

We Walk by Faith

by Sandeep Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of faith over feelings and logic, highlighting the stories of Abraham and Sarah as examples of unwavering faith in God's promises. It encourages believers to trust God's faithfulness, resist the lies and accusations of the enemy, and seek help through prayer and reliance on God's word. The message underscores the need to live by faith, not by sight, and to crucify the flesh that hinders spiritual growth.

Scripture: Hebrews 11:11, Hebrews 11:13, Genesis 20:17, Genesis 21:1, 1 Peter 1:13, Romans 8:33, Romans 4:5, James 1:6, Isaiah 55:9

Topics: "Faith over Feelings", "Trusting God's Promises"

Description

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Transcript

Let's pray. Let's, um, as we kind of read this morning, let's open our Bibles together with Jesus. Let Jesus and us sit together with this passage.

Father, we want to sit with you, Lord, as children sit on the father's lap. We want to sit and we want you to open the scriptures to us. Open our minds, Lord, to receive the scriptures and the truths Lord that are from you.

That will bring us freedom from all fear and a greater love for you, a love for everything about you, your holiness, your righteousness, your justice, your forgiveness, your glory. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

I want to start with, uh, uh, my, the thought that I'm trying to underline today is very simple and it is that we all must have faith and I want to contrast faith with what we may allow ourselves to have a lot. And I want to start from second Corinthians chapter five verse seven. It's a very simple verse and I think some of you may be able to memorize it even before I'm done reading it.

If you get there first. Second Corinthians chapter five verse seven. This is one of the most pivotal verses for me practically in my Christian life.

It's such a simple verse. I knew it for so many years, but the depth of this verse has had profound impact on my life. Profound.

And I guarantee you it will have a profound impact on your life too. If you will allow this verse, such a simple verse to go deep, not for you to memorize it, but for you to go deep with it. And the verse is very simple, which says we walk by faith, not by sight.

And I want us to think about sight not just being as what our eyes see, but a little bit broader than that because that word sight, that word is appearance. And our eyes really don't have any intelligence with it. As you guys may know already, our eyes take things in and it's our brain that then just processes things.

Right? So our eyes don't have a lot of brain cells to do all some computations and all of that. Our eyes are just taking information in like a mirror or a telescope or a microscope. It doesn't have any intelligence all by itself, but it feeds it to the brain.

So I want us to realize that when we say we walk by faith and not by appearance, I want you to think about appearance being more than just what you see. It's what your brain perceives. And your brain is a complex muscle that has different reactions based on how you grew up, based on your personality, based on who you interacted with, based on different races.

You may have different opinions of different races. You may have different opinions about men versus women, different genders, different colors of skin, different opinions of what beauty looks like. All kinds of things that your brain is taking information in and feeding it in.

And so your eyes and your nose and your ears and what you touch, they're all feeding this brain and forming opinions. And so you can see what the essence of my message today is very simple. We walk by faith, not by that.

Not by all that brain processing and intelligence that is given. All that data that it's fed in. We have to put that on one side and then I've got to put on the other side faith.

And I've got to make a decision. I'm going to live by faith, not by all of those data points. So it's not that faith is against science, but when I'm living the Christian life, I'm not interested in what science has to say.

And as it relates to life and godliness, not doing science experiments, that's for a job. When it comes to doing life, living daily life, living a holy life and godliness, I must live by faith. And I have to know that the opposite of faith is not unbelief.

The opposite of faith is not atheism. The opposite of faith is appearance. Appearance means whatever my eyes take in and my brain then processes or whatever my ears hear and then my brain processes.

And all of that is on one side. And all that you feel is on one side. And on the other side is faith.

And all that I have learned to intellectually think and process is on one side. And faith is on the other side. They're not always in opposition, but they can be.

Sometimes God's ways go beyond logic. That is why all of us have probably experienced things about life that we cannot understand. We don't understand in any of our ways how could this happen.

And we have to know that God's ways are so much higher than our ways. And God's way of thinking is so much higher than our way of thinking. That's Isaiah 55, right? Verse 9 or something.

How much value do you put on your thinking? Do you think you're kind of smart? Okay, maybe you don't think you're very smart. But do you think you'll get fooled right away by anything? We all have a certain amount of intelligence that we think we have. We think, well, I think the world works this way.

I think this is right and wrong. But what's the distance between what we think is right and wrong and what God thinks is right and wrong? Have you measured the distance between heaven and the earth? And have I seen that the distance between my way of thinking and God's way of thinking is that much? Of course I'm not going to be able to understand Him. Of course I'm going to find so many things that He does in my life unfathomable.

Why He allows relationships to break up, proposals to fall through, us to get certain diseases and so on for untimely deaths according to our clock, delayed hopes. So many things. How much easier it would be if we would just walk by faith and not by appearance and recognize.

And as I said, it's not about us knowing it in our head. It's about that verse going deep to where I can really say to our children that we may have someday or to our younger brothers and sisters, dear loved one, beloved one, if I can impart one truth to you, the distance between God's logic and my logic is heaven to earth and I mean it. I'm not there yet.

But I've seen what the problem with my faith is. That I think my faith in God needs to be this much above my logic. I'm not lying.

That almost all that God does I must figure out. And of course God's bigger than me so yeah maybe this much. That's how I live.

And that's why my faith is so limited. And I need my eyes. I sit here as one who needs my eyes open to the reality that the distance between what I see as anything of reality and God's way is the distance between heaven and earth.

I don't think I'm saying something radical because this is just very simple from God's word. All I quoted was two verses Isaiah 55 verse 8 which some of you may have already memorized. But I don't live with that being the distance between all that I've taken with my eyes and my ears and my intellect and the way God's ways are.

If I was completely uneducated it would be very easy for me to go into one of your homes. I had no idea how to turn on a stove. I didn't know how to light the stove.

I didn't know how to work the microwave. I didn't know how to make the oven. And if I came into your house it would be very easy for me to say, I don't have the slightest idea.

The distance between my understanding of the kitchen and your understanding of the kitchen is massive. So it shouldn't be that hard in my mind that the distance between God's logic and mind is that hard. But that's my problem.

And that has been my problem ever since I was born again and before that. And it still is my problem. And I wouldn't be surprised if it is some of your problems too.

This is not, again, deep, exhaustive Bible study. Sorry, it's not exhaustive breath. It's deep.

We're trying to drill into the quality of my faith. And James chapter 1 says, don't be surprised when fiery trials happen because those trials are going to test your faith. And the concept of a trial, the whole thought of a trial is, it's going to rock your logic.

Just think about that. The trial is programmed with certain things, which is, it's going to mess up your logic. And it's going to mess up the way you feel.

Because it's trying to test faith. And everything feels good and everything makes a lot of sense. There's not really any testing of the faith there.

But if you wanted to test what the value and the quality of your faith is, God says, this trial must feel really bad and not make any sense on certain levels. Then God says, now I see who are the people who are not living by intellect and feeling, and people are living by faith. That's what trials are.

So I must be surprised, if I'm a faithful Christian, if my trials are always agreeing with my feelings. Do you understand? If everything makes sense in the Christian life, there must be something wrong. Where is faith being tested? We walk by faith, not by sight.

And so dear brothers and sisters, I hope that we will not be surprised when things don't go our way, when things don't make sense. That's the exact spot where faith is being tested and can be validated to the praise and the honor of the glory of God. A lot is at stake.

And the world is not supposed to get it. The world is building their whole universe around catering to our feelings and our intellect. And the Christian is living in a kingdom that is not of this world.

That is saying, I don't base my life on my feelings and on the power of my intellect. I base my life on God's word. So, another thought before I talk about some of these things, how these feelings and intellect can be affected.

I want to ask you a question. It's a trick question, so I hope you get it right. Who is the enemy? Who is the enemy? It's a trick question.

Good. You're half right. Who's the enemy? The devil and his twin.

Did you know the devil had a twin brother? Maybe a twin sister. You know who it is? My flesh. I want you to think about this.

I want you to consider taking this home with you. The next time you think, the enemy is out to get me. Don't think about the devil.

Think about his twin. And if it's a boy, think about his twin brother. And if it's a girl, think about his twin sister.

And he's got the flesh. And it's called your flesh. He is your enemy.

She is your enemy. She hates God. That's what your flesh, my selfish will, and the devil have in common.

I have to tell myself, don't say that the enemy is just the devil. Because you're just now transferring the blame to somebody out there. Because I have found in my Christian life, I have never fought the devil in

real life.

He may have been there, I just have never noticed him, never felt him, never dealt with him. So what do you think? You think I'm the star of a Christian? Far from it. What's the problem? The enemy got me.

Who's the enemy? Who's the adversary? That enemy who hates God. Which enemy is that? My selfish will. And I think maybe if it helps, seeing my selfish will and seeing my flesh as evil as the devil, may do one of two things.

It'll give me a little bit more soberness about the filth of the enemy that lies within. And it'll also give me more compassion to those who are ruled by the other enemy. See for me, the enemy, the devil, has been defeated.

And God said, you will crush him under your feet. That's it. He's been defeated.

The devil's twin brother has not been defeated. The flesh has not been defeated. It's an open question for each of us.

And the flesh must be crushed and crucified. We've talked at length about that. But I must see him as my enemy.

Sisters, you must see her as the enemy. The enemy is out to get you. The enemy is out to get you.

Change your way of thinking about who the enemy is. And it's much harder to defeat the flesh than it is to defeat the devil. Much harder.

You know how you defeat the devil? Resist him. You know how you defeat the flesh? Crucify him. Which is easier? Resisting or crucifixion? It's a long road to grab the flesh by the scuff of the neck or by the lobe of his ear and drag him all the way to the top of the mountain and crucify him.

I'm speaking from experience. I know you do too. The enemy is out to get you.

And so when I talk about the enemy, don't think about the devil alone. I'm not saying the devil is not an enemy. But I have a feeling, I have a feeling that the devil has just made himself look like the enemy when he's not even involved.

He is involved for sure in many many things. But in a lot of the challenges that I've been dealing with in my life, I don't even think the devil or any of his forces are involved. I'm just, my flesh is having a field day with me.

I don't even need to worry about him. My twin brother's got him. Got him covered.

That sister of mine got her covered too. The number of Christians that the devil actually has to get up off his seat and tell the demon, hey, handle with this guy, is very few because twin brother and twin sister has gotten most of them. Our flesh.

I'm obviously saying that to make a point. Beware of that flesh. Beware of your selfish will.

We, none of us, see how evil the devil is. But I'll tell you this, none of us see how evil the flesh is, how selfish will is. I don't.

But I'm trying to do everything, including changing my language to help me remember. Lord, we want to stand against the enemy. When I say that, I want to think something in my mind.

Wait, two enemies. The devil and his twin. Because I need to die too.

I want to keep reminding myself, the enemy has a twin. The enemy who used to talk about it, the adversary, Jesus, the devil is definitely the adversary. It's James or 1 Peter or whatever.

The devil, your adversary, prowls around, for sure. But Romans 8 says that my flesh, my selfish will, hates God. So I want to have that attitude towards my flesh.

Here's how my enemy attacks me. As I said, we walk by faith, not by appearance. We walk by faith, not by sight.

And the enemy, primarily my flesh, seems to do a few things. As I said, he's a twin brother, twin sister. He's got a lot of the same characteristics of the devil.

So you'll see this and you'll say, yeah, that's what the devil does. And I'm seeing, because those guys are in good partnership, and they're twins, for lack of a better word, my flesh does the same thing. And so I resist the devil and I still seem to be struggling with it.

Devil's not there. Flesh is still there, alive, and he's not been crucified as yet. That's my problem.

Charismatic say, you've got to have a deliverance. No, you don't need to have a deliverance. You need a crucifixion.

That's what you need. One of the ways in which the devil attacked me first, one of the ways the flesh attacks me, accusation and condemnation. He accuses to condemn.

I'm not talking just about my flesh. You know the verses about the devil who does that. He's accuser of the brethren.

Revelation 12.10, we may have read that earlier this week. He accuses and he seeks to condemn. Not convict, he seeks to condemn.

There's no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. It's the devil who condemns. He wants to pass judgment saying, you belong with me in hell.

And the flesh is the same way. The twin brother is the same way. And so don't just resist that thought.

You need to crucify that thought. That's my point. You've got to crucify that thought of condemnation.

We have to do violence against it. Don't just brush it off. Don't just pray a prayer.

Gird up your loins for a crucifixion. Accusation and condemnation. I don't need to explain it.

You know it. You've felt it just as much as I do. Here's one of those thoughts that I believe is the way to solve this problem.

Romans chapter 8. The truth is not, it's not an aha moment. Dear brothers and sisters, the truth is not an aha moment. The truth is going deep with it.

Our roots in these truths need to go deep. You don't need more and more sermons. The truth is right there in God's word.

It's not a sermon you need to hear. If you see it as God's word, if you go deep with it, the Lord will show you. The verse is right there.

Romans chapter 8, verse, sorry, Romans chapter 8, verse 33. Who is going to bring a charge against God's elect? God is not the one condemning you. In verse 34 is one.

He's not that. The devil is bringing the charge. God is the one doing what? He's justifying.

And we don't have time to go into all the messes of justification but please go to YouTube, search Zach Woonen justification or something and seek to become a PhD in the truth of justification. Otherwise the enemy will get you with condemnation. Guaranteed, guaranteed.

Who is the one who condemns? The devil. What's the answer to that? God is the one who justifies. It's so clear to me in scripture.

Here's the solution for all condemnation and all accusation that the devil is, God is the one who justifies. It starts there. And here's another verse for me to give you.

Romans chapter 4, verse 5. The middle of that verse is this little expression. Such a special verse to me. Romans chapter 4, verse 5. But to the one who doesn't work but believes in this God.

You know God has many titles. God the healer, God our righteousness. There are many titles but this is one of my favorite titles about God.

Believes in Him who justifies the ungodly. Him who justifies the ones who don't deserve to be justified. Him who justifies the evil.

That's what the ungodly are. God is the God who justifies the ungodly. God is not the God who justifies the innocent.

Because there's no such thing as innocent. So there is no pit so deep, I believe as Betsy Ten Boom said, that God's love isn't greater still. There is no state of ungodliness so deep that God's justification cannot reach.

That is the message for all condemnation and all accusations of the devil. God is the God who justifies the ungodly. The word justification is massive.

To justify is to say you're totally righteous. Jesus was the total justification totally righteous lamb of God that took away the sins of the earth. And so when God says He justifies you, He's not saying He's forgiving you.

It's much more than that. He is saying you're like Jesus who was that spotless blameless lamb. That's massive.

How do you even begin to understand that? You have to lay logic aside and say God I need to have faith. That's why we're so plagued by accusations and condemnations. Because we haven't grabbed a hold of the truth.

God are you that good? You justify ungodly people. What state am I on? Now that I just shouted at my mother and my father. Now that I just watched internet pornography.

Now that I just sinned with gossip or unforgiveness. What do I do? I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do.

Who do you go to? You ungodly wretch. Who do you go to? The bottle? Self pity? Bad moods? Or the one who justifies the ungodly? That's faith versus feelings and accusations. I suffered with this for years.

But this truth went deep enough. I struck water. One day it did.

And I find that that root of believing in justification is almost doesn't need to be watered now every day by me because God's, I found this God who is this well of water supplying that root. That I don't struggle with condemnation and accusations anymore. Because I am not done yet.

But I firmly believe that God justifies ungodly people. I just don't know how ungodly I am. That's my problem.

That doesn't mean I have to sin more to find out how ungodly I am. God needs to just open up the inside to show me all the snakes that are already inside. God is the one who justifies the ungodly.

He sees everything that I have done, that I am doing, and that I am going to do. And He says, I am the God who justifies the ungodly. Romans 8.33, Romans 4.5. Dear brothers and sisters, the enemy is going to accuse you.

Who is the enemy? Two. The devil and his twin. Watch out for the twin.

Watch out for the twin. Don't resist the devil. Don't resist the accusation.

Crucify the accusation. Crucify the condemnation. The enemy accuses and the enemy seeks to condemn.

That's the first thing. The second one is the enemy lies. He is a liar.

The enemy. Who is the enemy? Your flesh. He is going to lie to you today.

He is lying to you right now maybe. I wrote five truths for today. Maybe you can bring that up.

I don't know how easy this will be. I put it up just on a simple slide just for you to, maybe we can share it or whatever. These are five truths that are among the top five truths that those roots have to go very, very deep.

I don't know if you read any of these and think, I'm really surprised to see that on there. I don't know if any of you read any of these and be like, man, I'm shocked. I didn't really know that that's a fact.

I didn't know that was a truth. I have a feeling you already know all of these five truths in your head. But this is where the devil is going to lie to me today.

This is where my flesh is going to lie to me today. And they're both partners. They're both twins working really hard to tell me one of these lies today.

God is my loving Heavenly Father. Matthew 5, 9. I think I kind of, Matthew 5, 9 is what I meant to do was the Lord's Prayer. It should be Matthew 6. Matthew 6, 9, 8 or whatever it is.

We can make a correction of that. Matthew 6, 9, 8. They killed Jesus because He said, I call God Father. That's in John chapter 5. The devil said, are you really the Son of God? You know who He said that to? To Jesus.

You think He's not going to say that to you? God is my loving Heavenly Father. Insecurity, fear, different things that we've heard about. God is good.

We heard that today from the story of the rich young ruler. No one is good but God alone. How can a good God allow this to happen? What are you talking about? There's no one good but God alone.

You don't get to decide this question about how can a good God allow this. There's only one person who's good. We're a bunch of evil people trying to debate how can a good God do these things.

We don't even have a concept about good. No one is good but God. Do not be surprised when fiery trials come because they're going to shake this with feelings and with intellect, with logic.

How could this ever happen? And as you know the devil quoted verses too. Twisted verses to try to prove their point. God is good.

God works all things for me to be like Jesus. That's Romans 8, 28, 29. You know these verses I think.

God works all things for good and then he tells me what good is. He predestined me to become conformed to the image of Jesus. This is a big one.

Big, big, big one. Number four. God will never, never, never give me something that I cannot handle.

Never. Impossible. So I must eliminate from my vocabulary I just can't handle it.

Impossible. Purely possible according to my logic and my feelings and my sight. Completely impossible by God's word.

Impossible. 1 Corinthians 10, 13. I must bind myself to these truths.

The picture I have is of a huge storm coming. I don't know if it's a cyclone or whatever it is. I don't know what the right words are.

Hurricane, hurricane. The only thing that's going to stand still is this huge tree. That is what stood any kind of thing.

Whatever. What stood everything. And that's God's word.

And what I need to do when the storm is coming is to bind myself to that tree. That's my only hope. Bind myself.

Bind myself to the altar. Bind myself. There's a big tree.

Bind myself to that tree. That word comes up a few times in the Old Testament. Bind it.

Bind it. Put another layer of ropes. Put another layer of ropes.

It's getting stormier. Put another level of ropes. Bind myself to the tree of God's word.

The tree of life. Bind myself. There's no safety in anything else.

God will never give me something that I cannot handle. Bind myself to these five truths. The last one.

I don't know if these are all the verses. There are plenty more you could probably add to this. Today I can be like Jesus.

This is a massive one today. Do you believe that? I woke up this morning and I told myself that. Not just as a mantra.

I told myself that in response to a temptation that came at me. And a temptation to settle for less than being like Jesus. For being a good Christian.

A good looking Christian. And I said no. Today I can be like Jesus.

I want to be exactly like Jesus acted. From morning to night. And here's the massively good news that you probably don't hear in most churches.

Today I can be like Jesus. This is hopefully well proved if you've been listening to Zach Boonin for a while. Today.

Why? You're not going to be given anything that you can't handle. You've been given the same Holy Spirit that Jesus had. You have the word of God.

Which is the sword of the spirit. Maybe I mistook the enemy. Maybe I kept resisting the enemy when I should have been crucifying him.

Maybe that's why I didn't have the success that I've had. Dear brothers, dear sisters. I have to find a way not to make this a mantra.

But we have to drill deep into these. And say Lord. Somehow Lord wake me up morning by morning.

To listen to this truth. Today I can be like Jesus. Well did you know what I did right before I went to sleep last night? It wasn't very pretty.

There's a solution for that. To get back into the light. To allow the blood of Jesus to cleanse you at 6.01am. If that's when you were reminded of it.

And then at 6.02 you renew your pledge. Today I can be like Jesus. And at 2 in the afternoon if you fall into sin in some way.

Because you allowed an unforgiving thought or a lustful thought or an angry thought or an angry word to come out. At 2 o'clock. At 2.01 or before.

You can confess it. Hopefully seek restitution if it was an active word. It was a word spoken.

It hurt somebody else. Seek to get back into the light. Repent.

And then you can do that all in one minute. And then 2.01 renew our pledge. Bind myself again to that fact.

Today I can be like Jesus. Dear brothers and sisters it's possible. It's possible.

To live this kind of life every day. I'm not telling you that tomorrow I am going to live like Jesus. Please hear me right.

I'm not saying that tomorrow I am going to live like Jesus. I'm going to tell you this. That tomorrow I want to keep saying I can be.

I can be. But it's that flesh. That enemy.

He's been tricking me for so many years. I've got to watch for him. And the devil of course I'll resist him.

That's the easy one. That flesh. I need to crucify him.

I'm going to watch for him. Watch for him. Watch for him.

And if I fall I know the way to get back up and then I say Lord I want to be like you. And when I fall is when I really need to go back to that other thing where the devil and the flesh my enemy tried to accuse me and condemn me. And that's when I really need to understand how is it that God justifies.

The way God justifies is how he justified you in the first place. When you came to him as a penitent unworthy sinner and said Lord please forgive me. I'm sorry for what I've done.

And he forgives you again. And you repent and you say Lord I don't want to do that anymore. I want to bind myself to your truth.

I want to repeat these five truths or many more. Or at least one of them. And Lord I want to keep moving.

Today I can be like Jesus. And the devil whispers you know what you did at 155. I know it's 201 right now.

But you know what you did five minutes ago. And then I have to understand Lord am I working with a God who justifies. And I have to tell the devil and my flesh go look at my track record.

It says fully righteous. It's not what my memory says. It's what the book of life says.

And it says fully righteous. Do I believe this? God justifies the ungodly. The enemy lies.

The enemy accuses and condemns. The enemy lies. The enemy deceives.

He twists our logic. I said this at our church. I'll repeat it here.

What if we had to secure this building from the enemy? What if we had not the enemy I was talking about right now. Let's say some terrorists were trying to get in here. Do you think we could secure this building? We've got pretty smart people here.

Put all the chairs up on one side. Put all our brains together. Come up with a plan B a plan C. We can secure this building for sure.

But I left out one fact. What if the enemy is a billion times smarter than you? Do you think you can secure this building? Not so sure right? It says about the devil that he was smarter than Daniel. His twin is equally smart in terms of disobeying God.

I stand no chance. I stand no chance if I make this a battle of the wits. I will lose every time.

And the devil will give me a couple of victories just to fool me into thinking. Yeah, yeah, you got this figured out. Go ahead.

Come on. Yeah, I'll give you a few victories here. Yeah, you figured that out by logic right? Yeah, good job, good job.

Keep on going now. I've softened you up right where I need you. Because you went by your logic.

I didn't establish myself by faith in God's word. The devil will outsmart me. My flesh will outsmart me every single time as it comes to the ways of God.

Because I ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Death entered into me. My only hope.

So how do you change the equation to where, now what do we do when we're dealing with an enemy that's a billion times smarter than me? How do we secure the building? What's the solution? Phone a friend. Phone a friend. Phone a friend.

Phone a friend. That's the help line. Call for help.

We heard that in the morning. That should be our repeated cry. Help.

And that message which we heard, brothers and sisters cry for help, will become more natural as we realize that my enemy is a billion times smarter than me. I just haven't seen that. My flesh and the devil, who I'm dealing with, is a billion times smarter than me.

What am I doing trying to figure this out with well planned, well schemed plans and this and that? What if you had a bunch of six month olds, had to defend this building? What would they do? Help. The mother and the father know that's cry for help. Our father in heaven knows.

And he's hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and revealed them to six month olds. Because what six month olds do, they don't try to figure out the enemy and come up with all battle strategies. They just say, God help.

That's how I'd like to double down on the point we heard this morning about asking for help. And look, I'm not a veteran in knowing these truths because I'm seeing where my mistakes have been. I'm seeing how I've blown it.

Because I've relied on my logic too much. My knowledge in God's word to not cry for help. To make it a cut and paste formula, Hebrews 10, boom, done, move on.

What kind of relationship is that? The enemy accuses, condemns, God is the one who justifies. The enemy lies, I've got five facts. The enemy deceives, cry for help.

Cry for help. If we see that the enemy just doesn't need to be resisted but crucified, I will be violent. I will be violent.

Gird your minds for action. Gird your loins, 1 Peter 1. Let's look at that, 1 Peter 1, just so that we remember it. I can't quote it exactly.

Gird your minds for action. Keep sober in spirit. 1 Peter 1.13. 1 Peter 1.13. Because we have such a great salvation, because we have such great life in front of us, because we have faith, verse 7, that is more precious than gold, because of all those things, because of all these wonderful salvation that we have in verse 10, that angels long to look at, and we get to look at it.

Because of that, therefore, verse 13, gird your minds for action. Pick up that sword. Prepare for a crucifixion every day, much more than you prepare for resistance.

And the violent will take it by force. That's how the kingdom of God is going to be won. And faith is going to come by confidence in God's word.

Let me end. This is a quiz question that I wouldn't have answered it right if I didn't study it. So no shame if you get it wrong.

You know Hebrews 11 is the story of the people who had faith in the faith. You know they call it the hall of fame of faith. Okay, let's see if we can figure this out.

Let's say it together in order. The first five heroes that are mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11. Okay? You ready? Somebody say, who's the first one? The first hero in the faith.

No, you don't get any spirituality points for this. The devil is not saying, shoot, man, I couldn't believe you answered that question. He's definitely a great Christian.

So let's eliminate that. You get nothing in terms of spiritual life for this stuff. This is just fun.

Who's the first in Hebrews 11? The only reason I know it is because I studied it. Abel is number one. Good.

Next. You're not looking. I love it.

I did explain the rules clearly. No looking. Let's see if we can get it.

Number one, Abel. Number two, Enoch. Hey, have you studied the faith of Abel? Have you studied the faith of Enoch? That's how I studied it because I kind of was like, find out what this Enoch's faith really was.

I know Enoch, the life, but I don't know his faith. Okay, what's the next one? Noah, number three. I'm looking at my notes.

Number four. It's getting softer and softer. Number four is Abraham.

Okay. Number five. Joseph, Isaac, Sarah.

I love seeing stories of women in the Bible. I remember my daughter once telling me, I was telling her, hey, let me tell you a Bible story. And she said, daddy, is this a story about a woman? And I'm like, I don't have many stories about women in the Bible.

God, Esther, I got. I got a few. Rebecca, Deborah, Ruth.

And now then I'm starting Mary and then Priscilla, but not much. Hey, Sarah. Sarah was number five.

She's the first woman in the hall of fame of faith. Have you studied the faith of Sarah? Oh, bless me to study the faith of Sarah. I don't think I even completely understand her faith.

Let me show you a few things. Hebrews chapter 11. We'll end with that.

Faith, faith, faith, family of God, faith, not feelings. This is faith. Hebrews chapter 11, Sarah, verse 11.

By faith, Sarah received the ability to conceive even beyond the proper time of life. Here's why, here's why. You know, I always thought the statement was about Abraham.

It isn't. It is about Sarah. Tells you about bias that we can sometimes have.

Since she considered him faithful who has promised. Sarah had that. Sarah considered God faithful who had promised.

Not Abraham alone. Abraham did too. But Sarah did too.

It's beautiful when we see stories of husband and wife. Faith. Not a lot of those.

But I thank God that in the hall of fame of faith, I get a picture of a couple. And even if you're not married, even if you're not going to be married, men and women can be in this hall of fame of faith. It's equally available to all of us.

She also considered him faithful who was promised because she was 90 years old. Can a 100 year old man have a baby? Yes or no? Absolutely. A 100 year old man can have a baby.

That's biology. Can a 90 year old woman have a baby? Not as far as I know. So, in a way, the miracle was that Sarah was able to conceive at 90.

Now Abraham considered his body as good as dead too. But Sarah did too. Sarah also saw her body as good as dead but considered him faithful.

This is a story about a faithful man and a faithful woman. And then it goes on in verse 12. We skip verse 12 because it's born of one man and all these things.

The people of Israel. And then now us. We are the seed of Abraham.

So that's how we came. Verse 13 onwards is about all these who died in faith. Who are these all these? Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah.

All of these guys died in faith without receiving the promises because they looked for a country of their own. They did not look for a country of their own. And they desired a better country.

Let me ask you this. Do you think it's easier for a man or a woman to wander around? To be a cowboy? Floating around, living in tents, uprooting, moving around. Is it easier for a man or a woman? Yes.

Sarah had faith. She too uprooted with Abraham. Every time Abraham, every time she just got her nest perfectly established and she got all the pans in place and all the hummus jars or whatever they did back then.

Just perfect. Honey, we're leaving. What? God is faithful.

Sarah was a woman of faith. She too, all these died in faith. She lived in tents too.

Sisters who are complaining about your house. Sisters who are complaining about this or that. Look at Sarah.

Look at her. She too lived from tent to tent. And we know it is harder for the woman than it is for the man.

That's in us, in the women to nest and to mother and to create a stable environment. I see the bigger beauty of Sarah in that particular area. And I want to show you in Genesis chapter 20 something that I don't know if I fully understand.

But as I saw Sarah, it struck me that Sarah was a person of faith. And I looked at Sarah and I tried to understand, Lord, what was it about Sarah? And I shared with you a couple of things. She too saw her body as good as dead but considered God faithful.

She too was grabbed on to a better country, a country she could not see. She too. But you know, in Genesis chapter 17, Abraham meets with God.

I'll just give you a quick overview of Genesis 17 all the way to 20 and 21. Genesis 17, God meets with Abraham when he's 99 years old. And God establishes this covenant in a greater way.

Asks him to change his name to Abraham. Establishes the principle of circumcision. And says, you're going to have a child.

Not Ishmael, who he had already had by then, but one through Sarah. And he believed. And in chapter 18 now, there's another instance of it where God visits, whoever it is, angels or somebody, visit Abraham and Sarah and tell them again that they're going to have a child.

And Sarah laughs. And they say, hey look, why did you laugh? And they said, next year this time you're going to have a child. Then Genesis chapter 19, the next chapter is the story of Sodom and Gomorrah.

So nothing about Sarah in that chapter. Then Genesis chapter 20, you find the most interesting story about Abraham who treats his wife so horribly. And he's, he's so angry that he's such a coward that he says to Sarah, hey, because I think they were half-brother, half-sister, whatever it is back then.

I think he says, look, it's true that we were kind of related as half-brother, half-sister. But he tells Sarah, look, don't tell people that you're my wife. Tell them that you're my sister.

Because guess what will happen if they know that I'm your husband? They'll kill me. So I'm out of the way. I think that's what he was thinking.

And he almost puts Sarah in such horrible danger, his own wife. I'm not trying to explain that situation. I don't know if I fully understand it.

But check this out. It's an interesting verse that I saw in Genesis chapter 20, verse 17. So basically, Abraham confesses and Abimelech, Abimelech, I think he's in a dream or something.

And Abraham said, no, she's my wife. And God told Abimelech, you better return this woman or you'll get punished. And see what was in verse 17.

And Abraham prayed to God and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maids so that they bore children. What was the problem with Abimelech and his wife and his children? They didn't have children. Guess who's praying for them? The guy who's been praying for 25 years for a child and still hasn't had a child.

God says, you pray for those Abimelech. And guess what happened? They bore children. Sarah's watching the whole thing.

See this in verse 17. I'm sorry, in verse 18. This is the verse that blessed me, I think as it related to Sarah.

For the Lord had closed fast all the wombs of the household of Abimelech, not because of Abraham, but because of Sarah. And Abraham saw, God saw how Sarah responded to an unjust situation. Now let me be clear, the unjust situation is very different today than it was whatever it is, 4,000 years ago, whenever it was.

There'll be a very different reaction today if a man even attempts to do that to his wife today. So let's be very clear about that. But that was in a different time in a different culture.

And the justice system may have been different. Men may have treated women differently. I'm not trying to excuse that.

But what I am saying is, God understood the culture in which they were living in at that time. And God saw the faithfulness of Sarah to submit. And because of that, God protected Sarah.

And God had punished Abimelech because of Sarah. Who's the righteous one in the story of Genesis chapter 20? Sarah, not Abraham. Abraham prayed and caused the miracle.

What was the reason for that whole miracle even being needed in the first place? Sarah. The virtue of Sarah is what closed this womb. And it's an encouragement.

For me, even if I'm in unjust situations and where I can't control it, and we cannot compare apples to apples, so I'm not trying to compare the situation today. But in similar injustices of today, and women today still feel greater injustices than were men. It's still the case.

God's watching. These truths are still true. And God's looking for men and women who have faith.

And here's an example of logic and feeling having an opinion about the situation. And Sarah, woman of faith, who trusted in God, and God said, I'll take care of you. Your man Abraham is a friend of mine, but he's being an idiot right now.

I'll take care of you. I'll close the womb of those people because of this. And then you see Genesis chapter 21 verse 1. You know what happened? You know what God waited for before they had a child? Tested and validated the faith of Sarah.

Sarah, are you ready to have a child? Do you fear me? Do you love me more than anything else? You know who God tested with that, right? Abraham. When Isaac was a 20 year old boy, I feel the test for Sarah also happened. It happened before she had a child.

Then the Lord took note of Abraham. Nope. The Lord didn't take note of Abraham.

He took note of Sarah. As he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as he had promised. Small words in the Bible, big words in my mind.

Big words. I'm not trying to lure Abraham. Abraham is a special place in the Bible, in God's kingdom.

The bosom of Abraham is all that it is. I'm just trying to elevate unknown Sarah. For you to realize, don't worry about how big it is written in the Bible.

God sees. And God took Sarah through a very big test. And then God said, now you're ready to have a child.

Not any old child. Many people have children. You're going to bear such a special child, Isaac.

And that's going to be the future of my people. And the unity of Abraham and Sarah is a picture now today for us, for Christians. Of the faith that we must have.

The faith of Abraham and the faith of Sarah. The story I picked about Sarah is a pretty drastic story. Go read Genesis chapter 20 and see if your blood doesn't boil.

How could somebody do such a bad thing to Sarah? How could somebody do such a bad thing? And don't let your blood just boil. Resolve it by marveling at the faith of Sarah. Marvel at the faith of Sarah.

And say, Lord give me faith like that. Because the reason that story is useful is because it goes against all of my feelings and all of my logic. And Sarah must have been sitting there.

And she was being taken away because Abimelech, the king, thinks this is Abraham's sister. So is available. And she's sitting on that camel being taken to Abimelech's tent.

She had faith. She trusted God. And God took note of it.

And stepped in. And He'll step in too, at the right time. He'll step in 2,000 years ago when we were dealing with our twin enemies.

And He took care of one and He crushed him. And He said, now you take care of the other one. You crucify that other enemy.

But you're going to do it if you live by faith. That's how it's going to happen. So I pray, dear brothers and sisters, I may have said many things, but please live by faith.

It's impossible to please God without faith. And the opposite of faith is not unbelief. The opposite of faith is not atheism.

The opposite of faith is whatever you feel, whatever you think. Set that aside and say, God, your ways are higher than mine. And the heaven is the earth.

Descartes, he's a French philosopher. He said, I think, therefore I am. Is that what defines you? I think what the Bible says, and I am.

No. That's not the Christian. Lord, what do you say? Open my eyes to the reality of the situation.

Lord, I want to fight back. Keep silent. And I'll fight for you.

May the Lord help us. Let's pray. Father, we pray that as we seek to fight the enemy, the enemy that needs to be resisted and the enemy that needs to be crucified, help us, Lord, to guard against the lies that seek to rob us of our faith.

Jesus, you're so interested in our faith. You weigh our faith much more than you weigh our failures and our falling. I pray for you that your faith may not fail.

Father, I pray, Lord, that we will seek to please you, Lord, by binding ourselves to the truths of God's word, marveling, Lord, at the saints of old who had such massive faith, Lord, against all the odds stacked against them. They trusted in you to have children when they were 90, to step in and intervene when everything was going against them. They are our parents in the faith, Lord.

Abraham and Sarah, we thank you, Lord, for such wonderful examples. That fruit now in Christ, Lord Jesus, we want to be children mimicking that faith. Thank you, Lord, Jesus, that you will do it as we bind ourselves to you over and over again.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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