

Don't Check Out

by Steve Mays

Pastor Steve Mays emphasizes the importance of remaining engaged in faith and responsibilities during life's challenges.

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Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that God wants believers to finish stronger than when they started. He outlines four things that God wants to do in the lives of believers: establish their hearts, make them unblameable before God, prepare them for the coming of Jesus Christ, and unite them with all His saints. The preacher shares a personal story about Dr. Ogavy, who learned the importance of staying full and ready to serve God. He also highlights the importance of faith and trusting in God's power and ability to do miracles. The preacher encourages believers to have faith in God and to forsake all and take Him in every aspect of their lives.

Transcript

It's the 2010 Summer of Sermons with Steve Mays. Pastor Steve Mays says, don't check out. You can check out of a relationship.

You can even check out of being a parent. And you can check out of the things that you have to do within life. And sometimes life can do that to you.

And what we need to do is look to God. And I think it's important that you not check out, but you start checking in. That you start locking in to the things that God wants within your life.

Sadly, we see too many Christians checking out when troubles check in. Checking out from their responsibilities, their marriages, their parenting duties, and even their faith. Pastor Steve Mays says, when difficulties arise, our best move is toward the Lord, not away.

It's this exercise of faith that strengthens our spiritual muscles. Here's Pastor Steve as he reveals three great benefits to a life of faith. Would you turn with me to 1 Thessalonians chapter 3. I'd like to draw your attention to verses 9 through 13.

And we want to take a look at just a very powerful moment in Paul's life. As you remember, Paul was reaching out and seeking to minister to the church there in Thessalonica. He had only spent three Sabbath

days there ministering.

But he gave to them just a tremendous insight of information and heart. And most of all, the power of the Holy Spirit and the word of God came very deep within their heart. And so Paul was chased out of that city.

He had to leave. He ended up, you remember, in Berea with Silas and Timothy. From there they took off and Paul wanted to go to Athens.

He left Timothy and Silas in Berea. And then Paul got back to Timothy and said, Timothy, I need you to go back to this church of Thessalonica because I'm worried and concerned about their faith. And one of the things that you will see this morning, I believe, is that faith became the issue.

It was more important than their comfort. It was more important than the growth of their church. It was more important than their health.

Paul was concerned about their life of faith. Because when that life of faith is real, when you see God for who He is, when you understand that God is going to take care of your problems, that He has begun the work, He's going to finish it until the day of Christ. And that which He has started, He's able to finish.

And that God does not lead you down a road that He's not going to bless and open the door in your heart. When you begin to see God through situations, as Nehemiah did, able to see God through the rubbish and see that incredible, invisible God working. Or like Shidrek, Meshach and Abednego, able to see God in the midst of the fire.

Lo, I saw four men and one looks like the Son of God. And they were rejoicing to the fact that it was Nebuchadnezzar that had to ask them to come out of the fire. They were having more time in the fire of affliction than they were being out in the world.

And when you all of a sudden find the disciples in that storm, and Jesus now walking on the water, saying to them, be of good cheer, speaking to them in the midst of the storm, showing them who He was, and that's so important in your life. You need to see God in the storm. You need to hear God in the storm.

Or even as Moses, he said he was able to see through the situation and see the invisible God. When that begins to happen, all of a sudden something wonderful begins to happen. You begin to grow in a way that you can't even believe.

And now that God has an instrument that is walking in the realm of the Spirit, understands the heart and the mind of God, God will now use you as an instrument to help other people. And that will be the joy of your life, no matter what you do. You now become a tremendous instrument in the hands of God.

And Paul was that instrument. He is now concerned, looking, hoping that they're growing because the church was being attacked. And Satan was coming after them.

And if they could stand, Paul knew everything else would work out. And you today and I need to stand in the grace and the strength of Jesus Christ, knowing that God's going to work it out. All things work out for the good for them that believe in Christ Jesus.

And so Paul says here in 1 Thessalonians 3, verse 9, For all the joy wherewith we joy for your sake before our God, night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, might perfect that which is

lacking, underlying, might perfect that which is lacking in your faith. Now God himself and our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ direct our ways unto you. And some see the Trinity, God the Father, and then the Lord Jesus Christ, and then the Holy Spirit is the one who leads and guides our way.

And the Lord make you, this is cool, the Lord make you to increase and abound. So it's the work of the Spirit, through the love of Christ, that desires that you would increase and you would begin to abound in a very powerful way in love, one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you. To the end, and underline that word, the end.

God wants you to finish this race. God wants you to finish stronger than when you started. To the end, that he might do four simple things.

One, he might establish your heart. Two, unblameable in holiness before God. Number three, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And number four, with all his saints. And so God is saying to us today that he wants to do a work. I was reading the other day about Dr. Ogilvie, in an interesting article that he wrote, that early in his ministry, he had the church there in Hollywood, a tremendous ministry in those early days, and he was reaching out.

But he said that there was a time in his life that he was called to go to a convention to minister the word of God. And when he came to the camp, the area that he was to teach, it was filled with all types of denominations. And one of the things that he had a difficult time, is that they were talking business, and they were talking down on their churches, and not really talking about the things of God.

And so he wondered, why am I here? Why did I come? Did I make a mistake? And so he went to the meetings and wanted to kind of say things that were on his heart. He hadn't spoken yet. And halfway through the message that he was listening to, he got up and walked out.

He went through the lobby of the hotel he was staying at, because he was going to take a walk in the woods, and all of a sudden he heard his name being mentioned. And the woman behind the counter answering the phone said, I'm sorry, Dr. Ogilvie has checked out. And he said, no, I'm here, I haven't checked out.

And so he came and straightened out all the problems, and continued his walk with God. And God said to him that day, you have checked out. And it hit him like a ton of bricks.

He was there, but he was out. He was there at the conference, but he had checked out. In other words, his heart wasn't there.

His life wasn't there. His ministry wasn't there. And sometimes life can do that to you.

You can check out of a relationship. You can even check out of being a parent. And you can check out of the things that you have to do within life to make things better.

And the pain and the agony that sometimes we go through, the disappointments and the heartache become overwhelming so much in our life. And we don't know what to do. And what we need to do is look to God.

But Satan is seeking to focus our minds on everything else. And when you find a Christian that is not focused on Jesus Christ, he is focused on himself. And that person becomes extremely selfish and

self-centered.

And they become a hazard to the body of Christ. Because all they see is the pain and the agony and the bitterness and the resentment. And they begin to tell other people, instead of talking about Jesus Christ, they are telling other people about how bad things really are.

And instead of promoting Jesus Christ, they're talking about how Satan is destroying their life. And I think it's important that you not check out, but you start checking in. That you start locking in to the things that God wants within your life.

And it's interesting to me that Paul was concerned about their faith. He wanted to check in. To find out if they checked out.

If the persecution was too much. If the price was too much. Because they turned from idols to serve a living God.

And they now were being persecuted by their own countrymen, you remember? And things were falling apart and they were being challenged. And Paul was concerned and so he said to Timothy, Go check on them, I can't handle it. And that's a good pastor.

That's a good parent. That's a good friend. Because we're willing to check and find out.

In other words, Paul was into other people's lives. And the only way that is ever going to happen in your life, is when all of a sudden the Spirit of God fills your heart with the presence of God. And the love of God begins to overshadow your life.

And now you see others more than you see yourself. And that's a difficult thing. And that is the outpouring of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

And so Paul mentions that he had a heart for these people. You remember what John said in 3 John verse 4, I have no greater joy than to see my children walk in truth. So God doesn't want you checking out of life.

He doesn't want you packing the bags and leaving. He wants you to have faith to see God in every situation of your life. Financially, emotionally, mentally, spiritually.

God wants you to see Him. And the reason why is because God is bringing these things into your life. And the reason why is because a faith that is not tested cannot be trusted.

I want to say that again. A faith that is not tested cannot be trusted. It's when you are able to go through a difficult time and see God, that you have passed your test.

It was God that said to Abraham, Take now thy son, thy only son. And he did not withhold. He came down and God stopped him.

And God said, now you are my friend. And the Bible goes on to say that without faith, it's impossible to please God. So there's going to be times that God works in your heart.

Five different times Paul talks about faith in this one chapter. Notice in verse 2, he says, And sent Timothy, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, to build you up, and to comfort you, to help you. The word comfort is paraclete, to come along beside you,

concerning your faith.

Underline the word concerning your faith. Then notice in verse 5, For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith. Underline that, know your faith.

Lest by some means the tempter has tempted you, and our laborer is in vain. Over in chapter 2, verse 18, Paul said, Twice was I hindered by Satan. In other words, Satan is coming after you.

Satan is going to seek to pull you away. He took the eyes of Moses off of once again heaven, and Moses saw the Egyptians coming. He didn't seek God behind the Egyptians.

And you remember the very same thing happened with Jonah. Jonah saw the situation. I don't want to go to Nineveh.

God wanted him to go to Nineveh, because God wanted those people saved. And then we read in verse 6, But now when Timothy came, from you and to us, So Timothy left once again, rejoined Paul there in Athens, brought us good tidings of your faith, and charity, that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us. Paul was blessed, because they loved him.

He laid the foundation. And then notice in verse 7, Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in our affliction, and distressed and underlined by your faith. And one last one, in verse 10, Night and day praying exceedingly, that we might see your faith, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith.

Underline lacking in your faith. Five different times Paul goes after their faith. Not after their comfort.

Not after their prosperity. Not after their health. Not after anything else but faith.

And I think that's what God needs to go after in our life. You see, this whole idea of not standing is because we lack faith. And God desires that I would be courageous, that I would have faith, and I would be strong in what God wants me to do.

And so to do that, I need to see through and understand that my disappointments are God's opportunities in my life. And my discouragements are God's appointed times to work in my heart. God is going to test my faith.

I need to understand that. And He's going to test it when I'm 80 years old. He's going to test it when I'm 10 years old.

God is going to test your faith. Not tempt you, test you. And God's going to bring you.

And there's going to be a progressive growth. And Paul exhorts them. Notice verse 8 of chapter 3. For now we live if we stand fast in the Lord.

I think that's a great verse. That's the theme of really the whole book of Thessalonians. In the Greek, I like it even better.

Now we really are living if we are standing fast in faith. That tells me everything. And you remember Paul sent Timothy to find out how in the world are you guys doing? And we find that Jesus said the very same thing.

It was, you remember, Jesus said to Peter in Luke 22 verse 31. And listen, because this is a killer verse. This is a great verse.

And the Lord said to Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you. And he may shift you as we. Peter, I want you to know that Satan is coming after you.

Oh Lord, I'm not going to deny you. Everyone else is going to deny you. Peter, stop fighting with me and listen.

Lord, even though you tell me this, I want you to know I'm going to be there at the very end. Peter, you're arguing with what I'm saying. Listen to what I'm saying.

God, you really don't understand. Peter, who are you talking to? And see, sometimes we get so caught up in trying to impress that we don't listen. And what Jesus was trying to tell Peter is that Peter, you're going to hit a hard time.

And in the moment of that going on in your life, you need to think about God. When he denied the Lord, you remember? The Bible says in the King James that his eyes connected with the Lord's. And Peter remembered what? The word of the Lord.

So God puts the word into your heart so you will remember in a day of temptation. And in the moment that Peter was being shaken by Satan, what was he to remember? It tells me in the very next verse. I pray for you.

Peter, when Satan is grabbing you and shaking you and tearing your world apart and throwing you up and down and you don't know where you're coming, I want you to know I have prayed for you. And if I prayed for you, my Father and I are one. And if I pray, that means it's going to be done.

So your hope and your sanctity in your own brain is knowing that I'm for you. And then he goes on to say what he's praying about, that your faith would not fail. That's the key.

You see, what's happening in America today is our faith is beginning to falter. And if I faint in a day of adversity, my strength is little. So what is the great thing that God wants to do for you? He wants to give you a knowledge of God.

He wants you in the word of God. He wants your mind and your heart to know that God is with you, that all things work for the good, that He's able, with one angel, to wipe out 185,000 enemies. With Gideon, He took out 120,000 mini knights in one moment.

In other words, God can open the Red Sea. And God can stop the sun. And God can resurrect the dead.

God can do whatever He wants to do. That needs to be in my heart. And that faith is what He's saying in a very, very powerful way.

In fact, I wrote down an acronym for faith. F-A-I-T-H. Faith.

F is for forsaking. A is for all. I is for I. T is for take.

And H is for Him. And this is what it means to me. Forsaking all, I take Him.

I like that. That's to me the gift of faith. It's when I look at this situation and I will not see anything else but God.

And the times are coming. And we're tired of running with the footmen, Jeremiah tells me. But what happens when the chariots begin to chase us? And we're tired of swimming in the Jordan.

But what happens when the Jordan begins to overflow? In other words, God will put my feet upon that solid rock. And though heaven and earth has passed away, my word will remain. That's the confidence that God wants within your life.

But it's going to happen by the hearing of God's word and by God planting that into your own heart, into your own life. And so Paul mentions three things I want to end up this morning. Very simple.

And I think pretty exciting stuff to hang on to. Very simply, in verses 9 and 10, faith makes you thankful. Faith makes you thankful.

And then in verse 11 and 12, faith will make you lovable. That's neat. In other words, not that you're not lovable.

Sometimes you can be ornery, mean, nasty. Well, why am I mean and nasty? Because you've lost your focus upon God. You're no longer seeing the cross.

You see situations and relationships and how hurt you've been. And you're reacting rather than trusting God with all your heart. It was Joseph that was thrown into the well.

You remember and sowed. But at the very end, he said, God meant this for good. God allowed this to happen so I could be the ruler over everybody and take care of you as my family.

God does things in life that doesn't seem fair. But there's a reason. And secondly, in verses 11 and 12, to make you lovable.

And number three, to make you acceptable in verse 13. So those three things I want to challenge you this morning. Number one, in verses 9 and 10, and really think about this study.

Because I think it can really do a lot in our lives. Number one, faith will make you thankful. He says here in verse 9, What thanks can we render to God again for you all? The joy wherewith we joy for your sake before our God.

Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith. So first of all, we find that Paul's faith made him very thankful. He was taken, you remember, in Philippi.

He was beaten. He should never have been beaten as a Roman citizen. They threw him in jail and we read in the Bible that he sang at midnight with Silas.

And so Elvis talks about the jailhouse rock. That wasn't really true. Paul and Silas had the jailhouse rock.

They sang in that jailhouse rock. I mean, an earthquake came and destroyed it. And they were there.

And God worked in their life. But here's what I like about it. Paul was able, in the midst of his discouragement, to see God.

So you could beat him and he would see God. You could stone him at Lystra. He would see God and go back into the city.

He would be picking up sticks and be bitten by a serpent. He'd shake it off and keep on serving. In other words, you could not stop this man from loving God.

And I believe that some of us have stopped being thankful within our life. We've become critical and just lost the vision of who God is. And we need to get back to the point that we see the hand of God in all things.

And so it mentions here that he was able to thank God at night. He didn't say day. He said night.

And you remember what the Bible says, that sorrow in the night and joy in the morning, heaviness at night, and garments of praise in the morning. Paul turns it around. I'm going to rejoice in my darkness.

I'm not going to wait till the morning. I'm going to see this thing through. My kids are causing me great difficulty, but I'm going to thank God that He's working in both of our lives.

My husband's not where he should be. He's driving me crazy. But God, you're using him to push me closer to You.

We need to be thankful, not about the situation, but that God's in it. And sometimes we don't see that. And then notice here also this little tiny word might perfect that which is lacking.

Two things really stand out here. Number one, he said I can't wait to see Your face. There was an anxiousness for him to get back.

And sometimes that doesn't happen in our life. We just want to stay home and be left alone and not reach out, not be a blessing, no more problems. We just want to chill out.

And that's a great thing to do. But sometimes people need you. So how do you give if you don't have it to give? You've got to receive it from God.

You've got to stay full, stay ready, stay ready to do things, having a word in season, sharing with your kids, sharing a business. In other words, you never know when God is going to use you. And you never know when you're not going to be an instrument for the kingdom of God.

Paul was willing to go. I couldn't get there. Satan hassled me.

But my heart is with you. I want you to know that. And I think sometimes when we go through difficult things with our children, we send a message that we're not with them no more.

They might disagree with you. They might drive you crazy. But you need to send a message that whatever you do, I'm with you and I'm going to be praying for you.

And God's going to turn you around. But don't walk away and give up on them. God didn't give up on you.

We cannot give up on people. We need to stay focused. How do I do that? I need to have faith.

And faith will push me beyond this circumstance and help me see God. It will see that God is working in my life, understanding that I have a problem here and God's going to do it. And so I find, secondly, to

perfect.

And this is the most encouraging thing I can share with you today. Paul said that there are two types of perfecting. One is to finish a book.

Or you watch a movie and you finish it. Or sometimes you go out and mow your yard and walk across the street and you're able to look at something you really got done. But the other word is what Paul's saying here.

It means to check the back of a soldier's backpack and make sure he has everything to win this war. So it means to equip. And so secondly, it means to mend.

Luke used it in the Gospel of Luke where it means to reset a broken bone. It means to set that bone. You're going to reset it.

You're going to mend it. And then you remember Peter talks about mending the ship or mending the nets. It means to sew up the net.

Why? You want to help them sew the net so they can catch fish. And you want to help them set their bones so they can run in the race. And you want to, once again, help them to do these things because you want to build a bridge.

That's what it is to be thankful. I don't like this kid. I don't like this relationship.

I'm out of here. No. You are to build bridges.

Well, that's impossible, Pastor Steve. It is, apart from God. But because God's with you and greater is He that's in you than He that's in the world, and because you're looking at Jesus Christ, God will say one word to you.

Will you love Him for me? And that's the end of the conversation. I will love Him for you. Then God will give you the faith to be thankful for what God's doing in your life, through your life, and around your life.

Paul was thankful. So if you're not thankful, I would suggest that you need to focus on the Lord and see the hand of God, the good hand of God upon your life. And secondly, we find here in verses 11 and 12, faith will make you lovable.

This is kind of cool. Faith will make you lovable. And if you're not loving, you've been hurt.

You've been bitter. You have resentment. And you don't love the person you're with, or you don't like what people are doing to you.

Well, see, when you see God, God will give you the ability to rise above the situation. When Judah told Nehemiah, there's too much rubbish, Nehemiah didn't listen. He went right to God.

He said, God will take care of the rubbish. And so we read in verse 11 and 12, Now God Himself and our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ direct your ways. And the Lord make you, I like that, make you to increase.

God's going to make you increase one way or the other. Abound in love towards another and towards all men, even as we do towards you. So in verse 11, three things I think are mentioned.

God the Father, He is giving. He gave His Son. Jesus Christ is the one who set the example.

He's willing to die for my sins. And the Holy Spirit is willing to mend and direct and bring my life together. In other words, this is all I want to say.

The Trinity is behind you and wants to build you. And the Father is praying and the Son is praying and the Holy Spirit is praying. And they have one goal to get you to heaven.

And if Jesus said He's praying for you, you're going to heaven. No matter what Satan does to you, you're going to get through this time. But you got to look to God.

And so I believe that Paul is telling us a secret about being able to stay lovely. Keep yourself in the love of God. Don't let anger, bitterness, resentment eat your heart out and destroy your relationship with God.

Because those people at work, they need to see the love of Christ. Your husband, your wife, your children, they need to see the love of Christ. Those friends, they need to see the love of Christ.

And if you break up with a believer in the body and your date and relationship doesn't work, don't get mad. Be glad you're not stuck with that guy for the rest of your life. Give God some credit for taking that guy out of your life.

In other words, God will direct. And if you made a mistake, God will put it back to you. I believe that.

With all my heart, I believe that God directs and God leads us. If not, we're in trouble. We might as well just quit right now.

And so he says here in verse 12, The Lord make you increase. And the word means to go deep in your heart. It means to work in that inner man.

It means the inner man is going to begin to explode. Devotions are going to begin to arise. There's something deep in your heart that now you have something to give.

See, when I live by feelings, I have nothing to give because I'm selfish. And that's the interesting thing. When people get hurt, you would think that they would turn to God, but they don't.

When people get hurt, they blame God. Martha said, Where were you when my brother died? If you would have been here, he would have never died. They said in the book of Revelation, The day of his wrath has come and who's going to be able to stand? They're mad at God.

They're shaking their fists at God. You would think that when God deals in people's lives, they would turn to God. They turn away from God.

That tells me something about human nature. Oftentimes, suffering doesn't bring us to God. It makes us bitter with God.

And what happens is someone who is going through difficult times with their health or with anything else, or with pain, they often become very self-centered and very insensitive. Why? Because it's all about me. My agony.

My pain. And that is true. But you know, Jesus on that cross was able to say to his mother, Behold thy son.

Son, behold thy mother. Jesus was able to build a relationship in the midst of pain. We've got to learn how to do that.

It's not going to be easy. But remember, God has to test you. Why? Because he needs to make sure this thing is real in your life.

Why? Because one day, Satan might really come after you and you're going to have no pastor or no church or no friends. You're going to have to make a stand on your own for Jesus Christ. It's a wonderful thing what God's doing in your heart.

And then the word abound means outwardly to be bubbling over, exploding with joy. It means to be lovable. I like what someone said about love.

L means to listen. O means to overlook. V means to value others.

And E means to express. And I believe this is really the gift of love. In other words, if I love you, I'm going to listen.

Not look around or think about other things. I'm going to focus on you. Now, that's not always easy for a guy.

My wife will sit there. She'll listen to me for five hours. But the moment she starts talking, I can figure out where she's going to go and I kind of get up and go.

And it's really rude. I know that. God's been working.

And I try to help my wife. You know, honey, one time, one way, not ten times, ten different ways, you know, but I have a hard time because I'm impatient. If I love her, I need to listen.

So now, she'll walk in in the middle of a football game, fourth down, two inches to go, on the goal line. I'll turn the TV off. Who's more important? The TV or a relationship? Flesh and blood.

Warmth. It's her. And then the oh.

I like this. Overlook. Start learning to overlook some flaws.

You know, you're going to put the toilet paper on upside down. And you're going to not do certain things. That's going to drive you crazy about some of the weaknesses that other people have.

But it's not sin and it's not situations. It just drives you crazy. Overlook it.

Grow up. Look at your children and overlook some of their weaknesses and some of the areas in your life and look at them. Let them know that they're accepted.

And that brings me to the third point. Learn to value. Value a friendship.

Value a person. Don't talk down. Value who they are.

Listen. Overlook. Value.

And lastly, express. In other words, put your arm. Throw the ball.

Take a walk. In other words, prove it. You know, it's interesting how women spell love.

They spell it T-I-M-E. Men spell love S-E-X. And that's the problem with our human nature.

We have one thing in mind. A woman says, you want to do that? Take me for a walk. Build some relationship.

Build some time. In other words, we don't understand. But faith will help you to love once again.

It will look around and see the pain and say, you know, God's in this. He'll change your heart. He'll teach you.

You'll be able to minister. Do not become critical and old in your life and be an old, nasty person as you get old. Keep the faith.

Caleb at 85 said, give me that mountain. Stay focused on God. And lastly, he says here in verse 13, faith makes you accepted.

He says, never lose sight in verse 13. To the end, he may establish your heart unmovable and holiness before God. Even our father at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

And boy, that says it all. In other words, faith will make you acceptable. Faith is going to put your eyes on the holiness of God, on the purity of God.

And because Christ is coming, and John tells me, he that has this hope purifies himself. It's going to keep me focused. It's going to keep me looking to heaven.

It's going to keep me on the things I should be doing. It's going to make my life pleasing before God. But when I take my eyes off of God, this is what you have to understand.

When I take my eyes off of God, there's a lot of things that go wrong. You don't think many things are wrong, but let me tell you what goes wrong. Number one, when you take your eyes off of God, you become unthankful.

And all you see is problems and you become critical because nothing's being done right. Number two, when you take your eyes off of God, you become unloving. You become kind of a hypocrite.

You become selfish and self-centered and want to be loved. And that's not what the Bible teaches. The Bible says that you are to be a giver, not a taker.

And when you take your eyes off of God, you start living the way you want to live, and that begins to produce evil, and God just begins to see the heart. And if I want to stay right with God, I need to stay pure before the Lord. And the way you do that is know that Christ could come at any time.

And so I believe that Paul very simply said, Listen, this church, go find out if they have faith. Because this faith will change your whole life. It's not a faith.

It's not feelings. If you're going to look at it in a biblical sense, it's facts. It's faith and it's feelings.

So the feelings is a caboose. The very beginning is the fact that God is God. And because He raised the dead, a fact, my faith believes in that fact.

And because my faith believes in that fact, my feelings rejoice in what God has done. You can't live by feelings. You're going to get hurt.

You're going to get blown out of the water. You're going to get devastated. Things are not going to go the way you want.

People are going to hurt you. They're going to say things about you because of the carnal nature. But all that God's looking at today is what do my people do when that happens.

Do they react or do they trust? Do they respond or do they believe? And God is asking you today, if you would focus on me, I'll give you the faith. I'll give you the faith to be thankful. No matter if you become sick or hurt, you will have a happy, joyful spirit.

And if you look to me, I will give you the ability to be a very loving person that you will build and encourage and not be bitter and end up a wasted life. And if you will look to me, you will see me coming. And I'll keep you pure because I'll put the fear of God in your heart.

What a way to live. Pastor Steve Mays, sharing three great benefits to a life of faith. This message is called, Don't Check Out.

You know, when it comes to the personal crises in our lives, too often our focus is not on the Lord, but on the problem itself. We find ourselves asking, how am I going to make it in this struggling economy? Or how can I fix my family? And what's the best decision for this certain situation I'm in right now? Pastor Steve addresses these types of questions in a new booklet he's just written called, Our Only Hope is God. As you can tell by the title, Steve is very intentional in pointing us to the Lord.

Steve says, now's the time to seek God and trust Him. He is never going to leave you nor forsake you. That's guaranteed.

He's going to establish you. He's going to build you back up. He is able.

Is this the kind of encouragement you can use right now? Our Only Hope is God also includes several steps to help you find clarity and peace of mind in whatever situation you find yourself. Let us send this timely book your way today. Get all the details on the booklet, Our Only Hope is God when you call us at 1-800-339-WISE.

That's 1-800-339-W-I-S-E. You can also order right there at our website, lightoftheword.org. That's lightoftheword.org. Meet us back here again as we go deeper into the study of God's Word right here on Light of the Word. Light of the Word.

Light of the Word. Hope shines in darkness. So follow the light of the Word.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24291.mp3>
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