
CBC WEEKLY RESOURCES



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COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH
3645 Cashiers Rd, Highlands, NC 28741

I.

SERMON RECAP

This powerful exploration of faith as a fruit of the Spirit challenges us to examine how we truly see the world around us. Drawing from Galatians 5:22 and Hebrews 11:1, we're confronted with a profound question: How much of what we trust is based on what we can see versus what we hope for but cannot yet perceive? The message reveals that faith isn't meant to operate in isolation—it must intertwine with love, joy, peace, and all the other fruits of the Spirit to be authentic and transformative. We're reminded that the greatest of these is love, and any faith exercised without love is fundamentally incomplete. This teaching urges us to identify what dulls the voice of the Holy Spirit in our lives—whether it's media influence, past trauma, or worldly mindsets—and to intentionally remove those barriers. The Spirit of God offers us seven perfect aspects, a complete fullness that addresses every circumstance we face. But here's the challenge: Are we allowing the world's algorithms and strategic messaging to shape our thinking, or are we truly led by the Spirit? This isn't just about believing harder; it's about believing rightly, with discernment, reason, and a faith that produces tangible evidence of transformation in how we love, how we find joy even in suffering, and how we extend gentleness in a harsh world.

Suggested “Chapters” of the Message

Chapter 1: Introduction to Faith as Fruit of the Spirit (0:00 - 7:31)

We explore how viewing the world through the lens of faith transforms our perception of others, circumstances, and ourselves, introducing faith as the focus of this sermon in the Fruit of the Spirit series.

Chapter 2: Understanding the Holy Spirit and Faith (7:31 - 11:36)

We examine the multifaceted nature of the Holy Spirit and how faith operates both as a noun and an action verb, requiring us to defend and live out our beliefs actively.

Chapter 3: The Interdependence of Faith with Other Fruits (11:36 - 24:06)

We discover how faith interconnects with love, joy, peace, and the other fruits of the Spirit, demonstrating that genuine faith cannot exist in isolation from these qualities.

Chapter 4: Faith in the Midst of Suffering (24:06 - 35:35)

We confront the reality that faith is tested and refined through long-suffering and trials, where we must choose to trust God regardless of our circumstances or deliverance.

Chapter 5: Living Out Transformative Faith (35:35 - 44:48)

We are challenged to demonstrate a faith that produces visible transformation in our lives, exposing darkness, defending truth, and raising a generation that can articulate why they believe.

II.

STUDY GUIDE

Key Points

1. **Faith is both noun and verb**

- We are people of the faith (our Christian confession) and people who exercise faith (active trust, obedience, and surrender).

2. **The centrality of the Holy Spirit**

- The Spirit is present with and in us now. Christ is at the right hand of the Father; the Spirit is our daily Counselor, Comforter, and Guide.
- We must learn to interact with, listen to, and be led by the Spirit to live fruitful lives.

3. **What dulls the Spirit's voice?**

- Media, cultural narratives, habitual thought patterns, unresolved trauma, unhealthy relationships with money or comfort can all muffle the Spirit.
- Lent can be a practical season to “do without” things that hinder us from hearing God clearly.

4. **Personal prayer and community prayer**

- Personal: We must regularly examine, “What is dimming my faith-sight? What am I allowing into my mind and heart?”
- Community: We need the body of Christ, fellowship, and koinonia to move from despair/isolation back into joy. Sometimes faith means simply returning to the family of God.

5. **Identity in Christ, not in circumstances**

- Severe suffering (like severe illness) does not define us; Christ does.
- The key question: “Is God who He says He is regardless of what I am going through?”
- Like Job, we learn to say, “Though He slay me, yet will I praise Him” (Job 13:15).

6. **Worship-first posture (A-C-T-S)**

- Adoration: Start by honoring who Jesus is—our Redeemer, Protector, Lord, Rider on the white horse.
- Confession: Acknowledge the ways we've allowed the world's voice to overpower the Spirit's.
- Thanksgiving: Thank God for His faithfulness in suffering and His gentle, patient work in us.
- Supplication: Then bring our needs, including the need for greater faith, love, joy, and peace.

7. **Stillness before God**

- To hear the Spirit's whisper, we must drown out the “noise of this crazy messed up world.”

- Stillness involves intentional choices about what we consume and how we structure our day.

8. Faith intertwined with the rest of the fruit

- Faith must operate in:
 - Love: Without love, our prayers, preaching, generosity, and evangelism miss the heart of God.
 - Joy: Faith believes that joy will come after a night of weeping (Psalm 30:5).
 - Peace: Faith trusts Jesus to calm storms we cannot see over.
 - Longsuffering: Faith perseveres in suffering even when we don't see deliverance.
 - Gentleness: Faith receives God's gentle heart and grows us out of harshness and defensiveness.
 - Goodness: Faith emboldens us to expose darkness and stand for what is right, even when costly.

9. Thinking faith, not borrowed faith

- We must learn not just what we believe but why we believe it.
- Our children and youth must be taught to think Christianly, to reason from Scripture, and to defend their faith—not simply to parrot what we say.

10. Faith that changes life, not just opinions

- People are less interested in what we claim to believe and more interested in how our faith has changed us:
 - Our priorities
 - Our relationships
 - Our responses to suffering
 - Our ability to love enemies and forgive
- A faith that does not lead to visible fruit needs examination.

Key Scripture

Galatians 5:22–23 (ESV)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love joy peace patience kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness self control against such things there is no law

Isaiah 11:2 (ESV)

And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him the Spirit of wisdom and understanding the Spirit of counsel and might the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord

Revelation 4:5 (ESV)

From the throne came flashes of lightning and rumblings and peals of thunder and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire which are the seven spirits of God

Hebrews 11:1 (ESV)

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for the conviction of things not seen

John 3:8 (ESV)

The wind blows where it wishes and you hear its sound but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit

1 Corinthians 13:13 (ESV)

So now faith hope and love abide these three but the greatest of these is love

Psalms 30:5 (ESV)

For his anger is but for a moment and his favor is for a lifetime weeping may tarry for the night but joy comes with the morning

Mark 4:39 (ESV)

And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea Peace Be Still And the wind ceased and there was a great calm

Matthew 5:23–24 (ESV)

So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you
leave your gift there before the altar and go
First be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift

Matthew 11:28–29 (ESV)

Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls

Ephesians 5:11–12 (ESV)

Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness but instead expose them
For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret

Philippians 3:10 (ESV)

That I may know him and the power of his resurrection and may share his sufferings
becoming like him in his death

III. DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL

Day 1: Faith Rooted in Love: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Faith without love is merely noise—impressive perhaps, but ultimately empty. The greatest of these is love because love gives faith its purpose and power. Today, consider the prayers you've prayed, the acts of service you've performed, the beliefs you've defended. Were they rooted in genuine love for God and others? Faith that moves mountains means nothing if it lacks compassion. Ask yourself: What am I allowing into my life that dulls my capacity to love? What relationships need reconciliation before I can truly worship? The Spirit of God will give you faith to believe something impossible, but that faith must be wrapped in love. Otherwise, you're just making noise in a world desperate for the melody of Christ's compassion.

Reflection Question: Who in your life needs you to combine your faith with genuine love today?

Day 2: Faith That Brings Joy Through the Fog: Psalm 30:1-12

Weeping may stay for the night, but joy comes in the morning. Sometimes life feels like driving through impenetrable fog—you can't see where you're going or when it will end. Faith is believing that on the other side of that fog is joy, even when you can't see it yet. The fruit of the Spirit includes both faith and joy because they travel the same road. Perhaps you've been in a season of sadness, anxiety, or loneliness. Faith whispers that you need to take one step—back into fellowship, back into community, back into worship. That mustard seed of faith, acted upon, leads to the morning light of joy. Don't wait until you feel like it. Believe by faith that joy is waiting, and move toward it.

Reflection Question: What small step of faith can you take today to move toward joy?

Day 3: Peace in the Storm: Mark 4:35-41

"Peace, be still." Jesus spoke these words to a raging sea, but He speaks them to your raging heart as well. Faith and peace have an intimate relationship. Peace doesn't just happen when circumstances calm down—it comes by faith when you surrender to the One who calms the storm. You may be in the middle of torrential waves right now, unable to see over the chaos, uncertain if you'll make it through. Faith says, "He is in the boat with me." The anxiety, worry, and panic that threaten to overwhelm you are subject to His authority. Peace comes when you abandon yourself to the power you cannot see but know is at work on your behalf. Trust Him in the storm.

Reflection Question: What storm in your life needs Jesus to speak "peace, be still" over it today?

Day 4: Faith in Long Suffering: Job 13:15; Philippians 3:7-11

"Though He slay me, yet will I praise Him." This is the defining moment of faith—when your worship is not dependent on your circumstances but on His character. Long suffering is part of the human experience, and none of us are immune. The question isn't whether trials will come, but how we'll respond when they do. Will God remain the focal point of your life even when deliverance doesn't come? Faith for your deliverance is not faith in God; faith is believing God is love whether you are visibly delivered or not. There are some things only learned in the fiery furnace. The fruit of the Spirit sustains us at the deepest, darkest depths. Christ suffers with you through the power of the Spirit.

Reflection Question: What does your response to suffering reveal about what you truly believe about God?

Day 5: Faith That Transforms: James 2:14-26

Faith without works is dead. People don't want to hear about your faith—they want to see how your faith has changed you. Does your faith produce love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, and self-control? If you have faith but none of these fruits are evident, something is disconnected. True faith is transformative. It changes how you live, what motivates you, how you treat others, and what you prioritize. You're not just someone who believes things about God; you're a dead person come alive in Christ. Can you defend why you believe what you believe? Can you articulate how faith has made you different? The fruit of the Spirit working together in your life is your testimony—it's the evidence of faith that the world desperately needs to see.

Reflection Question: If someone examined your life this week, what fruit of the Spirit would they see as evidence of your faith?

IV. SMALL GROUP RESOURCES

Question: Share about a time when you had to believe in something you couldn't see. What made it difficult? What helped you trust?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. Faith is both a noun and a verb - It's "the faith" we hold to AND the active believing and trusting we practice daily.
2. Faith doesn't operate in isolation - All nine fruits of the Spirit work together; faith without love, joy, peace, etc., is incomplete and ineffective.
3. Faith requires clearing out interference - We must identify and remove what dulls our ability to hear the Holy Spirit clearly (media, worldly mindsets, past trauma, etc.).
4. Faith is seeing through God's eyes - Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
5. True faith must be defensible - We need to know WHY we believe, not just WHAT we believe.

Discussion Questions

Part 1: Understanding Faith

1. The pastor asked: "What unduly influences your perception of life in a negative way?" What things in your life might be muffling the voice of the Holy Spirit? (Consider: media consumption, relationships, past experiences, thought patterns)
2. Read Hebrews 11:1. How much of what you trust and believe is based on what you see and hear versus what you don't see but hope for? Be honest about the gap between these two.
3. The sermon mentioned that the world uses sophisticated strategies to influence how we think. Can you identify an area where you've allowed the world's voice to become louder than God's voice?

Part 2: Faith's Relationship with Other Fruits (20 minutes)

4. Faith and Love: The pastor said, "If you don't like someone at all, but you got great faith that God's going to heal them and you're praying for them, there's a problem." Why is love essential to effective faith? Can you think of a situation where you need to grow in love before your faith can be effective?
5. Faith and Long-Suffering: Discuss the story of the man with stage 4 pancreatic cancer. The pastor asked, "Is God who He says He is, regardless of what's going on in our own life?" How would you answer that question in your current circumstances?
6. Read the Oswald Chambers quote: "Faith for my deliverance is not faith in God. Faith means whether I am visibly delivered or not, I will stick to my belief that God is love."

What's the difference between faith in deliverance versus faith in God's character?
Which do you tend to lean toward?

7. Which fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, self-control) do you most need faith to cultivate right now? Why?

Part 3: Defending Your Faith (15 minutes)

8. The pastor challenged us: "Don't just tell me what to believe. Teach me how to think in a way that promotes understanding of WHY I believe." If someone asked you why you're a Christian, could you give a reason beyond "because my parents were" or "because I go to church"? What would you say?
9. Read 1 Peter 3:15. "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." What areas of your faith do you feel unprepared to defend or explain?

Part 4: Faith in Action (15 minutes)

10. The pastor said, "People don't want to hear about your faith. They want to hear how your faith has changed the way you live." How has your faith tangibly changed:
 - The way you love?
 - Your capacity for joy?
 - Your experience of peace?
 - Your priorities and motivations?
11. Read James 2:17 - "Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." What action is God calling you to take by faith right now that you've been hesitating on?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge (Choose 1-2)

Option 1: Digital Detox for Clarity

- Commit to a 24-hour fast from social media, news, or entertainment that may be dulling your spiritual hearing
- Use that time instead for prayer, Scripture reading, or worship
- Journal what you notice about your thoughts and God's voice

Option 2: Love + Faith = Action

- Identify someone you struggle to love
- Commit to praying for them daily this week
- Ask God to show you one practical way to demonstrate love to them by faith

Option 3: Defend Your Faith Exercise

- Write out your answer to: "Why am I a Christian?" without using phrases like "because I was raised that way"
- Include specific reasons, experiences, and evidence that have convinced you
- Share with one person this week (group member or non-believer)

Option 4: Faith Inventory

- Using the nine fruits of the Spirit, rate yourself 1-10 on each
- Identify your weakest area
- Ask God to increase your faith specifically in that area
- Share with an accountability partner

Option 5: Lenten Practice (40-day commitment)

- Choose one thing to give up that interferes with hearing God clearly
- Replace that time/activity with something that cultivates faith (prayer, Scripture memory, service, etc.)
- Keep a simple log of what God teaches you through this practice

Pray for one another in these areas:

1. Clarity - That God would reveal what dulls our spiritual hearing and give us courage to remove it
2. Integration - That our faith would not operate alone but would produce love, joy, peace, and all the fruits of the Spirit
3. Endurance - For those experiencing long-suffering, that they would have faith to believe God is good even when circumstances are hard
4. Boldness - To speak truth, expose darkness, and defend our faith with gentleness and respect
5. Transformation - That our faith would produce visible, tangible changes in how we live, love, and interact with the world

Closing Reflection

*Read together: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
(Hebrews 11:1)*

Final Question: What is one thing you're hoping for by faith that you cannot yet see? How will you continue to believe even when you don't see it?