

August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## “Amazing Faith!”

### Review:

- Sermon series based off 6 statements by Jesus in Matt. 5: “You have heard...but I tell you...”
- Where we have been so far.
  - God allows us to be tempted, and we are called to resist that temptation and not act on it.
  - We need to seek God’s Kingdom above ALL ELSE in our lives.
  - There are spiritual pitfalls we need to avoid to keep us growing as Christians.
  - Our lives must be built on Jesus’ teachings, not anything else.
  - We need to make Jesus Lord of every area of our lives.
  - Parable of the Sower & the Seeds.

### Today we are talking about Faith:

#### What is faith?

- “Allegiance to a duty or a person;” “Something believed with an especially strong conviction;” “certainty without evidence or proof.”<sup>1</sup>
- What does the OT say about faith?
  - OT encompasses both God’s role in faith and the human role in faith.
    - Anything less than God being everything that makes God who He is would be a failure by God to uphold His role in faith.
    - Human role in faith: being bound to God alone and finding in God one’s strength & existence.
  - *Hineni* – “There I am!” or “Behold, it’s me!”

#### Don’t forget, faith is action!

**Matthew 8:5-10 (NLT)** “When Jesus returned to Capernaum, a Roman officer came and pleaded with Him, ‘Lord, my young servant lies in bed, paralyzed and in terrible pain.’ Jesus said, ‘I will come and heal him.’ But the officer said, ‘Lord, I am not worthy to have You come into my home. Just say the word from where You are, and my servant will be healed. I know this because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, “Go,” and they go or “Come,” and they come. And if I say to my slaves, “Do this,” they do it.’

When Jesus heard this, He was amazed. Turning to those who were following Him, He said, ‘I tell you the truth, I haven’t seen faith like this in all Israel!’

- Jesus clarifies what faith actually is in this story by contrasting two different ideas of faith.
  - **Idea #1** – Doing good things makes you worth more (**Luke 7:1-5**).
    - The elders thought the Centurion was worthy of Jesus’ healing because of his accomplishments.
    - This quickly becomes transactional faith.
  - **Idea #2** – The Centurion’s faith.
    - Jesus was actually amazed by the Centurion’s faith!
    - What was so significant about the Centurion’s faith?
    - “Because you believed, it has happened” (**Matt. 8:13**).

<sup>1</sup>“Faith.” Merriam-Webster.com. 2023. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/faith> (August 14, 2023).

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## What does Jesus expect of our faith?

Could there be ideas of faith in our culture that are not what God intended faith to be?

- **Idea #1** – Emotional, Experiential Faith.
  - “You feel it, so it is real & legitimate for you. But I don’t feel it, so it is not real or legitimate for me.”
- **Idea #2** – Rational Faith.
  - This kind of faith is head knowledge only.
  - Hebrews & James tells us this doesn’t work!
- **Idea #3** – Faith is about action, achievements, and worth.
  - This is almost like a point system.
  - This is where the Pharisees were and quickly becomes **transactional faith**.

### What kind of faith is God calling us to have? And what does it look like?

- God wants a faith that does not demand anything of God.
  - This is NOT because God is untrustworthy, but rather because faith is not transactional.
  - The centurion did not demand anything of Jesus.
  - “Yet I want Your will to be done, not Mine” (**Matt. 26:39 ESV**).
- God wants a faith that is solely built on God.
- God wants a faith that has evidence but does not require proof.
  - It is one matter to say you have evidence for your faith, but another matter entirely to insist on proof of future results before acting on faith.
- God wants a faith that results in action.
  - Inward faith without outward action is worth nothing. (**James 2:14-26**)

### Next Steps:

1. Identify what kind of faith you have – Is it emotional? Transactional? Head knowledge? Or faith like the Centurion.
2. How are you growing/allowing God to grow your faith? Trials, struggles, and bold responses to God’s will are all ways our faith can grow.
3. Is there something in your life God is calling you to do, but your faith has held you back? If so, go home today and create 2 **next steps** of your own to move you closer to obeying God.

### Questions to meditate on and discuss:

1. Have you ever had a transactional relationship with someone (friend, significant other, etc.)? How did it feel?
2. How have you defined faith? Is this different than what was talked about today?
3. How often do you think/talk about your faith?
4. How have you acted on your faith in your life?
5. When God asks you to do something, how willing are you to step out in faith and do it?
6. Read **James 2:14-26**. Why is faith alone not enough?
7. How do you keep your faith from being merely head knowledge.
8. What are you currently struggling with about faith in your life? Who in your life can you talk to that will help you and hold you accountable through this process?
9. What might God be calling you to step out in faith and do?