

# Only Believe

by Jim Cymbala

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*Faith is the key to receiving God's blessings, trusting in his promises, and living a victorious life.*

**Duration:** 32:12

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:1, Numbers 23:19, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:38, Philippians 4:19, Hebrews 11:6

**Topics:** "Believe"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of walking with someone and encountering a group of tough guys. The speaker's companion becomes afraid, but when the speaker takes her hand, she relaxes and has faith in him to protect her. The speaker then relates this to the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, emphasizing that we cannot change or overcome challenges on our own. The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding primary matters of faith and relying on the power of the Holy Spirit for growth and victory in our Christian walk.

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## Transcript

I started a series a number of weeks ago on vital truth. And the point of this series is to take the most important things and go over them because they're the keys to growth, blessing, understanding Christianity. It's not secondary matters.

In fact, Christians disagree on secondary matters. I have 15 commentaries on the book of Revelation up in my study. Not all Christians see that the same way.

Some people baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Others use the Acts formula and baptize in Jesus' name. They don't agree on that.

Unfortunately, sometimes they fuss over that. So there's secondary matters and then there's primary matters, which affect your life. And if you miss them, you live in constant weakness and frustration and you love the Lord, but you just can't quite get it together.

And instead of living victoriously and seeing our prayers answered and being a blessing to others, we kind of just exist as Christians. We're kind of life, continually on life support. Always wanting someone to help us, pray for us.

When the Bible indicates we should grow up and be mature so that we can be a blessing to other people. Amen? Amen. We've been talking about two sentences that meant so much to me when I wrote them in

my Bible a long time ago.

That all merit is in the Son. Say that with me. All merit is in the Son.

And all power is from the Spirit. Let's say that. All power is from the Spirit.

Those two sentences encompass a lot of verses in the New Testament. All merit is in the Son. In other words, the only acceptance we will ever have by God, the only entry into heaven, the only way we are justified and acceptable to God is to have the merit not of our own that comes from the law, obeying laws and being good enough for God to say, okay, I'm gonna bless you or okay, come to heaven.

And this is so important because 82% of all America believes you'll go to heaven if you live a good life. That is not true whatsoever in the Scripture because what's a good life? Who defines that? Good means what, better than your neighbor? Better than this one or that one? No. All merit is in the Son that the righteousness of Jesus Christ that he established while he was on the earth as the perfect Son of Man, Son of God, that righteousness is given to us as Christians as a gift.

He takes our sins. How many are so happy for that? Say amen. He has taken our sins and the trade is we get his righteousness.

So now there's all kinds of verses that we can come boldly to God. We're gonna enter into heaven not because of our life and how we lived but because we have the righteousness of Jesus Christ ascribed to us. It goes all the way back to Abraham.

One of the most important verses in the Old Testament. Listen to it, everyone. And Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness.

Listen, Abraham believed God and that belief, that faith was counted to him as if he was righteous, which he wasn't. He made mistakes. We're talking about perfect righteousness, which is the only kind of perfect God will accept.

So faith now gives us the righteousness of Christ so that we can come before God. Satan will battle you on this truth all day, every day, twice on Sunday because he wants us looking inward, not looking to Jesus. He wants us looking inward and making vows and promises.

I'm gonna be better. I know I messed up. Should never talk that way to my wife but I'm gonna be better tomorrow.

Should have never said that. Shouldn't have gossiped. Shouldn't have done that.

Shouldn't have looked at that and now I'm not gonna do better and if I do better, then God will say come on in and it doesn't work that way. You have to get to the end of your rope and give up and then accept the gift of God's salvation. How many have accepted that gift? Say amen.

Lift up one hand and say amen. We've accepted that. Now all power is from the spirit.

Now that we're justified and our past sins have been forgiven, how do you live for God? Someone who's up to no good and who doesn't understand the grace of God can say oh, this is cool. I'll get the righteousness and mercy and forgiveness of God through Jesus and then I'll go back and live like I used to and I'll keep sinning the very sins that put him on the cross. I won't live to please him.

I'll still live to please myself. Anyone who thinks that way, of course, does have no relationship with Christ. The Bible teaches us that when we put our faith in Christ, we want to live to please him and make him happy because of all that he's done for us.

We love him because he first loved us. But where are you gonna get the power? Where are you gonna get the juice? If you're strung out on OxyContin, how do you get the power to say no, not doing that? I just saw this horrible statistic. I don't even want to say it, but I will.

Just saw it yesterday. More than the combined audiences of the NFL, Major League Baseball, and the NBA, more than all of those audiences who watch those games are people who every week view pornography in our country. The combined audiences of all of that.

How do you say no to something that you've given into month after month, year after year? Where do you get the power to break that? The Bible teaches us that all power comes from the spirit. Just like you can't earn salvation, you can't live and be like Christ on your own. On your own merit, you can't get into heaven.

On your own power, you can't change. As the Bible says, can a leopard change his spots? You can't. It takes another power.

It takes the power of the Holy Spirit. And we live in the dispensation of the Spirit as we've learned. And he is God's operative here on planet Earth.

Christ is at the right hand of the Father. And that power is available to all of us. All of us.

All of us can have the power of God in our lives. He lives inside of us. Every Christian has the Holy Spirit living inside of them, or they're not a Christian.

Going to church doesn't make you a Christian. So I'm reviewing here, he lives inside all of us. But now he wants to control us.

We have to learn the secret of releasing, seeing his power released. And now that brings us to this number seven, most important vital truth. It could be number one.

Some would put it number one. They're celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. This year started in 1517.

It's now 2017 when Martin Luther in Germany began his protest against the Roman Catholic system. And he would put this when I'm gonna talk about number one, numero uno. He would say, no, you gotta put this first.

I'm not putting it in some special order. I just wanna share it with you week by week, vital truth. Let's look now.

How does a person get saved? How do you get your sins forgiven? And how do you get the righteousness of Christ put on you like a jacket so that you can now enter into God's presence? Number two, how do you see God's power work in your life? A lot of people have accepted Christ as their savior, but they don't see the change that they wanna see. They wanna be more like Christ. Anybody here like me wanna be more like Christ? Say amen.

But how do you get there? It's the same principle for both. And that is faith. The same faith that receives salvation as a gift, there's no other channel to go on.

That's the same faith that receives everything from God. Notice what it says here in Romans chapter one. For I am not ashamed of the gospel because the apostle Paul said, it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.

First to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed. Notice, not my righteousness, the righteousness of God is revealed.

A righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written, the righteous will live by faith. Let's say that last sentence. The righteous will live, not just get saved by faith, live by faith, every day by faith, everything from God by faith, every blessing by faith, all power by faith, all mercy by faith, every answered prayer by faith, every victory by faith, by faith that just shall live by faith.

When I grew up, I finally, as a kid in church, it finally dawned on me eventually that you just put your trust in Jesus. You come like a simple child. You confess your sins.

You give up on yourself. And by faith, you receive his pardon, his peace. You know something's happened in your life, but then because as Luther said, we're all legalists by nature, we're all type A spiritual personalities, we receive the gift and now we're gonna go work.

Now we're gonna show God that we mean business. We do appreciate what you've done. Just wait and see what I do for you now.

I'm gonna live for you. And of course, we come stumbling down time after time because self-effort is not what God is looking for. The same faith that received salvation is the same faith that has to receive the power and the blessing and the victory.

Everything has to come by faith. Faith from the beginning to the end is like the major theme of this Bible. God honors faith, Hebrews 11, verse six.

What does it say? And without faith, it's impossible to please God because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him, seek his help, seek his blessing by faith. When you read the Bible and you hear Paul writing to a church, he says Colossians where Paul had never been and Colossae, Paul writes and says, thank God every time I think of you and I pray for you because I've heard about your faith and your love for all the people. Heard about your faith.

We never talk about that way about a church. How do we talk about a church? Oh, they got a big building. Oh, they got a big attendance.

Oh, they got a lot of money. Oh, they do this, they do that. They got a pastor who's an orator or whatever but you never hear people report and say, what a church, what faith they have.

You just don't hear that. That's where everything is for God for without faith, it's impossible to please God. God's not looking for you to try.

He's God, he has all power. What are you gonna try to do? What could you do to impress him? What he's looking for is faith, that clinging to him. Well, let's look and analyze here, what is faith? Faith is trusting God.

Faith is clinging to his promise. Faith is holding on to God. In a general way, it's what happened with my first granddaughter when she was born into this world and my wife and I helped raise her because of the circumstances with my oldest girl.

Her name was Susan Joy. She was the cutest little thing and she was like a little stick of a girl. One day, I was living in Queens then, we were walking on Northern Boulevard and she was walking with me, a little stick figure.

She had to be about, let me see, about five or six. And she was walking with her papa. We were just walking together and she was apart from me, but we were just walking.

And then suddenly from around the corner came four or five wannabe tough guys from the neighborhood with their pants all hanging off their rear end and all cursing and shouting and shoving and low. No, come on, let's do it now and all that stuff. And shoving and then, come on, come on, come on, what do you got, what do you got, and all that.

So I just watched and we were 16, 17, 18 years old and Susie's walking with me. But one of them shoved the other one off the sidewalk and immediately when she saw that threat, she moved a little closer to me and I could feel her body just rigid. She was afraid, she was afraid.

And now we're getting closer because they're walking towards us, this is all happening. And now she's really rubbing close to me and suddenly I see her little hand go out and she's searching for my hand. And I took her hand and the minute I took her hand, her whole body relaxed, everything was good.

She had faith in her papa. He could take them all out. No, no, I'm not kidding, I do my Bruce Lee thing, I get down and, what the, that's faith.

How many get that, say amen. When you put your hand, then I met the master and everything's changed. How many have had everything change in your life? Because as long as you hold his hand, then you know, hmm, he's gonna work things out.

Let's get a more specific before I close definition of faith and leave you with one thought. Look at Romans, a very important verse. Romans chapter 10, consequently, faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word about Christ. Or as we, most of us have memorized it, how? So faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word and it means the word of Christ. The gospel, the good news, the promises.

So this trust, this confidence in God, this faith that receives the power of God into your life and it works. This faith that gets answers to prayer. Remember, Jesus said when you pray, you have to believe, you have to have faith.

James says, does anyone lack wisdom? Let them ask and God will give it to them. But when I'm asked, they can't be going back and forth. They gotta have faith.

Or else they'll receive nothing from the Lord. How many people receive nothing from the Lord that they could because they lack faith? Jesus laid it down as a principle. According to your faith, so be it unto you.

Great faith, great blessings. Little faith, little blessings. Hardly any faith, hardly any blessings.

I didn't make that up and it's not unloving, it's just the way God operates. He loves those who trust him, who have faith. There's nothing you can do for him, but he says if you'll reach out and believe my promises, that means more to me than anything.

Brothers and sisters, never try to do, this is a big mistake for a lot of us, don't try to do or be before you receive by faith. Because if God is almighty and has all power, what power could I have unless he gives it to me? Is he the almighty one? Does he have all might, all power? Well then how in the world could I have any power unless I get from him the power I need and that power can only be received by faith or blessing or answer to prayer or a wayward daughter or anything. So how does this work? Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word.

This faith that receives everything from God, let's start it from the beginning and then just end it here. How does a person get saved? They read or they hear the word of God about Christ. They hear the promise, whoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved.

They believe that. Repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and your sins will be blotted out. They believe that.

Another person, listen, it's mysterious. Another person sitting in the same meeting says, I don't get it, but you got it. And then your life changes.

God begins to work and do as he promised, why? When you believe, you see the completion of what God promised to do. It's like the Bible tells us in the book of Luke when it speaks about Mary. Mary said, I believe that everything God said to me will come to pass.

She had faith in the promise. The apostle Paul was on a ship in the middle of a storm and they were ready to just give up hope and he said, men, don't give up. Last night, an angel of the Lord appeared to me and told me that we're gonna survive this and I believe that what he said will come to pass.

Faith always is associated with a promise from God's word. Listen, faith, the kind of faith that receives from God always has its genesis from the word of God. I am the word.

It all begins with the word of God. Show me someone who hardly reads their Bible, I'll show you someone who has very little faith. Show me someone who reads and meditates and claims the promises of God, I'll show you someone with a lot of faith.

Show me someone wasting their time texting the universe and just all busy with all their machines and everything, I'll show you somebody who spiritually probably doesn't have a whole lot from God. Show me another person who, listen, as I close, diligently, daily, goes to God and says, listen, you're not a man that you should lie. I am gonna read your promises and find out what you said you would do.

Listen, if Pastor Burgos says to me, Pastor Cymbala, what a blessing. Somebody came in the lobby and handed me an envelope and it was \$5,000 in cash for the church. I gave it to the finance department.

Should I believe that or not? I know Pastor Burgos. If somebody just off the street said that, I wouldn't be sure. Pastor Burgos said it, I could take it to the bank.

I will take it to the bank, in fact. How many believe God is trustworthy? Lift your hand up. How many believe if he promises something, he will perform it, right? Now we're getting into faith now.

Now we're getting into faith. Notice, the Holy Spirit, as we meditate on God's word. Please, brothers and sisters, don't make my life a failure.

Please don't. Please read your Bible every day. What good am I a minister? What good is it coming here and watching the choir sway if you don't get into your word every day? Don't listen to me unless I'm speaking from God's word.

It's God's word that has power. He'll create faith in your heart. Your life will change.

How many people do I counsel and they're shriveling up spiritually because they're never in their word? They don't have faith because faith comes by hearing, whether it's spoken or whether you read it. Faith is born from God's word, his promise. Like we have faith that God created the whole world and the universe out of nothing.

How do we know that? Were we there? No, we were not there. But how many know what happened by faith? God is not a man, he should lie. Brothers and sisters, we gotta find out what he said he would do for us.

We gotta get his promises. We believed at first the person who puts their trust in him will have their sins washed away. We believed that and look what happened.

But now how about all the other things he said? Here's one in Philippians. My God will supply all of your needs. Now think about that.

Don't read it fast, think about it. What do you need? He didn't say what you want, he said what you need. What do you need? Meditate on that.

My God will supply for his children everything they need. So why am I biting my nails? Why am I worried? Why am I filled with anxiety? What, is God a liar? God's not gonna come through? How many believe he will supply all of our needs, right? Somehow in there as you meditate, the Holy Spirit makes the word alive to you. How many have read the Bible and you've read a passage over and over and then you read it one day and boom, it comes alive.

Raise your hand if that's ever happened to you. See, now faith is coming. The Holy Spirit is taking God's word and he's making it alive.

And now you have faith, he's gonna do that. Bringing my daughter back and he did. He's gonna bring her back.

How do you know? What's the proof? She'd gotten worse. I know. God gave me a promise one day.

I know it's gonna happen. I was talking to the staff about a man, had an impression on my life, even though I was just a child, a real man of God. No show time, just a true man of God.

Well anyway, years and years later, I never really spoke to him, he died. I was just a seven year old when I heard him. His son, I met his son in the Philippines.

He looked exactly like his father. Brother Goss, Howard Goss. Early pioneer in what you would call the Pentecostal movement.

And the father, and I met the son. And of course he was now the age almost of his dad when I saw his dad. So I said to him, tell me about your dad because I saw him speak one time when I was seven and something dawned on me that this was not just, you know, your preachers yelling, carrying on with the microphone and all the tricks that a speaker can use on people.

He was a true man of God, he spoke from his heart. He said, oh, my dad. He said, don't, don't, my dad, my dad and my mom.

He said, listen, I backslid, I went away from God. They had raised me right, I saw my dad's humility, I saw how he served God, but I went out to just live the wildlife, I was the prodigal. And he said, you don't know how tormented I would get.

I would come home at like one in the morning and just wanna sneak in. And they definitely wouldn't be up by that time. I'd come in at one in the morning trying to sneak in, they'd be in the living room and I'd be smelling from alcohol, my clothes all disheveled and they'd see me and they'd say, Howard Jr., praise God, we were praying tonight, you're coming back.

Praise God, you're coming back. And he'd say, I was like totally against them, totally living my own life. No, you can do whatever you want, God promised us tonight, you're coming back.

We don't see it yet, but we're rejoicing in it because you're gonna come back. Can we put our hands together and say amen to that kind of faith? But here's what I felt the Lord gave me for somebody here. So faith is this posture of being sure God's gonna come through.

And it comes from the seed of God's word. The Holy Spirit working with God's word, personalizing the promise. Not my God shall supply all of your need to a church in Philippi, no.

The Holy Spirit says, no, that's for you. God will supply your need. And then that transaction happens and then you believe.

But the thing about faith that's the hardest is the waiting of faith. Because faith has to wait. And a lot of us do not like to wait.

I only go to supermarkets at one in the morning when they're open 24 hours a day because I am not waiting on some line. I don't like waiting. Anybody here like me? I want everything yesterday.

But Abraham got a promise he would have a child and he had to wait years. But the Bible says he hung on and said what God said he's gonna do. I know, but you're getting older.

In fact, you're an old man and your wife, she's no spring chicken. Plus, she can't have children. I know, but God is able.

He spoke it, he will do it. He said it, I believe it. Now I'm waiting for the answer.

Noah had to build an ark with people mocking him. But he had God's word, a flood is gonna come. Get ready to save yourself and your family.

He had to wait, he hung on. David was anointed king of Israel, but Saul looked like he was gonna kill him. David was a kid when he was anointed.

How would he be king one day? He didn't think he would live another day. He had to wait, he had to wait. Jesus said when he left, now go into Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father.

I'm sending you the Holy Spirit, but now wait until that moment comes, wait. The Bible says that inside of us, we have a longing to put on our spiritual bodies, that these physical bodies, they encumber us. I burn myself trying to help my wife cook, keep me away from the kitchen, just burn my top of my hand half off.

I wanna put on that body that will never die. How many are longing for that body that will never die? But we have to wait. The Bible says Jesus is coming again.

How many believe he's coming again? But you have to wait. Did you know that Jesus is even waiting? Struck me so strong from Hebrews chapter 10, that although he died for our sins and he rose from the dead, and he was received into heaven as king of kings and Lord of lords, even Jesus has to wait now until his enemies become his footstool. He still has enemies, they curse him every day.

They mock him, they fight the gospel. A day is gonna come when they're gonna all bow before him. But even he has to wait until the fulfillment of that.

So if you're here today, I wanna encourage you, don't give up, keep waiting in faith. Let God know today, I haven't seen what you promised me, but I'm not quitting. The worst thing is to believe for a while and then just say, ah, what's this sense? Hang on, wait.

God is not slow. He's gonna come through just in time. At the right moment that will glorify him and will build your faith and give you a testimony, God's gonna come through.

Is it a wayward child? Is it something going on in your personal life, some calling you feel and the door hasn't opened? And you say, what's the sense? I believe, but I don't see anything. That's the whole thing. Faith says, I don't see it, but I know it's gonna happen because God said it and he cannot lie to me.

So I'm gonna wait. Not gonna get hyper, I'm not gonna get discouraged. I'm gonna wait.

Would you close your eyes with me? If you're sitting behind me, you're sitting in front of me and you put your faith in God for a certain object, you got a promise from him. He made it alive to you. You prayed about it.

And now you don't see anything changing. Today, you wanna say to God, God, I hear your word today. I saw those verses.

I know that, oh, how blessed is the one who waits for him. Oh, how unblest are the people who stop waiting and then rush and do their own thing. God, I'm gonna wait for you.

I'm gonna put my trust in you and I'm gonna hold it there. Anybody here have a situation? You're just determined now as never before, I will wait for my God. I have faith that he will do it.

I don't see it yet. Pastor, you're right, I don't see it. But I'm gonna wait for it in faith.

Just stand right where you are. Stand right where you are. I wanna pray for you in a second.

I'm believing God, I haven't seen it, but I'm gonna wait, I'm not gonna panic. That word encourages me today. I'm gonna wait, I'm gonna wait in faith.

He's coming back, she's coming back. God will supply. That which he has spoken to me from his word, I know he will do this.

Satan, you're not gonna discourage me. I'm gonna wait for God, I'm gonna believe. I'm gonna hang on and trust him.

Let's just tell the Lord we're trusting him, everyone. In your own way, right from your heart, now I'm trusting you, God. Standing on your word.

Have you not spoken? Will you not do it? Father God, I thank you that your word is faithful and pure. Your word has power. I am the word indeed.

That's what you said. Behind your word is your faithfulness and your power and your love. We know you want to help us and we know you have the power to help us.

That's why we rest in you today and we're gonna wait for the answer. We're gonna wait to see with our eyes what our hearts already believe. We thank you that you're faithful.

I ask you now, Lord, to give, increase our faith. Even as the disciples said, Lord, increase our faith. Increase our ability to wait on you no matter what we see, no matter what others say.

Help us to trust you. Oh, how blessed is the one who waits for you. We are waiting for you.

We are waiting for you. Just open your mouth and give him praise. Come on, don't be ashamed.

He died for us. We can praise him with our mouths. We bless your name, Lord.

We love you, Lord. Give him praise, everyone. We love you, Lord.

Bless everyone in the balcony. Bless everyone downstairs, Lord. Lord, we will give you all the praise.

We will give you all the honor. We will give you all the glory. As we see the answer come, Lord, we receive it now by faith, and we praise you even before we see it, Lord.

Let's put our hands together and praise him out loud. God bless you. Remember the prayer meeting on Tuesday night.

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