

# Faith Unto Enlargement Through Adversity - Part 3

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The testing of faith is God's way of enlargement, and it requires us to overcome unbelief and establish a solid and substantial foundation in our walk with God.*

**Duration:** 23:32

**Scripture:** Genesis 15:5, Genesis 17:1-8, Romans 4:17-24, Hebrews 11:8-9, Hebrews 11:11, Hebrews 12:1-2, Revelation 21:9

**Topics:** "Adversity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of faith and its application in the work of the Lord. He refers to various passages from the Bible, including Genesis, Romans, and Hebrews, to illustrate the importance of faith in the face of challenges and tests. The preacher emphasizes that just as Abraham faced tests of faith, so do believers today. He highlights the need to persevere and continue on the path of faith, even when circumstances seem to indicate otherwise. The sermon encourages listeners to trust in God's plan and have faith in His promises for enlargement and fulfillment.

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## Transcript

Through the passages of scripture which were before us this afternoon, I want to add one or two this evening. I remind you that those passages were in the book of Genesis, chapter 15, verse 5, chapter 17, verses 1 to 8, then in the letter to the Romans, chapter 4, verses 17 to 24, and in the letter to the Hebrews, chapter 11, and verse 8. Now, I want to add another fragment from that same chapter in the Hebrew letter, chapter 11, continuing to refer to Abraham. The record goes on at verse 9. By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.

For he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God. In the book of the Revelation, chapter 21, and verse 9, there came one of the seven angels, who had the seven bows, who were laden with the seven last flakes. And he spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

He carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city of Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her light was like unto a stone most

precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal, having a wall great and high, having twelve gates, and at the gate twelve angels, names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, on the east were three gates, on the north three gates, and on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

He that spake with me had for a measure a golden ring to measure the city and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. The city layeth four square, the length thereof is as great as the breadth. He measured the city with the ring, twelve thousand furlongs.

The length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal. He measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man that is of an angel. And the building of the wall thereof was of just air, and the city was pure gold, light unto pure glass.

Chapter 22 He showed me a river of water of light, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river, and on that, was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the health of the nation.

We continue where we left off earlier. We were speaking about God's governing thought of enlargement, bringing to remembrance his words to Abraham about the immense increase which he purposed concerning his servant, and then how every bit of that increase came along the line of a testing of faith. This is not just general teaching.

These things are very pertinent and appropriate to our need at this time. The whole work of the enemy, by every means and agency, is to limit what is of God, to reduce it, to make it as small as he possibly can, and keep it so. God's thoughts are for the contrary.

But God's thoughts do not just operate and come to realization automatically. He is dealing with living people, not with a mechanical world. It is in a people that his thoughts are to have their fulfillment, individually and collectively.

And for that realization, all the work of the enemy has to be overcome. And the work of the enemy is not only from the outside. It is from the inside.

The enemy has got a very strong and deep foothold in man by nature, in you, in me. And it is no small thing to enlarge us unto the enlargement of God. There is a lot in us that ever seeks to prostrate God, ever seeks to limit God.

That foothold of the enemy in us by nature is something that ever stands in the way of God's thoughts. It is a positive force to resist God. And the foothold in its nature is unbelief.

Unbelief. And there is not one of us here tonight, no matter how advanced may be the point of our spiritual progress, who has no battle remaining with the unbelief of his own heart. The sin which doth so easily beset, which retards, arrests and impedes us in the spiritual race, is unbelief.

You know that that metaphor and that exhortation to lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset is a part of this letter to the Hebrews, all of which is concerned with going on, going on to fullness. And here is this, which in the metaphor of the race running with patience, the race that is set

before us, is this impeding thing which is to be laid aside as the so easily besetting thing. It is unbelief.

It follows immediately in the original text without any chapter division upon the eleventh chapter of the letter to the Hebrews, which is the letter of faith. Thus, in that quite general way, it is very applicable to our present needs to speak about this matter of faith unto enlargement, for as it was with Abraham, so it is with us all. But of course, it has particular and specific applications in the work of the Lord, in a ministry, in a testimony, in an instrumentality for divine purpose.

There are times when the direction and course of everything seems to be to close it down, to halt, grasp, break, and bring it to an end. And because of that, tremendous tests of faith arise. Tremendous tests of faith.

Those concerned are thrown into the vortex of a great conflict as to whether God, after all, wants this, means this, is after this, or whether in view of the accumulation of frustrating, crippling, limiting efforts and activities, some mistake has now been made. The whole thing has got to be reviewed and revised. And under the pressure of the enemy, the enemy does press very hard with questions.

It's a time of testing of faith. And what is true collectively becomes so true in individual lives, time to time. Now, the point is this, that from all that we have seen in the Bible, and all that there is for us to see there, the argument is this, that the very testing of faith is God's way of enlargement.

Fresh enlargements will come by fresh testing. That's the order of things. It ever has been.

You see, here is Abraham. God has announced to him with an oath and a covenant what his thoughts are about this great enlargement. Thy seed shall be at the start and at the end of the season.

I will multiply thee greatly. God hasn't left Abraham in any doubt as to his thoughts about enlargement. But look at the testing into which Abraham was brought immediately.

He had, speaking naturally, every ground and reason for saying, I've made a mistake in thinking that God meant that. I've misunderstood what the Lord meant. Or I have been caught in some illusion.

It would have been very easy for Abraham to have so reacted under the pressure, under the trial. But the point is this, that the Lord has done that where Abraham is concerned far more than ever Abraham thought. For you see, all that great multitude presented to us in the last book of the Bible a great multitude which no man can number.

Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands. Paul says they are the seed of Abraham. Not Jews, but believers.

Children of faith. Everyone who has reposed faith in God is the seed of Abraham. A countless seed.

The point is it has come to pass. But oh, see how Abraham was tested on this matter of enlargement. They put to it.

And progressively so. It was not one battle fought once and for all and God over. But there through a long life till he was a hundred years old again and again in different forms at different ages and with accentuated poignancy the test of enlargement was raised.

It was up as an issue. But every test passed meant some further enlargement. We have said that that is a way and a law of the Lord.

Something to hide in our hearts. Psalm is said, Thy word have I hid in my heart that I sin not against thee. The sin of all sins is unbelief where God is concerned.

Here is a word that we must hide in our hearts against the day when we feel our faith is being so tested and tried and pressed by the situation, the position in which we find ourselves that it must mean limitation. It must work out to curtail if not to an utterance. The Bible all the way through argues the other way that such tests of faith are over alongside of God's expressed and revealed mind and that these tests are the way for the realization of that purpose.

And in the first place enlargement is the thought of God. So much of an added word upon enlargement. We pass to our second word establishment.

Establishment. If spiritual enlargement is the need of the Lord's people and oh how true that is must you get get a step to that. How small, how petty, how little, how mean is the spiritual measure of all of us and of the Lord's people generally.

It is distressing and heartbreaking how little Christians really know of the Lord. One could dwell much upon that. This is a thing which is more and more forced upon our consciousness.

Oh what a little there is in the Lord's people speaking generally of himself. And what a lot there is that is not the Lord. If spiritual enlargement is a need and if the work of God the testimony of Jesus needs releasing and enlarging is that not equally true this matter of establishment.

The establishing of the Lord's people. I could use quite a lot of words. Indeed I will use quite a lot of words to give a different just a slightly different complexion to that word establishment.

If God is after enlargement he is certainly revealed to be as desiring and working toward something that is solid. Something that is substantial. Something characterized by stability.

Endurance. Steadfastness. Trustworthiness.

Faithfulness. Responsibility. Depth.

Those words touch the situation very, very closely. He cuts away the false bases of our trust in feelings. He does the same with our theories.

Even theories derived from the Bible. God is not going to allow us to rest on mere theories. He is going to bring us to realities and actualities.

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