

Rahab - Example of Faith

by Billy Strachan

Faith is an action of risk, trusting in God's sovereignty and provision, and surrendering our lives to Him.

Duration: 49:00

Scripture: Joshua 2:18-21, Psalm 104:14-15, Matthew 1:1-17, Matthew 6:19-21, Matthew 6:33, John 4:4-26, Hebrews 1:3

Topics: "Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses various aspects of faith and action in the context of biblical stories. He emphasizes the importance of not just hearing and believing the message, but also taking action based on that faith. The preacher uses examples such as the story of Rahab and the spies, as well as the story of Abraham and his willingness to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. He also highlights the contrast between legalistic rules and regulations and the freedom found in faith. Overall, the sermon encourages listeners to have a faith that is evidenced by works, not just words.

Transcript

Chapter two and we've seen that the first illustration cited of a person who lived a life of faith and that faith was evidenced by works not by words was Abraham and we saw that the great step that warranted his claim to being a person that would take the risk of faith was in offering Isaac but that God had to take years to get him to that place where he would learn to be obedient and learn to do what he was told and learn to be obedient and let God take the consequences and know that God could do what he thought he had to do for God and one never needs to go around manufacturing miracles and manufacturing helping God out of a mess.

You never find Jesus Christ panicking when he was on the earth to manifest the father as we are on the earth to manifest the son you find that his attitude was one where he never panicked.

I mean he's standing there on the mountain and he's shouting to the people my father is great take no thought for your life what you shall eat what you shall drink wherewithal you shall be clothed don't you know that my father looks after the sparrows of the field my father looks after the lilies of the field the very hairs of your head are counted there's not a little sparrow falls to the ground and dies but my father knows about it he clothes the fields with grass he takes care of all the animal life he upholds all things he has wealth.

I think fellas we'll let that be the end of the first lesson could you go and feed the crowd please and Peter comes down out and says I haven't got anything you mean to tell me we've got five thousand people out here and you guys forgot to take care of the catering we've got to feed this lot what are you reading the bible Jesus panicked what have we got get anything around see if you can find something what's that what's that give me that son five loaves and five fishes oh boy what a mess we're in thank god if I'd known we didn't even have the food I would have said perhaps my father knows when the sparrow falls there's a slight possibility that he will uphold things by his power it may be that my father could look after you in a time of I mean I would have softened the message up now

I've stood there and bragged about what my father can do now we've got five loaves and five fishes oh dear father do you think you could send down a knife that would slice these fish into five thousand pieces no that's not what we read that's not what we read do you know what we read Jesus took the bread and the fishes and he said thank you I've told them how big you are you don't take the opportunity I don't look stupid you do that is faith at risk God you're going to take the consequences for this I've told them what you're capable of doing I've declared your name declared your glory declared your power now here's a big chance for you to prove it and I'm not going to prove it for you and he gave thanks dished out the bread dished out the fish and there was 12 baskets left over because

God always does exceedingly abundantly above all you could ask or think he's standing there at the tomb of Lazarus I am the resurrection and the life he that believeth in me though he were dead yet shall he live and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die now would you roll the stone away from the grave please and Martha comes up and says hey what is it he stinks been in there four days what four days Peter come here why didn't you tell me he'd been in there for I thought I thought he just died this morning you mean he's been in that tomb four days in this mid-eastern heat oh boy what a mess we're in hey fellas look I've gone and bragged that I'm the resurrection and the life and that God can raise people from the dead like you know so look we got to do something about this

so what I want you to do is take a you know roll the stone away and then take a big breath of fresh air run in and bring it out and stand there and get James you get behind one arm Pete you get behind the other and Andrew you hold it up and wiggle it a bit you know make it look like it's alive and then when I pronounce the benediction and the crowd go home let's stick it in there because I mean we've got to help God out of a mess is that what we read no she says he stinks by now it says roll the stone away father I thank you that you always hear me Lazarus come out and he came out father I thank you have you ever thought of thanking God for what he's going to do instead of asking him just check your prayer list is it an ask you list or a thank you thank you the thing that I consider to be

the biggest problem in my life today is no problem to you thank you you're big enough to take the consequences to iron out this mess and bring about the best for me possible thank you thank you that my crisis of today is not a crisis to you to you it's history because you've already seen the outcome I just haven't been there yet thank you thank you God that my future is boring to you because to you my future's history thank you I don't need to panic let's live today let's get out of today all I need today and all I should enjoy today in a relationship with you and you take the consequences for tomorrow thank you that's tough that's really tough and it works for every area of life and I'll tell you this everything that you lift the knife to and you're just about to kill it God is the one

that's liable to say see that ram you can have it back what you are about to kill you can have it back but now you'll know that when you get it back it's me that gave it back to you and it's mine you're just getting a

loan of it I was recalling to someone today how that when I first came to this place in the summer season and I walked into the dining room I'd never been amongst Christians before I sat down in the dining room and somebody prayed the dining room door opened and in came the waitresses to serve the meal and the first waitress through the door it was just sunshine she was a small girl and she was from Greece but her entire face was the first female face I ever saw that just radiated sunshine and the joy of the Lord oh and I flipped I wouldn't eat in any other dining room the

rest of the week but then I knew I was only there for a week and going back to the military forces so I thought well what's the use of saying anything so I said nothing but I just said Lord it's yours so I went back to the unit later that year I came back here to be a student when I came through the door she was there and I had thought she was temporary summer staff and she was there oh boy did I do a flip so within three days I sat in the seat outside the lounge and I said I want to talk to you and she said what's about I said I saw you in the summer and you're still here I never thought I'd ever see you again and I think I'm in love with you and I think the Lord possibly could want us together so she says well let's pray about that so she bowed her head and she prayed father you've

heard what this man has said to me and it's a surprise to me and so I just lovingly commit to you the entire situation and leave you to bring to pass your will amen and I said amen I said now what do we do she says oh I don't know about you but I leave for Paris tomorrow to go through a bible college for three years you'll have plenty of time to find out so I really committed her to the Lord and let her go and I got on with life I got on with getting what I came here for the bible studies never messed around with any other girls or anything like that because I was just convinced that the Lord had it in hand and when school finished and I stayed on the staff I suddenly my eye caught a German girl and I thought oh isn't she nice but then I said to myself why start anything you're going to

America to go to college if it's of the Lord's will she'll be there at the end of the time why the panic I just put her on the altar went off to college didn't even bother over there get on with my ministry get on with life and just as I was finishing there due to come back I wrote to the German girl to find out how she was and she wrote back and said fine and that she was now engaged I said thank you father came back here and the very first week I was back you'll never guess who turned up from Paris having just finished her course that was the Greek girl we saw each other and talked and there was just nothing there she said bye and I said bye and I was completely at peace within a month she announced her engagement and then within a few months I announced mine and the amazing thing is

that on the 8th of September 1961 at 12 noon I married in that lounge and at 12 noon in Paris the Greek girl married and at 12 noon on the same day in Austria the German girl married you see he not only looks after you in your commitment to let God take the consequences he looks after the others also and I'll tell you something there are those of you here and you're messed up at the moment and get nothing at the moment of what God really wanted you to get here because you're carrying next month next year three years time today and your heart was never built to carry more than one day at a time why don't you just take all of that romantic stuff and just put it in the altar and get the knife out and say God you take the consequences but I'm going to kill this and unless you produce a ram

right on time as a substitute I'm just going to forget this and the minute you let go the obsessiveness and the possessiveness of what you think would be the best thing God had for you the best career the best wife the best gifts the best of everything the best ministry the best friends and everybody needs friends until you're prepared to drop them all in their altar and step back and just wait to see if God lets you have

them back you're going to get nowhere let them go I know the hardest lessons waiting just wait it's worth it and you'll find that he will never fail you and he'll not only look after you he'll look after the others and to me what happened to me and those girls that is just something you could never arrange you couldn't in a thousand years arrange that the three of us

would have married unknown to each other the same day in the same hour and you know as three couples were still in touch with each other all down those years we're still very good friends and we laugh at it now but we know we got the best that's why I'm always sorry for you men you're getting inferior stuff I got the best because I got what God wanted me to have not what I wanted to have he used to teach us the hard way but he's not asking us to go through something he never went through himself in Hebrews 5 and verse 7 we read this of Christ who in the days of his flesh when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death and was heard in that he feared though he were a son yet learned he obedience by the things which

he suffered and being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation unto them that obey him chapter 2 verse 9 but we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man for it became him for whom are all things and by whom are all things and bringing many sons to glory to make the captain of the salvation perfect through sufferings so even Jesus himself had to learn the art of obedience the art of doing what he had to do the art of saying what he had to say and being what he had to be in order that he would get the best and so he's not asking us to go through something that he himself has not gone through he's not asking us to suffer in a way that he doesn't know

anything about it it's only the enemy of your soul that can't understand the sympathy Jesus has for you in your pain and we all want to shout to God it's unfair it's unfair but Jesus knows how unfair it is he knows what he never was allowed to have never allowed to get and yet we think it's unfair if we don't get everything we want but he learned obedience by the things that he suffered that we might be here today so join the school and even if it takes 65 years learn the lessons the second illustration he uses in this section of what is faith more than a mental attitude it's an action of risk believing God will take the consequences and do well is by the use of the prostitute Rahab likewise also was not Rahab the harlot I love that I love that Rahab the harlot in Hebrews 11 she's known

as Rahab the harlot every time you read of her she's known as Rahab the harlot heaven heaven heaven never calls her anything else other than the prostitute because heaven's quite used to accepting people as they are and she was neither ashamed of it nor heaven ashamed of it because both of them knew it was the truth and she didn't spend her life trying to hide the fact and yet she was picked up as a prostitute and placed in the royal line from Adam to Christ and Rahab was connected to Boaz who was connected to Ruth another gentile through whom came Jesse through whom came David through whom came Jesus but she knew what she was and have you ever noticed that when you know what you are and you do know what you are very often when I say to people you know ask them a question they say to me I

don't know and that's not what they're saying what is the saying in effect is I'm not telling you and have you ever noticed that you do know what you are people often say to me how do you know if I'm pretending and when I'm real don't even ask me that you know perfectly well if somebody comes up and asks you a question you know exactly what your immediate real spirit personal response would have been get lost but then you always take a fraction of a second to recompute the answer and say bless you yes and you know perfectly well you were lying do you like so and so oh yes bless them you know perfectly well you hated

them and you know what you are but so often people can't understand why heaven doesn't seem to give us any energy to keep the lid on what we are and the answer is heaven is

not interested in giving you divine energy to hide heaven gives you the divine energy to be who you are to be acceptable to heaven as well as man by who you are know what you are know how to handle it and she was always known as the prostitute and it's a very interesting you know a little story likewise also was not rehab the harlot justified by works when she received the messengers and had sent them out another way for as the body without spirit is dead so faith without works is dead also and you'll find that story in the book of judges and you remember mooses sent in 12 spies and 10 came back with a bad report well joshua was a bit more sensible he sent in two spies he thought he would at least have a 50 50 chance getting them there this time and uh so he sent the spies and they went to

jericho and if you look in chapter 2 of joshua and joshua the son of nun sent out of shittim two men to spy secretly say go view the land even jericho and they went and came into a harlot's house i like that name rehab under the strictures of the legalistic mosaic rules and regulations of morality you know the best way to describe the camp and mooses and marion and the law and it's it's command of our people and it's legalism and and the strictures are being demanded to be holy it's you know just like your church and um and sometimes your family and the legislation and the severity of it is so much that you'll notice that the minute they got over the hill away from the camp the first thing those two guys did didn't spy anything secretly they went straight to a prostitute's house you know

what i mean you get on the plane and you say bye mom bye dad i'm going to bible school and as you turn to walk in the cabin wow up comes the new phase when i get away just think mom and dad you old fools you're letting me go nine thousand miles away amen tonight nine thousand miles away from the church and the people that know all about me oh life here i come and even since getting to catenary you've done things you would never have done back home oh my if they knew today what you've done since you came to bible school you'd be crucified dead and buried with no hope of a resurrection that's the severity of the judgmentalism of the systems but isn't it amazing we get away and oh boy the first thing we do is try everything we've never tried before because they'll never find out and they went

straight to the prostitute's house and stayed there and i was told the king of jericho saying behold there came men in here tonight to search out the land and the king of jericho sent to rehab even he knew him saying bring forth the men that are come to thee which are entered into thine house for they become to search out all the country and the woman took the two men and hid them and said thus there came men unto me but i didn't know where they were and it came to pass about the time of shutting the gate when it was dark that the men went out neither whether the men went i don't know chase them quickly you'll overtake them but she had brought them up to the roof of the house and hid them with the stalks of flax which she had laid in order upon the roof and the men pursued after them the

way to jordan and to the fords and as soon as they were pursued after them were gone out she shut the gate and before they were laid down she came up unto them in the roof and she said to the men i know and she's a pagan prostitute in jericho i know that the lord has given you the land hey you've been talking to her while i was having coffee no well who's witness to her how come she knows the lord i mean we're god's people over there and when mooses in the encampment and with joshua in the encampment we're the rebels and yet we're the ones that believe in god who told her about god i mean i thought these people were pagan and knew nothing about god and we are the people of god coming to take over this land and she's talking about the law and you say he's giving your grandma's not very good

dear he hasn't given us the land we're coming for it but he hasn't given it to us given means we've already got it even she could see that even a pagan prostitute could see that what god promised to abraham god would keep and that your terror has fallen upon us what do you mean our terror has fallen upon you we haven't come near you for 40 years yeah we know and all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you faint because of us hey they're fainting because of us how could they faint because of us because this land's too big to conquer the giants are too big we're like grasshoppers compared to all the problems we face to conquer and you're fainting because of us for we have heard how the lord dried up the water of the red sea for you when you came out of egypt yeah but that was 40

years ago yeah no and that's when we fainted what do you mean for 40 years the people we feared the land of victory we've feared to come in and possess that god said he gave that for 40 years you've been living in terror of us coming and taking over while we feared that you were too big to conquer and that for 40 years we've been living in self-imposed poverty in the face of a non-existent enemy and what you did to the two kings of the amorites that were in the other side jordan zion and all whom you utterly destroyed and as soon as we had these things 40 years ago our hearts did melt neither did there remain any more courage in any man because of you for the lord your god he is god in heaven above and on earth beneath wow what a mouthful of testimony from a prostitute she believes in god

almighty maker of heaven and earth she believes that god is a deliverer god is a savior that god and his people are the people and for 40 years in her heart she's exercised faith that that's his people that's the god i want to worship yes he did quite a good job and it's amazing how it's people like prostitutes that are the first to recognize the value of a relationship to god even in your new testament you're only into the fourth chapter of john and he's talking to a prostitute at a well who's waiting for the christ to come you see people who really know sin at his depth are ready to believe in a savior and so she makes an agreement with them she says now therefore i pray you swear unto me by the lord that since i have showed you kindness you will also show kindness unto my father's

house and give me a true token and that you will save alive my father my mother my brothers my sisters and all that they have and deliver our life from death when the man answered her our life for you as if you utter not this our business and it shall be when the lord has given us the land that we will deal kindly and truly with you then she let them down by a cord through the window for our house was on the town wall and she dwelt upon the wall and she said unto them get you to the mountains lest the pursuers meet you and hide yourself three days until the pursuers be returned and afterwards you may go your way and the men said unto we will be blameless of this act thine oath which thou has made us swear behold when we come into the land you shall bind this line of scarlet thread in the

which thou didst let us down by and thou shalt bring thy father and my mother and my brethren and all thy father's household home to you and it shall be that whoever shall go out of the doors of your house into the street his blood will be upon his head and we will be guiltless and whoever shall be with you in the house his blood shall be upon our head if our hand be upon them and if thou utter this our business then we'll be quit of thine oath which thou has made us to swear and she said according unto your words so be it and she sent them away and they departed and she took this scarlet line and put it in a cupboard and then she called for the family and said let me tell me my tell you my theology i believe that god's going to conquer the land and in the cupboard there in a box in the

top shelf i've got a scarlet line and you know if we tie it in the window and hang it out the window when they come in they'll save us we'll remember this gospel every morning but we won't bother tying the rope

in the window because that's action and it looks rather silly to have a scarlet rope dangling out your window hey if she just heard the message believed the message but stuck the rope in a cupboard she would never have lived faith and action hears the message believes the message takes the rope ties it to the window and flings it out and each member of our family had to act by the similar faith that when the enemy comes we've got to stay in this house with the door shut or we die and you have your freedom of choice my brothers and sisters to walk out the door and die or stay in and

live and they came and conquered the land and they ended up taking her out of there and bringing her to safety in verse 22 of joshua six but joshua had said unto the two men that spied out the country go into the harlot's house bring out fence the woman and all that she had as you swear unto her and the young men that were spies went in and brought out rehab her father her mother her brethren and all that she had and they brought all her kindred and left them outside the camp verse 25 and joshua saved rehab the harlot alive and her father's household and all that she had and she dwells in even unto this day even unto this day matthew's gospel chapter one matthew one the book of the generation of jesus christ the son of david the son of abraham abraham begat isaac and isaac begat jacob and

jacob begat judas and his brethren judas begat faris and zara of fama and faris begat israel and israel begat aram and aram begat aminadab and aminadab begat nason and nason begat salmon and salmon begat boaz of rehab he begat boaz of rehab and boaz begat obed of ruth and obed begat jesse and jesse begat david the king and david the king begat solomon yes in the royal line a prostitute you'd be amazed at the number of the people in life that you would reject from your christian community you would reject from your fellowship you would throw out as being untouchables and above all even if they got converted they are second-rate people they should only be sitting in the pew somewhere at the back of the church and they should never be in the ministry never be in leadership never be in a

position of being a blessing to anybody because really you can't trust a person like that in the ministry because they are the dregs of society well i'll tell you this you'd be amazed at the pastors that are the best pastors because they have been the worst sinners and the reason for that is when somebody walks into their study and says pastor i sinned last night the pastor doesn't slap them in the face he cries with them because he remembers when he used to do it himself and these people that are picked up from the dregs and fitted into the royal line of service they have no self-righteousness because they know they're trash and so they can sympathize with the people that hurt because that's where god found them but god is the only one that can pick up rubbish and fit it for service and

fit it for service and some of you disqualify yourself because you just don't think you're good enough yet to be chosen by god for service hey the problem is you're not bad enough yet oh you are but you're not convinced you still think there's something good in you that if you just fan it to life oh get lost just come and humbly acknowledge what the word says about you is true there is no good thing in me now god get on with making me a blessing to people just as you did with rehab just as you did with the woman at the well use me in spite of what i am irrespective of how good or bad you are you act by faith and leave god with the consequences and take the risk and the concluding verse for as the body without the spirit is dead so faith without works is dead also hearing it all and doing

nothing about it is dead and so there has to be this man and wife union between what you hear and what you do what you hear and what you do hammer it in every day father i'm hearing teach me to do it father i'm hearing teach me to do it and it's in the doing of it that you'll be blessed so what is faith it's a relationship between what you believe what you do and you step out and take the risk and leave god with

the consequences and that attitude will fit you to have victory over every conceivable onslaught or attack to your experience that you're ever going to meet now if you turn back to james chapter one and i'm never going to redefine faith again i'm never going to talk about what it is again i'm going to presume that what we look at from now on you will know that we're facing each

issue that comes up on the basis of taking a risk and leaving god with the consequences of the outcome so james says in chapter one verse two my brethren count it all joy be aggravatingly happy when you fall into all sorts of outward temptations and trials now these these temptations in the first 11 verses are the outward circumstantial day-to-day inconvenient testings and trials of life we're not talking here about sin this isn't necessarily the talk about attacks of sin on a life this is talking about just the hardship of living the outward testings and trials that come to us daily and these things will hurt you but they won't kill you and he says and in the face of all of that mess that hits you every day the letter you expected today to arrive and it didn't counted all joy just be

hilariously happy it means you've something to look forward to if you're alive tomorrow it might come tomorrow it might not but if i should have been miserable today just because i wouldn't get today what i want today don't put god in a limit there's a very good reason why you don't get it today he enjoys keeping his surprises and you'll just learn to do today what you're supposed to do instead of wanting to know what and why and when i remember the kids when they were younger and grace and i said look let's take them to this there was a big circus coming to lancaster i said let's take them to the circus they've never seen one and she says that's a good idea so i remember we turned around and said to the girls in the morning now come on girls get your piano practice done and get your

homework done and get it all out of the way just so that you'll be free the rest of the weekend and won't have to sit down and do any of that oh we're playing with our dolls you know we're doing our wendy house or something like that oh come on girls get the homework done and we knew why we wanted them just to do what they were told we had a surprise in store for them but you know they never did it and they never did got the circus they never knew what they missed they never knew what they missed because they just didn't do what they were told and we didn't feel obligated to explain the future promise as an inducement to obey no there's no faith in that and i'll tell you you if i gave each of you a piece of paper this morning and said write down on it everything you think god could give

you in the next 30 years of your life as promises and surprises of his goodness and his tokens of love to you i'll tell you when you're finished letting your imagination go wild you can tear it up because it'll be nothing like it it'll be much better much better you see we are beggars we want to open the box take the money open the box you know and we want to see everything is in the box before we decide whether to take the money or open the box and god says sorry you take the risk trust me trust me and you see the reason we have difficulty in the face of all sorts of different outward testings and trials is because we are wonderful designers of what we anticipate should be a happy salvation since i've had my quiet time this morning since i have prayed and even since yesterday i have

washed and i have showered i've done my laundry and my ironing i am spiritually paid up god no debts therefore this should be one of the greatest days i'm going to have in my christian experience so i'm going to get through today and everybody's going to smile at me i'm going to have a great time with all my roommates i'm going to have a nice fellowship with the staff i'm going to have nothing adverse that's going to happen to me today and i should get more letters today than i got yesterday and oh god everything's going to be good today and you step out of your bed and the kitchen sink gets flung at you somebody next

to you snaps at you and you step out and you suddenly bump into me to the corner and say oh you just got up have you then you go around the corner and bump into somebody in

the kitchen that might be in a mad mood that snaps at you and you find that before an hour's gone oh god i'm being persecuted everything's going wrong there must be some secret sin you're punishing me for you know some of us have an awful picture of god we seem to think he's standing behind a door with a big stick with a rusty nail in the end of it just waiting for us you know he shows us two doors oh what's the will of god shall i take the left door or the right door you know why we're afraid to take the risk we're convinced he's standing behind the wrong door the big stick and he's just waiting and we come to ah gotcha i knew you would i knew you would take that and you really believe that he's just waiting for you to do the wrong thing so that he's going to get you get you oh he's not

like that at all you've got it wrong and the minute you're having a a pressure the minute you're having something come in that you didn't plan for today you jump to the conclusion god's against me either that or it's the devil's against me i'll tell you there's such a host of angels camped around this bible school he doesn't even get up the drive he hates this place because god guards it there are more that be with us than be with them you just don't see them so you don't believe it and every inconvenient little pressure that comes up you blame him for it and he enjoys taking the credit because he knows he can't get through the gate he's nothing to do with it most of the chaos most of the struggle most of the pain is because we are not prepared to allow god to make adjustments and train

us and develop us and discipline us and teach us and train us and so everything that's inconvenient that brings up a little emotion brings up a a bad feeling brings up a hurt it's either god's against me because of a secret sin or the devil's against me and james says oh for goodness sake go and laugh just rejoice when you fall into all these different trials why knowing this keeping this piece of knowledge to the forefront of your mind that the trying of your faith worketh patience and if you look up patience in webster's dictionary you'll find it says to endure with composure that means to calmly put up with it over a long period of time yes it's like putting your head in a vice and tightening it up and you have to endure with composure boy he says you only learn patience have some good

things to help you and they'll train you to wait be patient trust me know that i am doing everything well and nothing wrong but let patience have a perfect work that you may be perfect and entire wanting nothing if any of you lack wisdom let him ask of god that gives to all men liberally and upbraideth not and it shall be given him but let him ask in faith nothing wavering for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and tossed let not that man think he shall receive anything of the lord because a double-minded man is totally unstable in all his ways and don't pull out that fifth verse and use it the morning you're doing your test on introduction oh god give me wisdom which means i played volleyball yesterday just hit the town with my friends and didn't bother

studying so i want the miracle of wisdom open my head up and put it all in there i've done nothing you give it all sorry that's not what it's talking about it's not asking or giving you the right to demand an increase of the intelligence the wisdom that you are entitled to ask god for here is an understanding a wise understanding of why you're going through what you're going through that wisdom there has to be directly connected with your problem with your difficulty with your pressure zone with whatever it is that's pulling you down and making you feel you're not a good christian in the light of everything that's going against you everything looks like life isn't a mess would you please just turn to god and receive from him a gift of wisdom to be patient and wait and see what it's all

about because he does everything well and he'll give it to you he won't scream and shout at you he won't upbraid you and it'll be given you but you have to ask in faith no two-facedness no wavering because he that wavereth is creating big waves and storms to crash in upon yourself and to be quite honest most of the problems we have in our daily life most of those thundering crashing waves that billow in and nearly drown us are of our own making because we're so busy thrashing around in the water in a panic instead of just letting it become a calm see the lord hold you up yes it's not the devil it's not god and it's not even the people around you there are people here who every morning commit themselves to god for whatever he has in mind and you know what he uses them for to bump into you

to step on your toes to upset you so that he uses each other to sharpen each other up smooth each other out and help each other i've seen people in years past in this place and honestly nobody loved them they were that everybody went around the corner to avoid them and yet when the school was finished and years passed and they wrote back to me they always remembered that that person more than they remember any other was a person that god used to teach them something yes very often it's the person that's in the bed next to you that is your biggest irritant that's there to be your biggest blessing you came saying god i want to be like you i want to be holy patient long-suffering good meek gentle kind you say well i better give you something to work on hey you're awkward enough be next to

that person get to work on them upset them bump into them and see what you can do to give them a chance to laugh in the face of their difficulties to hug their problems and learn to live hey it really is exciting living if you let god be god and you take the risk let's have a word of prayer father we really really want more than anything else that each of us will learn to step out and be men and women instead of babies use these hard lessons from this practical hard instrument in the toolbox of heaven called james oh i'm glad god that not all the instruments are for polishing and smoothing for putting on a sparkle i'm glad you've got some of the instruments in your toolbox to fashion us that are rasps chisels hammer god give us that wisdom to let you use the finest and sharpest of tools

on our lives as long as the outcome is we are being fashioned into his likeness and for thy name's sake amen

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