

Faith: Our Connection to a Bigger Reality

Series: Daring Faith
Brad Bailey - September 16th, 2018

What is faith?

1. Faith is the connection to the bigger world.... the intersection between the finite and infinite.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. - Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV)

2. Faith is _____ who rules over a larger reality.

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. - Hebrews 11:6

3. Faith is essential to _____ to God's saving love.

The good news shows how God makes people right with himself. From beginning to end, becoming right with God depends on a person's faith. It is written, "Those who are right with God will live by faith." - Romans 1:17

4. Faith is what _____ to find at work in us.

Luke 18:8

5. Faith is _____ the bigger reality of God's

purposes and power.

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints. - Ephesians 1:18

How Fear and Faith Shape What is Ahead of Us

The Work of Fear...

1. Fear _____ our problems.

Numbers 13:31-32 - "...We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."

2. Fear spreads _____ in us and around us.

That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. Numbers 14:1

3. Fear can lead to complaining ... blaming...and becoming enslaved to _____.

Numbers 14:2-4

All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert!"³ Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? ... Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?"⁴ And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

What faith is not...

- Faith is not simply _____...wanting something to be true.
- Faith is not _____ with God... to change the truth.
- Faith is not _____...pretending that something is true that isn't true.

The Work of Faith...

1. Faith allows me to _____ than my problems.

"Is anything too hard for the Lord?" - Genesis 18:14

"For nothing is impossible with God!" - Luke 1:37

"Glory be to God, who by His mighty power at work within us, is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of—infinity beyond our highest prayers, and desires, and thoughts, or hopes!"
Ephesians 3:20 (LB)

2. Faith gives me power to _____ in tough times.

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 (NLT)

We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed.

3. Faith allows me to _____ all that God has for me.

"...none of you will enter the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun." Numbers 14:30

How To Grow In Your Faith during the Daring Faith Fall Focus

1. Get the Daring Faith Guide... available now in the Book Nook.
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The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" - Luke 17:5

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Intro:

How big is your world? How big is the world around you?

It's an interesting question ... because we begin to realize that we might begin thinking in terms of **purely physical dimensions... which itself seems more expansive than we can really know...** ... but we can also begin to consider another way of thinking about this which **transcends those mere physical dimensions. What we call our world may exist in relationship to what exists outside of it.**

This is precisely what Jesus reveals to us. Jesus... lived in relationship to a bigger world...a bigger reality. Jesus confirms that indeed the world we know emanates from an eternal realm. He spoke of this as "the Kingdom of God ... breaking in... breaking in on what has been given control of this world. He lived in that connection. He became the means of our own connection. And **he calls us to live in the reality** of that connection.

That connection is called: FAITH.

Today we are launching into a Fall focus on what it means to live in this dynamic connection called faith. We are going to sharpen our understanding of faith...but also grow in living in this connection called faith.

I believe this is going to be a significant season for many of us.

Today is simply our introduction. We are going to consider what faith is...and the difference between seeing life through the power of fear...or the power of faith. So let's begin by considering...

What is faith?

The **nature of faith** can seem a **little hard to grasp**. It can be a bit **like the air we breathe**. We know that air is central.... essential...but it generally remains unseen.

...So let's begin with a **few ways** we can **consider what God tells us about faith**.

1. Faith is the connection to the bigger world.... the intersection between the finite and infinite.

Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV)

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Substance of things hoped for...that is... **substance...something meaningful**... related to that which not yet manifest fully in our present experience. It is not wishful hope...but something of substance. Similarly...it is "Evidence of things not seen." There are things unseen that we have

reason to believe in. In fact Jesus would remind us that the material world is temporary... and the eternal world is not less real...but perhaps more real.

It is so important to understand that faith is not about that which is irrational... it is about that which is beyond finite understanding.

It's the connection to a bigger reality...it's the space in which we as the finite engage the infinite.And that **becomes personal** when the living God **meets us in that space**.

2. Faith is trust in God who rules over a larger reality.

Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

The point here is **not that nothing people do** can be **considered good** at **some level**.

I believe that God is pleased in some way whenever good is done to creation...to others. **The point here is about relationship**...and that you simply can never have relationship if you refuse to acknowledge and trust in the other.

3. Faith is essential to responding to God's saving love.

If faith is about trusting in God who rules over a larger reality... it would only make sense that faith is essential to trusting what God has done to make it possible for us to be reconciled to Him. And that is what the Bible teaches us.

Romans 1:17 (NIRV)

The good news shows how God makes people right with himself. From beginning to end, becoming right with God depends on a person's faith. It is written, "Those who are right with God will live by faith." (Habakkuk 2:4)

The term Good News is simply another term for the Gospel. The word "Gospel" is simply the Old English word for good news. And the Good News is that God's way of becoming right with Him is not by our capacity to get right on our own...but by our response to what he has done... to trust in his provision. The writer is quoting the prophet Habakkuk... which state sore fully... Habakkuk 2:4 - *Look at the proud one; His soul is not upright - But the righteous will live by his faith.*

It is not pride in ourselves. Faith is about trusting not in ourselves but in God.

But trust is **not something** that is **defined only in a moment**. It is essential to our response to his saving love... but is a call into a life of such trust. True faith is not that which says I trust what God did to save me...but I will take it from here. In fact... it is the very quality which God has been sowing and will come seeking.

4. Faith is what God seeks to find at work in us.

The people ask Jesus about when God's judgment finally comes... will there be justice... and he says: yes...they and quickly...but he says something that should cause us all to pause:

Luke 18:8 (NIV)

However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

He says in essence... "Yes...justice will come... but what you should be considering...is will God find those who are living in the larger reality of His purposes and power ... living out their trust in Me?

Will he find faith? That question alone is enough reason for me to value these weeks ahead...of considering how to understand and grow in faith. [1]

5. Faith is seeing the bigger reality of God's purposes and power.

The Bible says that faith is a way of seeing. Now, would you agree that **there's always more than one way to look at something?** If you're married, you there's always more than one way of looking something. Their way...and the right way.

What really matters is how God sees it. Faith is seeing that there is more at work in any given situation. The Apostle Paul describes this beautifully...

Ephesians 1:18 (NIV)

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

There something vital in these words.

It speaks of **opening up the eyes of our hearts**. We have songs that speak of such a thing...but what does it mean?

This use of the word "**heart**" in **Hebrew** culture was not speaking of the physical heart...nor simply emotions or feelings. It speaks of **one's whole inner disposition**.

It means... allow my inner disposition...my inner being... to see the bigger reality... the **hope to which you have called** me.

There is an unseen realm in the world that's more real than the seen realm.

The Bible has many examples of what I call seeing with spiritual eyes or seeing with the eyes of the heart, seeing from God's point of view.

Examples of where **someone was facing** what **seemed was an insurmountable problem** ... and then the **eyes of their hearts** were **opened to the larger reality** of what God was doing.

- Hagar and her son Ishmael are cast off by Sarah...and exiled into what would seem their end...and she goes, "Lord, don't let me watch my child die." All of a sudden, it says, "God opened her eyes" and she saw a well of water in the middle of a desert and they lived.

- Another sees what by all appearances would be the onslaught of Jerusalem. Another prays "Lord open the eyes of my servant." All of a sudden, their spiritual vision is opened up and they see a realm of angels circling the city of Jerusalem. He wasn't afraid anymore. God opened his spiritual eyes.
- Followed the resurrection, Jesus comes to two of those walking home from Jerusalem... feeling lost...and then he reveals what God had long been doing and they describe how suddenly their eyes were opened.

... There is a dynamic example of this in our roots... **in the Old Testament in the Book of Numbers, Chapter 13 and 14.**

How Fear and Faith Shape What is Ahead of Us

Here is the background of numbers 13 and 14; Moses has led the nation of Israel to freedom. He's got them free from Pharaoh and the Egyptians; they've crossed the Red Sea. They've been traveling for about two years, not 40 years, just about 2 years... they're coming up to a place called Kadesh. **At Kadesh, God says: You have been here long enough...it's time to break camp...and move forward."**

I believe many of us can relate to such a point. We didn't intend to get so settled where we are... but the temporary has become familiar. It's time to break camp...and move forward. So Moses calls them to get ready to cross the Jordan and go into the Promised Land. This is the land that has been promised to them for 400 years that they would have their own country, they would have freedom, they would be free from slavery.

When they get up to the edge of the water, before they go in, Moses says, "Okay, before we go in, **I want to send in a spy team.** I'm going to pick 12 guys to go in and spy out the land and they're going to **do reconnaissance**... they're going to check out what's going on and do a little fact finding. **Twelve spies are chosen** by Moses and they are sent in to go visit the land.

When they come back... with **two very different reports.** they give a mixed report. Two of the spies say, "It's incredible. Let's go take it. It's ready for our taking. God has given us truly the Promised Land." Those two spies were named Joshua and Caleb. The other 10 spies come back and said, "Yeah, it's a great place, but..." and they have a whole list of problems on why they can't go in. They're not seeing with eyes of **faith**, they're seeing with eyes of **fear**.

What unfolds is a great picture of what happens when we see with eyes of fear and see with eyes of faith.

The Work of Fear...

1. Fear exaggerates our problems.

Numbers 13:31-32 (NIV)

"We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. ... We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."

I think any of us can appreciate that they were scared by what they saw. The Canaanites had developed into a more organized force.

But there is a loss of perspective here.

Fear will exaggerates the obstacle you face...and the limitations you have.

Here is an amazing thing. God has just delivered them from Egypt, the most powerful nation in the world and yet, now, they're worried about some local tribe. They've just defeated Pharaoh and yet, now, they're worried about somebody else and how quickly we forget. When you look at your problems with eyes of fear, they get bigger. The more you look at your problem, the more exaggerated it gets. Somebody criticize you, the more you think about it, pretty soon, you think the whole world is criticizing you. It grows by proportion.

Notice, they say, "We saw ourselves like grasshoppers in our own eyes," that's their own self-image and it says, "And we look the same to them." How do they know how they looked to the enemy? They didn't. There's a word for this. It's called, projection. You tend to project your fears on everybody else around you and that's what they're doing there. **They're projecting their fears. They have been slaves for 400 years...and despite the season of being free...they're still internally feel powerless. They're enslaved not by a Pharaoh now but by an idea, by an image, by a self-concept.**

Now, let's just stop here for a minute. Because many years ago, people said things about you and to you and behind your back that you overheard, that were not true, but you believe them. They're not even in your life anymore. Some of them are even dead and you're still believing their lies. You're still enslaved to their image of you. You had somebody, a parent or a partner or a friend or brother or sister who said, "You're uncoordinated," and so you think you're uncoordinated. Or "You're never going to amount to much," so you think you're never going to amount to much. "You're not good at speaking," or on and on. They told you all those things. You're not in Egypt anymore. That's a self-imposed prison.

Now, here's what's ironic, they said, "This place is filled with giants and we can't take them on and they're too big for us and too powerful."

Ironically, 38 years later, when the next generation did get to go into the Promised Land, you know what the enemy said? They said, "We have lived in panic for 40 years because we heard about the 10 plagues of Egypt. We heard about what your God had done against the most powerful leader in the world, Pharaoh and we were scared to death and we were ready to surrender. You needlessly walked around in the wilderness for 40 years because we were scared to death of you. (Joshua 2:9)

2. Fear spreads discouragement...in us and around us.

What they saw elicited some fear. That in itself is natural. But instead of stopping and looking to the bigger picture...the fear began to swirl within them.

Fear wanted all the attention. It always does. And they gave it that attention. And it gave no room for courage.

That is the essence of what dis-couragement is... it is stealing courage.

It spread within them... then among the ten...and then upon their return... among the whole people.

The "bad report" of the 10 spies is contagious. By nightfall their report has spread throughout the camp, and with it the infectious fear of these tribal leaders.

Numbers 14:1

That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud.

Here's the problem... fear spreads...and it spreads like a wildfire.

Negative attitudes are contagious. When they walked up there to the edge, everybody was excited about going into the Promised Land. It was only when 10 come back and said, "We can't do it," that everybody changed their mind and they began to get infected with a negative attitude. People always trust the majority report because there are **always more worriers** and there are always **more naysayers**, and there are always **more critics** and **more fearful** and fretful **negative people**.

So the majority report of the spies was negative...and the truth is...the **majority report is almost always negative**. Anybody who's going to get something done in this world is going to have to go against the majority report because the majority of people are going to be looking with eyes of fear and not eyes of faith.

Then quickly, we move to number 3 and that is, we move from discouragement to griping.

3. Fear can lead to complaining ... blaming...and becoming enslaved to familiarity.

Numbers 14:2-4 (NIV)

All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert!"³ Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? ... Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?"⁴ And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

This reference to how the people looked back to Egypt has often been noted as one of the most **fascinating reflections of how deceiving our perspectives can become**. It was the place of bondage...oppression... enslaved as animals. But now...faced with challenge...they look back...and **want the security of being enslaved over facing the uncertainty of what's ahead**.

That may sound strange...but the truth is that we find comfort in what is familiar. They were ready to give up freedom and become slaves again, just for a measure of security.

There is a false sense of safety in bondage. We have all heard of long-term prison inmates that were released only to be back in jail in a couple of weeks. It is said they become institutionalized. They do not feel safe outside the restrictions of that prison life. **When a person is in bondage there are no choices to make. There are no risks to take. No expectations.**

Fear always leads to familiarity. The destination of fear... return to what is familiar...stay in what is familiar. We become prisoners of the familiar to avoid change and uncertainty. And notice how they blame the inability to move on ...on God. They're blaming God for not letting them go in the Promised Land. God isn't holding them back. It's their fear that's holding them back.

They are going to die in the desert....because of fear.

Now, lets consider those who saw with the eyes of faith.

But first...I want to quickly note what we learn about...

What faith is not...

Faith is not simply desire...wanting something to be true.

All 12 spies desired to enter the promised land. It wasn't simply a matter of Joshua and Caleb wanting it more.

Faith is not simply desire. Desire may lead you to faith but desire isn't faith.

In fact... it isn't a feeling at all. We naturally associate feeling more inspired... more optimistic... more "up for the risk" as what it means to have faith. But the feeling isn't itself faith. Faith can elicit the feelings...but faith is not the feeling itself.

Faith is not bargaining with God... to change the truth.

Sometimes when we become desperate for something... for a relationship to work out... a loved one to be healed... a financial crisis to be met... we can think of God's desire for us to have faith...and offer up some promise to God. Faith is not that which tries to make a bargain with God... thinking, "God, if you'll do this, then I'll do this."

Joshua and Caleb never suggested that God had to do something first. They believe they could trust God by what he had already promised and done. They were ready to accept whatever came as being from God.

Another thing...

Faith is not denial ...pretending that something is true that isn't true.

When did Joshua and Caleb suggest that the Canaanites were not strong? Never.

Faith is not psyching yourself up and pretending something is that really isn't true. You're not conning yourself into believing something.

Faith is seeing more. [2]

The Work of Faith...

1. Faith allows me to see more than my problems.

Did Joshua and Caleb see the Canaanite people? Sure they did. The difference is what they saw...and what the others saw...was not that they didn't see the problems...it was that **they saw MORE**. They saw more than the problems.

They were assessing the situation with a larger view of reality.

It may look hard... "BUT God is with us" ... "BUT God has promised."

Faith sees what may be a problem... but has the mind to consider "But God.

Joshua and Caleb remind us that people of faith have big butts. May we be people with big butts. (Joke)

Faith is what puts our problems in perspective.

When you keep a sense of how big God is... problems get smaller.

When you stay clear that there is that which you have been given influence over...and that which you don't control...which God does...then you will relax... freedom to take risks.

Genesis 18:14 "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

Luke 1:37 Jesus says,

"For nothing is impossible with God!"

If God had a dictionary... the word "impossible" would not be in it.

Ephesians 3:20 (LB)

"Glory be to God, who by His mighty power at work within us, is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of—infinately beyond our highest prayers, and desires, and thoughts, or hopes!"

2. Faith gives me power to remain strong in tough times.

Faith is trust in the purposes of God being at work even in the midst of hard time. Faith **sees the potential for circumstances to change...but ALSO** for God working good IN any circumstances. [3]

So faith doesn't always take you out of the problem. Faith often takes you through the problem. Faith doesn't always take away the pain. Faith gives you the ability to handle the pain.

The fullness of heaven has not yet come to this earth... so there will always be hardship.

Faith is discovering that there is more than suffering.

Great honor was given recently to Senator John McCain...and the life of faithful service he gave before leaving this earth. As many know, he survived over 5 years as a Prisoner of War in Vietnam....including some of the harshest conditions... torture...and isolation survived.

Part of what that time brought... was faith in the larger reality... in something greater than his captors.

During his imprisonment in Hanoi, "there were times when I didn't pray for one more day or one more hour, but I prayed for one more minute," he says. "So I have very little doubt that it was reliance on someone stronger than me that not only got me through, but got me through honorably."

Orson Swindle, an ex-POW who spent the last 20 months of his captivity at McCain's side, recalls how important "church" was when he and the others were being held individually in separate rooms. Every Sunday, after the midday meal was finished, the dishes were washed, and the guards had departed, the senior officer in the area would signal that it was time to pray together, by coughing in a way that signaled the letter "c" for church – one cough and then three coughs.

McCain will always remember the first Christmas they were allowed to have a service together. They had never been able to have a Bible before, but shortly before this particular Christmas, the Vietnamese handed McCain a King James Bible, a piece of paper, and a pencil. He jotted down bits of the nativity story from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

"On Christmas Eve, the first time we had been together – some guys had been there as long as seven years – we had our service," he says. "We got to the point where we talked about the birth of Christ, and then sang 'Silent Night,' and I still remember looking at the faces of those guys – skinny, worn out – but most of them, a lot of them, had tears down their faces. And they weren't sorrow, they were happiness that for the first time in so many years we were able to worship together." [4]

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 (NLT)

We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed.

Where do you get resilience like that? Faith.

3. Faith allows me to fulfill all that God has for me.

Ten of the spies became set in fear... two became guided by faith.

How telling is where it led their lives.

Numbers 14:30

"...none of you will enter the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun."

Raise your hand if you've heard of any of these guys. Shaphat...nobody, Igal, Palti, Gaddiel, Ammiel, Sethur, Nahbi, Geuel, Shammua, not the whale, Shammua and then Caleb and Joshua. Here's the point, **nobody remembers the negative guys**. Nobody remembers the critics who say it can't be done. The only people who get remembered are the guys who said, "Let's go do it in God's name." They saw with eyes of faith, the others saw with eyes of fear. **Now, because they failed to see with eyes of faith, that entire generation missed God's purpose for their life in God's will.** [5]

We really can miss entering spaces which God intended for us...if they are being defined by fear.... more than faith. I want to be one of those who fulfilled all that God has for me. That is why I am inviting you to join me in this season of growing in Daring Faith.

What are we going to do?

We refer to this as **DARING** Faith...because I am inviting you to **join a season of choosing to move forward...when it's easier to move backwards.**

It's a **space between** the **familiar** and the **future**.

I am inviting you to a season of enjoying some **healthy discomfort**.

It's a challenge to get **out of the shallow water** of the kiddie pool... put on our **big boy swimsuits** and **dive in the deeper pool**.

How To Grow In Your Faith during the Daring Faith Fall Focus

We are engaging in an **INTEGRATED** process... that will **allow us to sow** the nature of faith more fully...more naturally.

1. Get the Daring Faith Guide... available now in the Book Nook.

2. Join an 8 week Daring Faith Group (with video studies.)

Make a commitment to get in a Daring Faith Group. This is what will help you form real movement. Most of us...if left to ourselves... lose momentum.

Not only will it help you grow... but you will get to know some new people. By Thanksgiving you will have a new group of people who have gotten to know you.

If you can't find a group that works for your schedule... try starting one...just ask a couple friends.

3. Read the Daily Inspirations in your Daring Faith Guide.

4. Carry the weekly Bible verse with you.

5. Listen to the Weekend Messages.

6. Allow God to help shape what He wants to do in your life.

How can we start today? It begins with opening up our hearts.
At one point Jesus first followers were faced with the challenge...and we read:

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" (Luke 17:5)

That simple statement is the best way we can begin. May that be our prayer today.
Lord, "Increase our faith!"

Resources: This message is the first in a church wide series based on the Saddleback Church Darin Faith campaign / series. We have adapted that set of messages by Rick Warren to fit our thoughts and way of approaching these topics, while maintaining most of the broad themes and some specific points. This message draws upon Rick Warren's message WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU HAVE FAITH (March 22, 2015)

Notes:

1. The question of finding faith when he returns appears to flow from the context in which the tendency to fall away is being spoken of... alongside the need to persist in prayer.
At the beginning of Luke 18, "He spoke a parable to them that men ought always to pray and not to faint." He went on to tell about the woman who kept coming to a judge in her city to get justice for a wrong done to her. In Matthew 24:12, where Jesus was speaking about the time just before His return, He said, "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall grow cold." Boundless iniquity and a growing lack of love throughout the earth. Then in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 Paul said about the second coming of the Lord, "that day shall not come except there come a falling away first."

2. The nature of "faith" can raise different ideas about it's relationship to "reason." Believing, especially when related to the larger questions about life, always involves the humility of grasping our finite limitations.

All of the larger questions about life...origins...meaning... source...and if a source ...the nature of that source... and why the evil that runs through us...and so much more. They are all questions about that which transcends our finite nature. We must draw from the limitation of our nature and perspective... and continually form our beliefs.

Such "belief" always reflects the nature of "faith" as it involves trusting what you don't understand with what you do understand.

It always involves trusting what you don't understand with what you do understand.
If I trust only what I can fully understand...I can't believe in anything...including our existence.

Regarding the larger questions of reality..."certainty" is far more an illusion that we grasp.

I believe the problem we have discussing beliefs...involves the illusion of "certainty"... our modern loss of grasping our limited nature.

When we say we "believe" in God ... in the living God revealed in the living testimony of the Scriptures... we must not lose the fact that we are declaring our "faith"... our trust in God... and not in our superior minds which claim some form of "certainty."

And in like mind...the problem that I see in our modern culture's often proud assertion against belief in God... is claiming to know far more than they do or even can.

If I was to share the one thing that has stood out to me as I have reflected upon the most fundamental cultural shifts within my short lifetime... it is the loss of our basic sense of limited knowledge. The modern world has lost it's sense of mystery...and become so enamored with our knowledge and control...that we have lost our most basic sense of how finite we are...of how little we know and control. The point is that we all live by faith far more than we know or want to know. In receiving Christ we are choosing that are faith lies in what he represents to be true.

3. Reflected so beautifully in Paul's statement: "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)

4. Drawn from: John McCain: keeping faith, on his own terms -
<https://www.csmonitor.com/2007/1018/p01s06-uspo.html>

A further reflection is shared.

For McCain, there were other moments of grace in prison. While in solitary confinement, he would be left for the night with his arms tied back in a painful position. One night, a guard walked in and loosened the ropes, then came back five hours later and tightened up the ropes again, without saying a word. Two months later, on Christmas Day, McCain was allowed to stand outside for 10 minutes in a courtyard, and that same guard came up to him. The guard stood beside him for a minute, then drew a cross in the dirt with his sandal and stood there for a minute, looking at McCain silently. A few minutes later he rubbed it out and walked away.

"My friends, I will never forget that man," McCain recounts during a town-hall meeting with voters, his voice choked with emotion. "I will never forget that moment. And I will never forget the fact that no matter where you are, no matter how difficult things are, there's always going to be someone of your faith and your belief and your devotion to your fellow man who will pick you up and help you out and bring you through."

It was, he said later, the most transcendent and uplifting experience of his imprisonment.

5. We also read how God says to Moses... "...because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it." (Numbers 14:24)

They had 'a different Spirit' At times, we may have to embrace a different spirit as we move forward. It's not easy... when the prevailing perspective surrounds us... it's only natural to be affected... even consumed by it. Cynicism is the spirit of our day. It's cool to be a cynic...to stay on the side of the road and expect nothing...and do nothing.