

Faith as a Lifestyle

by Michael L. Brown

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen, and it's a spiritual transaction that enables us to take hold of eternal reality.

Duration: 20:42

Scripture: Jeremiah 33:1-5, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Faith And Obedience", "Spiritual Renewal"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of coming together as a corporate body to experience the outpouring of God's presence and encouragement. They also highlight the need for believers, especially those living in luxurious and materialistic societies, to hold onto eternal truths and not be consumed by earthly possessions. The speaker believes that the Spirit of God is calling many to step out of their comfort zones and into new territories, emphasizing that this is not a carnal battle cry but a response to the voice of God. The sermon references Jeremiah 33, where God promises to answer and reveal great and mighty things to those who call upon Him.

Transcript

If you ever wonder why we come together corporately in large numbers, it's for very nights like tonight for corporate outpouring and corporate encouragement, corporate hearing of the voice of God. And I believe the things that the Spirit of God wants to say through his word through me tonight are going to further on what's happened already in our midst. I just want to let our community know about something that will be happening this week at school.

We really felt that it's a critical time, that there's so much that's happening before us in terms of the move of the FIRE campus and base to Charlotte, ongoing plans with the FIRE church plant here in Pensacola, ongoing developments with our school in New York City, the ongoing need for release of funds, release of direction. Many have been pressing in and seeking the face of God for many months now, and we've had some times over the past year of corporate prayer and fasting, but just felt the need for another focused day. So we just want to encourage all of you whose heart prompts you.

We're going to be fasting at least 24 hours together, so whatever you want to add to that on either side, go for it. But from dinner to dinner, Wednesday to Thursday, just as a community, and if we have gatherings at homes or different things on Wednesday night, it'd be great to spend extra time in prayer. But then the schedule Thursday is this.

In your homes, wherever you are, I'd encourage you to spend extra time in prayer, just for breakthrough, for the releasing of everything that God has for this moment, and bringing us right where he wants to bring us. And if you're normally part of the 8 a.m. prayer over at the New Hope building, then by all means be there. That'll be the official corporate start of things, 8 a.m. Thursday morning, this coming week.

If you are a student in the school and you have an elective on Thursday morning, show up for the elective, but there won't be regular classes. We'll just be spending the time in prayer. And then students, you're invited to get there early during the day to seek the face of God with us, and then all of our normal classes will be canceled through the day, and we'll be spending, as a student body, spending the day in prayer, seeking the face of God together.

So I just want to encourage you, wherever you are, however your schedule permits you to join in, to please do that, and those that are currently students of the school or grads will be having that focused time gathering together. God is faithful, and it's going to be extraordinary to see the things that he does as we take him at his word. Amen.

Well, let's pray. Father, we thank you, O God, for the outpouring of your joy in our midst tonight. We thank you, Lord, for the outpouring of encouragement in our midst tonight, for the way you've spoken to us and the way your spirit's moved on us.

Now, I pray, O God, through the preaching and teaching of your word that further clarity would come, that further foundations would be laid, that you would take us deeper into your presence, into your eternal holy reality. Give us ears to hear what your spirit is saying, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Turn with me to the 11th chapter of Hebrews. I had been praying during the day about which direction to go tonight, been meditating on some things, and when some of us gathered for prayer just to agree before we came out for the service, suddenly something else completely different dropped into my heart, and it's been a direction that the whole service has gone in many ways.

I don't normally think in terms of special days, holidays, calendar days, but we do know that this is a day that set aside around the world for people to remember the resurrection of Jesus. And often people are thinking about this more at this time of the year. And everything that I say tonight ties in with this divine reality that Jesus has risen from the dead.

And I want to open some things up to you regarding faith, regarding some things that are happening in our midst and are about to happen by the grace of God in our midst. I want to give you a message to deepen your understanding of faith. Other messages have been coming in recent weeks that I believe have been pushing us, encouraging us to take hold of many of these truths.

And now I just add my voice to that. But not only is it a time for a deepening of understanding, it's a time for us to grow in faith. It's a time for us to grow as people of faith.

It's a time for the foundations that have been laid to be built upon further by the word and by the spirit. I'm going to be reading from a different translation. It's the English standard version, new translation that just came out a couple of years back.

Some months ago, my friend Sid Roth gave me a call and asked me if I had heard of this and I didn't even know about the translation. He was curious to get my opinion about it. And I got it and started reading it and was really pleased with the style of it and the accuracy of it in many ways.

So I just decided to bring it and read it tonight. It's not for any specific insight into any specific verse. So if it reads exactly the same as what you have in front of you, that's fine.

But I'm just telling you, that's what I'm reading from Hebrews 11. Now, faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. So what the word of God is telling us here is that we're hoping for something.

It hasn't happened yet. If it's already happened, we're not hoping for it. We're not hoping that Aaron and Holly will have a baby soon because they just had a baby this morning.

We're hoping for things that have not yet materialized. We're hoping for things that we've not yet experienced. We're hoping one day for the resurrection of our bodies and to be with the Lord forever and ever.

And faith is what gives us the assurance that the things that we've hoped for will actually happen. Faith locks it in so that hope is a reality to us. It's the conviction of things not seen.

It's not a matter of, you know, it would be nice if these unseen things were true. It would be nice if there was this other realm, if it would be nice if God was really there. I like to think about it sometimes.

No, it's an absolute conviction. It's an absolute knowing. It's as if legal evidence has been presented that cannot be refuted.

And we know that we know that the things that we don't see are real by faith. Faith is not fantasy. Faith is not creating another reality.

Faith is taking hold of what is truly real. Excuse me. We've said this before, but just remember when Jesus rose from the dead, you can read in the ends of of the different gospels that some of the disciples were still not believing the reports.

The reality was he had risen. Faith was not to manufacture that a dead man was alive. Faith was not denial of reality.

Faith was simply taking hold of reality. Unbelief was denying reality. Sometimes we think of it differently and the world looks at us like we're crazy, as if we're living in a fantasy world or living in some kind of denial.

But the fact is, those who are unbelieving are living in a fantasy world and are living in denial. And those who take hold of faith are taking hold of reality. We don't create this.

We don't just decide what we're going to believe. But when we put our trust in what God has said, when we put our trust in who God is, that is taking hold of reality. That is faith.

And as we were exhorted earlier in a word that was spoken to lean on the Lord so that we'd we'd fall over if he wasn't supporting us. That's what faith does. Faith is not one option out of many.

Faith squarely, completely puts itself in God and says, this is it. I'm not talking about an emotional state. I'm not talking about presumption, but we just think if I'll just step out, then God will be with me.

It doesn't make it happen. If you think, well, if I just go in this direction or if I just believe this or if I just say this, it will happen. No, friends, that can mess everything up.

Our faith is always a response to who God is or to what God has said. Our faith is simply a leaning on what he has revealed as true. So faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen for by it, the people of old receive their commendation.

By faith, we understand that the universe was created by the word of God so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. Scientific evidence may one day validate things that God says, but that has nothing to do with faith. Being mentally convinced of something has nothing to do with faith.

Faith is a spiritual transaction. It is not simply now I am convinced logically or rationally, but I am convinced because of God. So even though I don't see it, even though we talk about God being the creator and none of us have ever seen him in an earthly way, touched him in an earthly way, we were not there when the universe was made by faith.

We declare that's how it happened. And we consider everything else unbelief, folly that says that the universe was not created by God. By faith, Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts.

And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks by faith. Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death and he was not found because God had taken him. Now, before he was taken, he was commended as having pleased God.

And without faith, it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him, those who diligently seek him without faith. It is impossible to please.

When you go through scripture, when you read through the New Testament, when you look at the Gospels, it's impossible to get away from the central importance of faith. When you read the epistles, when you read the teaching of justification, it's impossible to get away from the centrality of faith. And when you read all the lessons in the Hebrew scriptures in the Old Testament, it's impossible to get away from the centrality of faith.

Faith is not the only thing. If you have faith, but you don't have character, you're not going to make it. If you have faith, but you don't walk in love, you're not going to make it.

If you have faith and you play games with sin, you're not going to make it. But on the flip side, without faith, you're not going to make it. Without faith, you can't even please God.

Because the most fundamental thing must begin with that you believe he exists, you believe he is, and you believe that he rewards you when you seek him. You believe that when you go after him and you believe him, not by our works of righteousness, but by dependence on him, that that pleases him, that he will reward, that he will answer. This is fundamental.

I'll say again, faith is not fantasy. Faith takes hold of eternal reality. When Paul writes to the Corinthians and says, we don't look at the things that we see, but at the things that we don't see, because the things that we see are temporary, but the things that we don't see are eternal.

He is speaking truth. He is not in denial. Circumstances change.

Circumstances do not determine what is ultimately real. Often circumstances can be deceiving. Circumstances can look one way one minute and another way another minute.

Circumstances can change based on what our perspectives are. But faith doesn't change. If you're moved by circumstances, then there's something lacking in your faith.

Walk with God. If you're moved by emotions, if you're moved by what happens and how things look, then something is lacking in the foundation of your faith in God. And I don't say that to discourage.

I say that to encourage, because God is here to be believed in and adored. God has been inviting us through the night to call out to him and believe in him. He desires to reveal himself to us.

You say, is there any particular reason that you're bringing a message like this now? Well, on the one hand, we always need it. On the one hand, it's always true. On the one hand, as long as we are in this world, we need to be reminded.

We need to be encouraged. If we were going through severe persecution, like some of our brothers and sisters are around the world, hey, we need to be reminded about it. Our light and momentary affliction, Paul writes about it.

He said, works for us are far more exceeding an eternal weight of glory. Paul says, I consider the sufferings of this present age are not even worth comparing with the glory to be revealed in us. Maybe believers going through severe persecution and hardship, separated from family, put in prison, tortured.

Sure, they need to be reminded of the eternal reality of things. But then we also living here in the midst of luxurious America, some others visiting from Europe and other parts of the world. We here who have so much at our fingertips, who can look at the things of this earth and think this is it.

We need to be reminded also. We need to take hold of eternal truth. But I also feel that that we are again at one of these moments and it's been spoken through others prophetically tonight.

I believe the spirit has been speaking with one voice through different people tonight and that it is time for many of us to be getting out of the boats and walking on the water. It is time for many of us to step into things that we've not stepped into before. Again, I'm not talking about presumption.

I'm not talking about some carnal pressure that we feel as if we have to conform. Faith never comes out of trying to prove something to somebody. Faith never arises out of feeling some earthly pressure to do what everybody else is doing.

But on the other hand, we can encourage one another in faith. We can believe God and your faith in God encourages me and my faith in God encourages you. And we say one to another, be strong in the Lord of good courage.

We say, like Paul said in Acts 27. They're in a dire situation, it looks miserable, it looks like everybody on this boat filled with prisoners and soldiers, everybody's going to die. Who knows what it's like to be in a miserable storm like that out at sea and day and night.

There's no light day and night. It looks like you're about to go overboard day and night. Everything is shaking literally.

Then an angel of the Lord appears to Paul and based on a word from God, not based on a change in circumstances, based on a word from God, he says, I believe everybody's going to be all right. I have faith in God that he's going to do what he said. Paul writes to the Corinthians and explains how the spirit works in different ways in different people's lives through the body.

And one of the gifts, one of the manifestations of the spirit he speaks of is the gift of faith. You say, well, don't we all have faith? Of course, without faith, we can't be saved without faith. We don't overcome the world.

He who believes in his baptized shall be saved without faith. It's not going to happen. But then there's a gift of faith.

There's a supernatural working. It can be something that comes up over and over in someone's life. It can be something that manifests itself at a given time in a given way.

But at those moments, it seems as if you are jet propelled by God, just like every one of us can pray for healing. And according to Scripture, the elder should be able to pray the prayer of faith for healing. There's also a gift of healing or gifts of healing where there are supernatural dimensions where we're instead of just being sporadic, it's like a river, it's like a flow.

I believe God wants to manifest gift of faith in the hearts and lives of different ones here. And on a certain level, I'm not making doctrine out of this, but just talking on a practical level. On a certain level, there are seasons.

We are we are all carried together on a wave of faith. There are seasons when it seems like God is just there in such a dimension that it's easier to believe that in fact, it's hard to not believe. You say, well, if you're trying to encourage us to faith, then how come you're so serious instead of preaching a message that has us all shouting, amen, because it's not a matter of getting you worked up.

This is not some carnal battle cry. Emotionalism gets worked up over nothing. Or people who think if they just say something that they can create reality by just saying something.

I didn't fail the test. I got an A. All that is is delusion. But on the flip side, when we keep the word of God before us, when we keep it in our hearts, in our minds, on our lips, when we listen to the voice of the spirit of God, faith rises as a natural consequence because we're hearing God's perspective.

We're hearing what he's saying. There was a word spoken out during the service tonight from Jeremiah 33. Many of us know the promise called to me and I'll answer you and show you great and mighty things that you don't know.

When was the promise spoken? When was the promise given? It was given in Jeremiah chapter 33. Let me just read you the background to the promise. This is what's written Jeremiah 33.

One, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah a second time while he was still shut up in the court of the guard. He's a prisoner. Things are not looking good.

In fact, the Babylonian armies are marching against the people of Judah and the temple's about to be destroyed. It's one of the darkest days in Judah's history. Thus says the Lord who made the earth, the Lord who formed it to establish it.

The Lord is his name. Call to me and I'll answer you and we'll tell you great and hidden things that you have not known. What a time for a word like that.

Just as the storm is breaking out and Jeremiah is himself a prisoner. God says, I'm going to show you wonderful, sunny, beautiful days to come. For this says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of the city and the houses of the kings of Judah that were torn down to make a defense against the siege mounds and against the sword.

They are coming in to fight against the Chaldeans and to fill them with the dead bodies of men whom I shall strike down in my anger and my wrath. This is not exactly what you're expecting when God gives you a good word. He's saying bad stuff's going to happen, but that's not the end of the story.

I've hid my face from the city because of all their evil. Behold, I will bring it to health and healing. I will heal them and reveal to them abundance of prosperity and security.

I'll restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel and rebuild them as they were at first. I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me. And this city shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and a glory before all the nations of the earth who shall hear all the good that I do for them.

They shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the prosperity I provide for it. This is the Lord in this place of which you say it is a waste without man or beast in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate without man or inhabitant or beast. There shall be heard again the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, the voice of the bride, the voices of those who sing as they bring thank offerings to the house of the Lord.

Give thanks to the Lord of hosts for the Lord is good for steadfast love endures forever for our restore the fortunes of the land is at first.

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