

Hindrances to Faith

by G.D. Watson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of overcoming hindrances to faith, such as looking at surroundings instead of fixed promises of Jesus, receiving honor of men, and a lack of personal consecration to God.

Scripture: Psalm 37:3, Proverbs 3:5, Matthew 14:31, Mark 9:24, John 5:44, John 7:48, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 2:5, Hebrews 12:1

Topics: "Faith Development", "Spiritual Hindrances"

Description

G.D. Watson preaches on the importance of faith and the hindrances that can prevent us from fully trusting in God. He delves into the story of Peter walking on water and how his doubt stemmed from looking at his surroundings instead of focusing on Jesus' promises. Watson also highlights how seeking honor from men and the unbelief of those in positions of authority can hinder our faith. Additionally, he emphasizes the necessity of personal consecration to God as a key factor in strengthening our faith.

Transcript

"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Matt. 14:31.

The pivot word in this question is "wherefore." Doubt should have a sufficient reason for it. Neither Peter nor any other has been able to find a satisfactory answer to this all-piercing "wherefore" of Jesus. The implication is, God could allow us to doubt if we had sufficient reason for it. The unbelief of the human heart startled and amazed Jesus at every turn. It was like the air on the frozen polar sea, that pierced His sensitive nature on every side. God made man to believe, organized his whole being on that line, launched him out in such a sea of relationships with nature and the supernatural, with his fellows, with the past and future, that he could not exist, could never plant nor reap, never give nor receive testimony, in fact, never do anything of import, except by the exercise of a measure of faith. Doubt is no part of our original constitution, and can never be explained, except on the basis of a terrible calamity in our moral nature. God has never deceived human beings, never played fast and loose with the hopes and fears of His creatures. The greatest reason for Peter's doubt was the remaining carnality in his soul, which prompted an uneasy fear in such a sudden emergency of danger. But while carnality is the root of unbelief, there are some other considerations which will enable us to explain it.

I. One hindrance to faith is that of looking at our surroundings, and not to the fixed promises of Jesus. In the incident of the text we have an example of the power of our surroundings versus the power of the promise of God. There were two things upon which Peter might fix his attention; one was the word "

come," uttered by the Saviour, the other was the waves of water. Peter was not destitute of faith, for he asked the Lord to bid him walk on the sea. He felt an inward inclination to go out to Christ on the water, but wanted the authority of the Master's word like a plank under his feet to authorize him in doing so; and that sublime inward prompting which was evidently of God, never broke down until his eyes were diverted to take in the danger of the waves. Here we have the conflict in every life, that between the prompting of the inward Spirit to trust God without reserve, and that of the senses which survey the instability of outward things. It is a battle between the invisible truth and the visible shadow, the stability of the rock and the motion of the sea. The appearance of the waves and the significance of the word "come," were to human reason directly the opposite of each other. Through all ages, the waves had never failed to drown, and on the other hand, God's word had never deceived any one; so here were two invariable things that met' as opposites; the only question was, which of these invariables was the stronger; which law should have the precedence, that of gravity or that of the word of God? The word "come," from the lips of Jesus, had more authority than all the rolling seas, for it was the power of His simple word that set every sea in motion. The water had the appearance of power, but in the word of Jesus was the real power. Most of our life is illustrated by this incident. We live on a rolling sea, we are repeatedly shut up to the alternative of trusting either the appearance of things or the invisible truth of God. If we listen to the blowing of the wind, it will shut out the omnipotent voice of Jesus. If we look at the white-capped waves of circumstance, we shall not see the outstretched hand of Jesus. Each of us must come for himself to a fixed, irreversible decision, as to which is reality, the wave or the word, and fasten ourselves to unchangeable truth.

II. Another hindrance to faith is that of receiving honor of men. Jesus asks us, "How can ye believe which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" It is not seeking honor of men, but receiving it; that is, opening our heart to the cordial reception of human praise, or flattery, or fame, that utterly contravenes the repose of the soul in God. Receiving honor from men is a great virtue in the eyes of the world, but this is an instance in which things highly esteemed among men are an abomination to the Lord. It may not be seen by all at the first glance, how receiving worldly honor can prevent true faith in God, but a little reflection will show us that receiving worldly honor is an insidious, subtle and malignant form of idolatry. It has in it the element of man-fearing as well as man-worship. It is a subtle way of putting self in the place of God. It implies that our chief happiness comes from man, which is an ignoring of the true fountain of joy, and the hewing out of broken cisterns. This deference to the creature, this fearing or cringing to man, this love of place and distinction for self-severs the soul from Christ, diverts its trust to some other object and destroys true faith.

III. Another hindrance to faith is the low state of faith in those around us, and especially the unbelief of those occupying high places in the visible Church. In the days of Jesus it was asked, "Have any of the rulers believed on Him?" The great mass of nominal Christians are in such an infantile state of grace, as to lack the independence to launch out boldly and alone, and trust God radically and bravely, in spite of the coldness and half-heartedness of those in religious authority over them. How often it occurs in every age, that those who are set to guide the affairs of the Church, and its education and economy, have no warm, living faith in God, beyond a gross rationalistic faith in their ecclesiastical system, who, like Bonaparte, put their faith on the side of the heaviest battalions. It is a historical fact that faith kindles faith, fervent holiness inspires others to pursue it. Saints multiply in great revivals of religion. In the world of letters, great authors rise in clusters, the same thing is true of inventors, and there have been epochs in Church history where saints rose in constellations. We need to be incited by those of faith, but let us beware of toning down our trust to the level of the half believers and doubters that swarm around us.

IV. Perhaps the greatest hindrance to faith is a lack of personal consecration to God. We are taught this in the twelfth of Hebrews, where, in order to look to Jesus as the "beginner and perfecter of our faith," we are to lay aside every weight and the easily besetting sin. Just as long as there is defect in our consecration, there will be corresponding defects in our faith. We can trust God only to the extent that we are given up to Him. Your risk in a bank is up to the limit of your deposit. Consecration puts us right on believing ground. Consecration is cutting the shore lines, and faith is launching out into the deep. So the real question is, not why should I trust all to God, but why should I doubt anything of Him? Have His promises ever broken down? has He ever disappointed or deceived us? True, He often tests our faith, but at the last moment, in the worst extremity, His train of infinite mercy and provision has arrived on schedule time, and the finale in many a psalm of life has been, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/gd-watson/hindrances-to-faith/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net