will give you problems to produce a stronger faith
 - James 2:5 (Rev. 2:9)
 - God chose to give the poor Christian a lot of faith to go with a lot of problems
 - Difficulties can deepen faith. Difficulty does a faith good
 - Difficulty is an opportunity for your faith to grow
- How do you increase Faith?
 - Ask for it. Cultivate it. Believe in big God (sovereign)
 - Believe hard things. Endure hard things # 405 “Have Faith in God”