

The Bible 20/20 Week 40: "Like Precious Faith" (10-11-20)

Reading this week: The Gospel of John 11-21

Introduction:

2 Peter 1:1-2 (NKJV)

(1) Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained **like precious faith** with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: (2) **Grace** and **peace** be **multiplied to you** in the **knowledge of God** and of **Jesus our Lord**

Note: Precious - Equal honor, equally esteemed, worthy

Grace & Peace is multiplied to those of Faith - **How?** Knowledge of God - Experiencing Jesus

Today: 3 growth phases of Faith - Loss, Doubt, Failure

1) "Even Now" - Faith in Loss

John 11 - The Story of Lazarus & His sister's Martha & Mary from the town of Bethany

Lazarus gets really sick and word is sent by his sisters to Jesus . . .

John 11:3-4 (ESV)

(3) So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." (4) But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

Note: Jesus defines death and loss differently than we do! (Does Lazarus' illness lead to death?)

Jesus timing is different than our timing - check this out . . .

John 11:5-6 (ESV)

(5) Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. (6) So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Note: Jesus waits! God does things we "would never do" and allows things we "would never allow"

God is working on a different level - but allows motivated by love!

So a couple days pass, and he tells the disciples it's time to go wake Lazarus up. They don't get it so . . .

John 11:14-15 (ESV)

(14) Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, (15) and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may **believe**. But let us go to him."

Note: Jesus was motivated by love for Lazarus, His family, and his own disciples. so they may - Believe!

So for God's glory and their benefit he aloud this suffering and loss to take place!

Back in Bethany - Lazarus has been dead 4 days & his sisters are in mourning as Jesus approaches

John 11:20 (ESV)

So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, **she went and met him**, but **Mary remained seated** in the house.

Note: I get Mary's response - she is in no rush to go meet up with the one she feels let her down and abandoned her in her time of need.

But Martha musters what I'm calling "even now" faith and she goes out to meet him.

Friends when we are suffering, hurting, and experiencing loss, this is the whole deal - will we go out to meet Jesus?

*Eventually Mary comes to him as well, but it's interesting that Jesus drew near in their pain, but he didn't force his way in, they both had to get up and go to him!

John 11:21-22 (ESV)

(21) Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. (22) But **even now** I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you."

Note: When God doesn't intervene the way we expect he should, that is a crucial faith moment.

John 11:23-27 (ESV)

(23) Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." (24) Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." (25) Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life**. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, (26) and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. **Do you believe this?**" (27) She said to him, "**Yes, Lord; I believe** that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

In a crisis of faith moment of loss Jesus invites us to look up and see him more fully - do you believe this?

And in a moment of total faith - Martha responds - "Yes, Lord; I Believe"

Friends I can't promise what it will look like when you suffer loss - but you will suffer loss!

Suffering, Pain, & Loss - bring into sharp focus how "wrong," "unfair," and "unnatural" they are. Yet, these are an inevitable part of life.

Why does something we know will happen seem so wrong - because **we were made for resurrection life!**

Martha shows the key - with faith "even now" (though I don't know how)

- Maybe God intervenes with miraculous healing
- Maybe He intervenes with his nearness to comfort
- But Always - He shows up for our benefit - with resurrection life!

Since suffering & loss are inevitable, He will use it to reveal his loving heart, healing power, & ultimate victory

Let it point us to hope & reality of Heaven - (Micah story after Lydia)

2) “Unless I see” - Faith in Doubt

Jesus has risen from the dead and begun to appear to his followers . . .

John 20:24-26a (ESV)

(24) Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. (25) So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “**Unless I see** in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, **I will never believe.**” (26) **Eight days later**, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them.

Note: Thomas is experiencing a crisis of faith - I’ve got to see Jesus, the real Jesus!

Eight days later Thomas is with the disciples - notice that time passes & notice he is still with God’s people

John 20:26b-28 (ESV)

Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” (27) **Then he said to Thomas**, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” (28) Thomas answered him, “**My Lord and my God!**”

Note: Jesus reveals himself in suffering and scars (And that’s how he heals!) . . .

1 Peter 2:24-25 (ESV)

(24) He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. (25) For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

- He reveals himself in suffering and scars
- He reveals himself in resurrection and new life
- He invites us into that life

John 20:29-31 (ESV)

(29) Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? **Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**” (30) Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; (31) but **these are written so that you may believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that **by believing you may have life in his name.**

- May God’s Word be an anchor of revelation in the present storms of this life
- May we learn from Thomas’ example - stick around God’s people & handle the word that is life!

3) “Lord you know everything” - Faith in Failure

Peter - denied (3x) and abandoned Jesus on the night he was betrayed. And John’s gospel records this conversation between the two after Jesus is risen again . . .

John 21:15-17a (ESV)

(15) When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, **do you love me** more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” (16) He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, **do you love me?**” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” (17) He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, **do you love me?**” **Peter was grieved** because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “**Lord, you know everything;** you know that I love you.”

Note: Jesus walks him through this slowly, painfully, and lovingly. Notice the repetition of 3 - Peter sure did!

John 21:17b-19 (ESV)

Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. (18) Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” (19) (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “**Follow me.**”

- Your failure does not disqualify you from relationship
- Your failure does not disqualify you from having an impact
- Your failure prepares you for future challenges

When Peter failed - Jesus restored him, and said - “Follow me”

Friends, when we fail, may we learn to get back up and keep walking with Jesus!

Conclusion: In fact, it’s the survivor of this sort of failure who writes to us, the very words we opened with . . .

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- **Suffering and Loss are inevitable**
- **So to is doubt and failure**
- **But we have obtained “like precious faith”**

May we hold on in these moments of crisis to receive experiential knowledge of Jesus - that will multiple Grace & Peace in our lives!

Let’s Pray!

Discussion Questions:

- Which of the 3 examples of faith today spoke the most to you? Have you been experiencing one of these recently?
- What can we learn from Martha's example to help us navigate suffering and loss in faith? Why do you think "even now" type faith is so precious to Jesus?
- What can we learn from Thomas about dealing with doubt? How can we have our own experience "handling" Jesus and seeing his wounds and his victory that can help us grow in faith and hold on in seasons of doubt? What role do other Christians have in our lives in these seasons of doubt? How can God's word be an anchor for us in times of doubt?
- What can we learn from Peter's story of failure to help us navigate our own seasons of failure? What did Jesus reveal about his heart towards us, when we fail? What's an example of a specific act of faith that it takes on our part to help heal us when we have failed? (examples: coming to Jesus - not hiding / receiving forgiveness - not wallowing in condemnation)
- What sort of experience are you going through now that may be an opportunity to grow in faith? Where do you need some grace right now? Where do you need some peace? How can we pray for each other and support each other right now in faith?