

True Faith

by Albu van Eeden

Faith is not just believing in God, but obeying Him in what He tells you to do, even when you don't know how it will turn out.

Duration: 1:09:08

Scripture: 1 Kings 17:9, 1 Kings 17:12, Proverbs 28:13, Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Ephesians 2:10, James 2:17

Topics: "Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the mystery of God selecting a vessel to use. He emphasizes that God not only wants to save us but also desires to use us for His purposes. The speaker shares a personal experience of witnessing a street performer in New York City and how no one paid attention to him. This serves as a reminder that even if we feel alone or insignificant, God has a purpose for us. The sermon concludes with a call to obedience and trust in God, acknowledging that our problems and difficulties should not distract us from focusing on Him.

Transcript

This mysterious thing called faith The Bible says it is impossible to please God without faith So there are people who are living lives where they are trying to please God But they are not succeeding they are failing They do the right things They sacrifice They might be sacrificing in terms of time or money or effort And yet in spite of all the effort they are putting in Their lives are not pleasing. They don't please God with all the good they do Why? Because it is not done in faith And the Bible goes even a step further God says what is not done in faith is sin Do you realize dear brothers and sisters what that means There might be some people living in sin without knowing it They don't kill anybody They don't steal They don't sleep around They don't watch pornography And yet in God's eyes they are living in sin Because they're not living in faith What is this mysterious thing called faith That seems to be the key In unlocking the blessings of heaven and eternal life to our souls To some people faith is as a mysterious kind of a woolly unclear thing You know that to a certain extent even the theologians Argue and debate and fight with each other on the topic of faith Because Because on the one hand the Bible says God saves us through faith not through works so that no one can boast before God That's the one side of the of the truth of faith On the other side we hear that with that faith without works is dead On the other side we hear that with that faith without works is dead So what is the faith that one needs to be saved?

Because as I've said there's the possibility that we can have faith, but it's dead It's a faith, but it is a faith that is not able to save our souls from eternal damnation What kind of faith what is the real faith like the real faith that saves the soul of a person and snatches him out of an eternity in the worst suffering and pain that you can imagine in hell and Makes him pass over into glory into heaven and escape all that punishment And I found in God's Word an example of a woman that had that kind of a faith And she was to a large extent just as Insignificant as this little sparrow that was sitting on the wire there Oh We find her story in the first book of Kings chapter 17 and from verse 8 See First Kings 17 verse 8 then the word of the Lord came to him saying What's a figure is the God Jehovah go?

Yeah, not this hymn that the Bible is speaking about is the prophet Elijah Elijah Verse 9 arise go to Zarephath which belongs to Sidon and dwell there See I have commanded a widow there to provide for you So So he arose and went to Zarephath and when he came to the gate of the city indeed a widow was there gathering sticks And he called to her and said Please bring me a little water in a cup that I may drink Why is a sugar wire is a rafati is a figure a sanguine Lomousi beggar um fellow guys Why a kakasha corner one bees are what he again?

Let tell a English on a man's it's chaining people's and as she was going to get it. He called to her and said Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand It's a sugar one land one bees are what he again? Literally Nicole is all the same What is something cycle so she said as the Lord your God lives? I do not have bread only a handful of flour in a bin and a little oil in a jar and See I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go and in and prepared for myself and my son That we may eat it and I Get power to appeal a Google Jehovah uncle uncle Waco Aguinaldo Cabellan one cook or Nagu Pella who cashed a Booboo and business and I am a footer opiswain beggar singer singer singer Ashley is in cool.

It's not actually isn't gonna say as in Billy who goes a gingan And Elijah said to her Do not fear Go and do as you have said but make me a small cake from it first and bring it to me and Afterward make some for yourself and your son Why is it? Iliya Lord God of Israel, the bin of flour shall not be used up nor shall the jar of oil run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth. So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah. She and he and her household ate for many days.

The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the Lord which he spoke by Elijah. So she went away and did according to the word of the Lord which he spoke by Elijah. We'll just read thus far.

Friends, these days I couldn't get away from this portion in Scripture. Each time I read about it, it blessed me more. I spoke to a small group of people where I shared this word, and afterwards I thought, man, I haven't done justice to this.

And I trust that God will give me the grace to just share with you a little bit of what I experienced when I read this. The first thing that struck me is the mystery of God selecting a vessel to use. We as human beings will never fathom or understand God's wisdom and the reasons why He selects a specific vessel, a specific person to use for His purpose.

Here we find Elijah, one of these select servants of God, a special man, a man that somehow stands out in the Old Testament as one of God's specially selected servants and specially blessed and anointed people. This man must have been worth more than 20,000 people to God. He was precious to God.

Remember on the Mount of Transfiguration, out of all the heroes of the Old Testament, God selected Elijah and Moses to come and speak to His Son about the suffering He was going to go through on the cross. At a later stage, God used angels to comfort him. But at this stage, God didn't see it fit to send an angel to strengthen Christ.

He thought that it would be an encouragement and a strengthening to His Son to be able to speak to Moses and Elijah about the things He was going to go through. Brothers and sisters, what a blessing! What a privilege! What a compliment from the God of heaven and earth! On top of that, Elijah was on a very important mission. Jezebel was on his tracks.

She had been hunting him like a buck day and night to try and track him down and kill him. His life was in danger. Not just from Jezebel, but there was a drought and a hunger in the land.

And God had to send this servant of His to a place where He knew somebody would take care of this servant of His. Do you know where He sent him to? To the country that was under the rule of the father of Jezebel. Elijah was really in danger.

But God hasn't sent him to a great king who can fight for him. God hasn't sent him to a band of mighty warriors who could stand up and protect him and flee with him on their horses and kill him. And hide him in caves and help him.

God sends him to a widow of all people. And not just any widow. A widow that was so helpless herself, she could not even help herself.

Friends, how will we ever understand God? God says He's chosen the weak of this world to put to shame the wise and the clever of this world. That which is foolish in the eyes of the world. Those are the people whom God chose for some of His most important work on this earth.

In a way, maybe this woman was looked down upon. But you know, to me she was a step worse than being looked down to. Because if people look down on you, at least they are aware of you and of your presence.

At least they recognize that you are there even though they don't think much of you. But it's as if this woman was just totally insignificant. Nobody even bothered about her.

She was just nothing. Nobody worried about her and her son. Nobody took care of them.

She was like pushed aside and life went past her as if she was not existing. But God looked down from heaven. And He saw this totally insignificant, weak, needy, helpless woman.

Just listen to the words that God uses in the Bible. It's a mystery. He speaks to Elijah.

He says, see, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you. This woman was totally unaware of God. She was the last person to be in the position to help anybody else.

And yet, God of heaven was not going to command her. He had already commanded her, He said, even though she was oblivious of His command. She was so busy with her own crisis.

She was so busy just trying to stay alive. That she didn't even think or consider the possibility of God coming in and using her. Friends, I think that's one of the strongest weapons the devil uses.

He keeps us so busy with our problems. He keeps us so busy with the hard side of life. That he blinds us to what God wants to do through our lives.

Because he knows as long as he can keep you busy with these problems that you have, you will never be able to look up to God and never be able to hear God's voice and see God's guidance in this. What an absolute tragedy. Just think if this woman missed the point and missed the message.

Not only would she have missed being saved from her predicament and from her problem. She would have never known that God was planning to use her. And that is another mystery.

God doesn't just want to save her. He wants to use her. Dear friend, dear brother and sister.

Are you aware of the fact that God wants to use you? I don't worry about what crisis you are in. I'm not concerned about how difficult life is for you. I'm not concerned about all these impossible obstacles in your way.

Have you ever realized, has it ever dawned on you that God doesn't just want to save you, but he actually wants to use you? Even if you are nothing, people don't even look twice at you. Some time ago I was in New York. And we walked in Broad Street.

Broad Street is the most photographed place, they say, in the world. That's the center of the entertainment industry to a certain extent of New York. And you know, I saw the funniest things there.

But you know what struck me? Nobody was looking twice or blinking an eye. In the middle of Broadway they have what they call the naked cowboy. There's this chap standing with his underpants in the middle of the street.

With his cowboy hat on. Playing his guitar in the middle of the traffic that's driving past him. Well my mouth hang open, I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

But you know what was even more astonishing? Nobody else was taking note of him. Nobody else was looking at him. And like him there were dozens of others just as weird and just as strange doing their thing and nobody was taking care of them.

One of the people, the Christians I know, said she was going to do an experiment one day. She was with her husband. And she ran into the street and she started singing the song from the Sound of Music.

The hills are alive with the Sound of Music. And she moved her hands and she stood singing in the street. She says nobody even turned around to look back at her.

That's the other side of democracy in its extreme. Everyone is free to just do what he likes. You do your thing, I do my thing and that's it.

But there's something very terrible about it. And that is, that makes of you the most lonely person in the world. If nobody cares and nobody worries about you, you're the loneliest person in the world.

Someone said the biggest thing in the world is to be needed. Do you know what it feels like when you realize I am not needed? Nobody needs me actually. Here was this woman feeling that nobody needed her.

God in heaven had his plans, he needed her. Friends, God has a work and a job to do for each one of us sitting in this auditorium this morning. This woman must have felt so lonely.

I don't think she ever dreamed that generations to come, thousands of years to come, people were going to read her story and speak about her story. When she was at that stage, she must have not dreamt that we in the 21st century would be talking about her and what was happening to her on that specific day. But God had already commanded her.

Oh brother and sister, may we not miss the command that God has spoken over our lives. That's the worst tragedy in this world. To miss the purpose for which God had brought you and me into this world.

Leave alone our sins and the punishment for our sins. This will be maybe the worst punishment when we get into eternity. When my eyes are open to what God wanted to do through me and I've been blind to that.

I've listened to the devil. And he's totally taken me away from the blessing and the purpose that God had for me. The third thing I want to take note of.

When God comes to visit us, He comes at the time, very often, at the time when we can least afford it. God could have come to this woman at any other time and it would have been better than this day. This was the day when she was least of all prepared to minister and to be a blessing and to serve somebody else.

Even if she wanted to serve God, she didn't have anything to serve God with. And I thought, how true is it? God often comes to us at the time when it's the most impossible time He could have chosen. It happens when we are still sinners and He comes for the first time to us.

Maybe I've just got a bankruptcy behind me. Maybe I'm an alcoholic and I'm down in the gutters in the worst state a man can get. Maybe my marriage is on the rocks.

Maybe I've lost my family and I've lost my friends. Maybe I've even lost my self-respect. I mean, you need a bit of self-respect to be confident to be able to do something.

Maybe I have such a lack of self-confidence that you can't even do anything for the Lord. You're so embarrassed to stand up and speak before people. You're so self-conscious.

You're at your lowest. And God comes to you. And God says, well, what about that money that you've stolen? I know you're bankrupt.

You can't pay your debt back. But you've got to face the reality that you have sinned and that you owe money to people which you have not paid back to them. And then we say, no, Lord.

You don't understand. Come at another time. I'm battling to survive.

I'm not in the position where I can now face all the wrongs that I've done. I'm not in the position where I can now confront all the lies that I've told in my life. I'm not in the position where I can go and apologize to somebody for what I've said.

Lord, just give me some direction first. Let me first see where you're going with me. Then I will start obeying you.

But that, friends, is the beginning of faith. To obey God blindly even though you don't know how you are going to get it right. And to go where he sends you.

And if he says, go back and apologize for what you've said. Don't say, Lord, no. If I apologize now, that's going to just strengthen so-and-so in this case.

It's going to prove to them that I was wrong and they won't see their own mistakes. They had 80% of the error. I just had 10% of the mistake.

God expected this woman to act when she was at her weakest. To start obeying God and to put him and his kingdom first in her life. Friends, I don't mind how weak and how poor and how wretched you may be.

God expects you to put him and his kingdom first now in your life. Not tomorrow, now. You know what's the other thing that strikes me? God appeared so loveless.

And the servant of God even appeared more loveless. You know, I can already imagine what some people would have been saying. Some Christians would have been saying about Elijah.

What kind of man of God is he? He's only aware of his own needs. He's not like the Good Samaritan. The Good Samaritan went out of his way to try and help this man who was weak and wounded.

This proud man Elijah walks into my house. He's not concerned about my needs and my difficulties. He just thinks of his own hungry stomach.

And you know, it's as if Elijah rubs it in for this woman. He first says to her, bring me a bit of water. Now, I remember it was a time of drought.

Maybe water was more scarce than food. Can you imagine what she felt like? She didn't have so much left. And I can just imagine her walking with bowed shoulders to go and fetch the water and think, well, let me just do it for this man.

And I can just imagine him saying, as she walks away, saying to her, oh, and by the way, just bring me some bread as well. She must have thought this man is crazy. God was stretching her absolutely to the limit.

She nearly, I think she nearly, nearly blew it, if I can use that language. Friends, if she turned around there, and she allowed Elijah to have it, and she told him off. God wouldn't have worked the miracle.

She would have gone around, across the world, and she would have been justified in the eyes of everybody who heard her. When she told them that the God of Israel was a loveless God. He's a God that doesn't feel for people.

He's a God that doesn't have compassion on people. And his servant, that man Elijah, he is the most selfish man I've ever met in my life. She could have gone around and spread rumors all over the world about this evil man of God Elijah that's so selfish.

And meanwhile, she's been wrong. She would have been the one that failed. It wouldn't have been Elijah that made the mistake.

It wouldn't have been God's mistake. It would have been her own mistake. But the whole world would have agreed with her and said to her, yeah, no, you're right.

Reminds me of the text in the Bible that says the truth is justified by its children. People can say things against this book. The theologians can tear it apart.

Or shall I say Godless theologians, because you get the good ones also. People can point out all the discrepancies and try and point out all the mistakes in the Bible. But the life of one Christian in whose life this word works justifies the whole Bible.

Friends, can you understand God's ways? That God makes the respect that people have for his word dependent in a way on me and you. Our faith must work. People must see it work in our lives.

Then they'll have the Bible will be justified. A man of God can help you up to a certain point. But friends, you reach a point where nobody can do it for you anymore.

You have to go through with God now. You have to go through. You must get through to God and make personal contact with him.

And develop that relationship with him. Here was the prophet of God, a man who worked miracles. But he was helpless to do anything more for this woman.

He had reached the point where he could just stand and look at her and watch her reaction and maybe pray for her. I think it must have broken his heart to speak so harsh to this woman. But sometimes God expects of us to do that.

Blessed is the person that is not offended and annoyed when God sends a hard message to him or her. This was where her faith had to save her. And this is the crux of what I wanted to say today.

She had to act in belief upon the word of Elijah that what he was saying was the truth. She couldn't first wait to see whether he was going to increase the flour and the oil before she starts doing it. Dear friends, this is faith.

Faith means to obey God in what he tells you to do, even though I don't know whether he is going to keep his promise or not. It's a faith that doesn't just stay here in your head. But it's a faith that comes out in your deeds.

This woman would have been stupid if she said, I believe what you say, Elijah, but I'm waiting. I want to see first. Oh, how often have I not seen this? People saying, yes, I believe what you say.

I believe God's word. I believe it's the truth. But they're not willing to change.

They still stay in the same old life they've been in all the time. Friend, if you're not willing to change your life, then you don't believe. If you're not willing to let go of the sins in your life, then you don't believe.

These days, I read a portion from Spurgeon. And he says, would you believe if a man tells you he cannot stop stealing because it's too strong, the hold of stealing on him? He says, Spurgeon says, I won't believe him. You can believe him, but I won't believe him.

He says, or if somebody's living an immoral life. He says, and he comes and he tells you, the lust has got too much control over me. I can't get free of this.

He says, would you believe that he's speaking the truth? He says, I don't believe him. He's a liar. He says, so friends, if you've been sitting, and your life has not been changing, and you've not been set free of the sins that has been burdening you all the time, he says, let me put a thunderbolt under your slothfulness and your complacency.

He says, you are ready for the flames of hell. That's all that's good for you. Friends, this is the faith that can save our souls.

A faith that causes us to move, to act, and to change. This is the faith that will be able to stand on judgment day. That terrible day that's coming.

And the Bible says, it burns like an oven. The day when the just will only just be saved, the Bible says. When the mountains will shake, the earth will shudder, and the Son of God will come as the judge of this world on the clouds of heaven.

And the people will be running away like rats under the mountains and shouting to the mountains to cover them. There's one kind of faith that will keep you standing on that day. And that is a faith that has been tested here in this world.

And a faith that has stood the test of this world with all its difficulties and temptations and sufferings. If your and my faith hasn't stood the trials of this life, if we have not been victorious here, brothers and sisters, your faith will not save you on judgment day. On that great and terrible day, when the sound of the trumpet of the archangel will sound, and people will fear and pull their hair out of their heads out of fear.

Then the children of God will stand bold while the world is shaken around them. They will stand firm in their faith because their faith has been tested in the furnace of this life. Brothers and sisters, we dare not miss the boat in this life.

There's no such thing as a place where you can go after death as the Catholics believe where you can still be made holy. What God wants to do in my and your life must be done here in this world now. Oh may God not find us wanting with that quality of faith.

When I read about this woman, it lit a fire in my bosom. And I said, God, I want to be like this woman. Help me Lord, help my unbelief that I can be like this woman.

You know what? She had to be so desperate that she would be willing to die if God was not speaking the truth. She would have taken her last bit of flour and given that to the man of God. And she and her son would have had nothing to eat.

And they would have died. This is how important this decision was to this woman. But is that not what the Lord Jesus said? He said, unless we're willing to lose our lives, we won't save it.

If we don't have such a faith in God that I'm willing to die if God's word is not true, then I will not get my life. There's so much one can say, but time's running out. But let me just mention this briefly.

This, by the way, I see in this woman's situation the ideal situation for euthanasia and for depression. If this woman lived in Holland today where euthanasia has been legalized, the temptation would have been

very big for her to go and say, listen, there's no way out for me. Give me an injection and let me just die without hunger.

Because I'm going to die a slow, painful hunger death. I'm already old. I've lived my life.

There's not much purpose for me anymore. Friends, it's amazing how logic the devil can make the reasons not to believe to us. He may make it appear so logic that we cannot believe.

Everything is telling me that I cannot believe. Let me tell you this. At the root of the idea of euthanasia lies the conviction of unbelief.

You see, it has the appearance of something actually quite noble. You know, she doesn't strike out at Elijah. She doesn't try to hurt him or she doesn't speak against him.

No, like a lamb, she just keeps quiet. And she just bears this difficulty. And she just accepts the reality that's standing in front of her.

If you're a realist, there's no future for her left. There's so little food left. There are much younger people who need the food more than what she needs the food.

So why would she still eat food at a time when there's such a shortage? Go to a doctor and ask him, man, just give me an injection and just let me die in peace, please. Just let me die with dignity. But do you know what lies at the root of that? Unbelief.

You do not believe in a God that can work miracles. You do not believe in the God of this Bible. The God that did all the miracles in this world.

You do not believe that he can bring purpose into your suffering. You do not believe that he can bring meaning into your life. You are nothing and your life is worthless and that's it.

But this woman went all the way. She did everything that she was expected to do. Just listen to what he says to her.

He says, bake me a little cake first. Dear friend, that's all that God is asking of you today. Just bake him a little cake.

He doesn't ask you to bake a huge big cake. Just bake me a little cake, please. But he knows what it's going to cost you to bake that little cake for him.

And even if you have met with Christ, even if you are his child, then God can say to you and me also today, this morning, just bake me a little cake. And God even comes to his children at the times when they can least afford it. When everything inside you cries out to save your own life.

When you are in a difficult time and you are in need. God may send somebody to you. And it's so easy as a Christian to become irritated during those times.

And say, Lord, you're asking of me above what I could do for you. But I tell you, there's not one person in this auditorium this morning to whom God is not saying, just bake me a little cake. You know what a little cake is that God wants you to bake for him.

Don't say no. Resist the urge of your flesh to become irritated and angry and say, Lord, I cannot do it. Walk in faith.

Exercise your faith that God can use you to save his men and his heroes. God didn't expect her to go and do the things that Elijah did. No.

She had a different calling. Her calling was just to bake a little cake. God won't tempt us above what we can bear.

And do you know what are the most beautiful words for me in this whole portion? Elijah's words to her when he realized the turmoil she was in. He said to her, do not fear. Go and do as you have said.

Do not fear. God realized she needed a little bit of encouragement. Just something to hold on to.

And he didn't expect more of her than what she could do. When he realized it was getting too difficult for her, he gave her this comfort. Do not fear.

Is that not what the Lord Jesus said when he left this world? He says, fear not, because I'm with you all the days up till the end of the earth. Friend, I don't know whether you feel alone, whether you feel lost and hopeless, whether you're down in the dumps. God says, fear not.

He's got a purpose for us. If we are just willing to bow in faith and obey him, faith without obedience does nothing. May God find that kind of faith in mine and your hearts.

Thank you very much for this message of profound importance to every one of us. I believe the Lord is speaking and addressing the sinner. And using it to every heart as individuals here.

Maybe there is a certain step of obedience, something that you personally need to do, that will confirm to God and to you and to his people that you're putting him first. It will be of salvation. It will bring life and joy to you and your family.

Even when others are starving to death, you can live with abundant oil and flour and let need never run dry. We thank you Lord for this message which has been so clear today. Lord, we realize that the problem doesn't lie with you but with us and in how we'll respond and obey you.

Lord, you leave us with the question as to who will trust you and believe you and obey you today. Grant Lord that we wouldn't leave here in doubt but trusting that you've spoken to us and addressed our needs. Lord, we've heard how Satan tries to distract us from looking above by focusing us on our problems and difficulties.

Lord, help us by your grace that we would listen and obey what you have spoken to us today and be able to realize and to reach that for which you've created us. Amen.

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