

Remnant Life Church
May 4, 2025
The Foundation and Testing of Our Faith
Hebrews 11:6

- At the very core of our lives as Christians is our faith
 - Faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God to save us from our sins
 - Faith in the regenerative, life-changing power of the shed blood of Jesus on the cross
 - Faith in His presence with me in every situation
 - Faith that His Word is true and perfect
 - Faith that He hears my prayers and cares about my life

But because of our faith, many people consider Christians to be gullible.

- And there are certainly very gullible people. When P. T. Barnum said, "There's a sucker born every minute," he was right. It seems that there is no limit to what someone will believe.
- Listen to some of the titles that have appeared in the tabloids found in grocery store checkout lines:
 - Cow Mattresses Help Cows Produce More Milk
 - Satan Captured by GI's in Iraq
 - Alien Bible Found – They Worship Oprah
 - LA Quake Opens the Gates of Hell
 - Adam And Eve's Bones Found in Asia: Eve Was a Space Alien.
- There are those who consider themselves to be very rational and logical who would put Christians in the same category as those who read these headlines.
- We believe in miracles and in an unseen God, and (to them) that is evidence of what makes us gullible.
- May I assure you this morning, there is nothing gullible about believing in God and His Son, Jesus Christ.
- To believe as a Christian, however, does require what is the cornerstone of our belief - faith

But we are not given a mature, fully-grown faith when we become a Christian

- Like our bodies our faith grows, strengthens, and must be fed and exercised
 - Faith is unique in that it takes on many appearances
 - For some it takes on a very aggressive and intense form when it is being used
 - For others it is very quiet and steady
- Of course, the Bible is our source for developing our strength of faith – it is the “How To Manual” of how we live and how our faith impacts our daily lives
 - In **Matt 8** we read of the centurion who came to Jesus to ask Him to heal his servant
 - Jesus told him, *Go, it will be done just as you believed it would* (**Matt 8:13**)
 - His belief was his faith in action

- When Jesus healed the blind man in **Matt 9** He said, *According to your faith let it be done to you” (Matt 9:29)*
- And faith is at the core of our relationship with God
 - **Heb 11:6** - *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*
- Our faith is the key that unlocks the door to our certainty and our eternity
 - Faith is the key to salvation
 - And to how we are to live each day
- So, let’s see what the Bible says regarding our faith as it relates to those two central keys to our existence

Faith in God’s Righteousness

- God’s Word is what reveals His righteousness to us
- **Rom 1:17a** - *For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last*
 - Paul is saying that the gospel, the Word of God, reveals God’s character, His righteousness
 - When Paul writes that in the Gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, he is also speaking of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Jesus Christ is the message of the Gospel, and the Gospel centers on the person of Christ.
 - It is all about His sinless life, the atonement of our sins, and the supernatural resurrection. He is the center of the Gospel, and so He is the center of our faith.
 - Our salvation only comes because of what God has done through His Son Jesus Christ
 - We can not do that for ourselves
 - The Bible tells us that we are all sinners for two reasons
 - First, by nature – we were born into sin (**Psa 51:5**)
 - Second, by choice – we ignore or reject God through our choices (**Js 4:4**)
- We are totally incapable of saving ourselves
 - No amount of good works
 - No amount of church activities or attendance
 - And you certainly cannot buy your salvation
- Salvation has only been made possible through God’s Son, Jesus Christ

Faith in How We Live

- Going back to **Romans 1:17** listen to what the rest of that verse says
- *...just as it is written: The righteous will live by faith.*
- The righteousness of God is given to us only through faith, that is why it is called the Good News
 - The bad news is when we do not have the faith to embrace His truth
- And the growth of our faith often is the result of testing

- Testing that God permits
- Let's look briefly at three ways God tests our faith

1. God tests our faith through difficulties

- a. Nothing occurs in our lives that is not within the Father's will
 - i. This is not to say that God sends temptation or sin into our lives – He will not do that – there is a prince of this world, however, who will
 - ii. But even Job could not have gone through his trials without God's permission
 - iii. Nothing happens by accident in the life of a Christian
- b. **Isa 48:10** - *See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.*
 - i. What is the furnace of affliction?
 - ii. We can all identify times when the heat or our circumstances have become very intense
 - iii. The analogy being used by Isaiah is the furnace of the refiners fire
 1. It is so hot that the impurities of the raw silver and gold brought from the ground are burned away leaving only the pure metal
 2. When you are in the furnace of the refining fire your impurities are being burned away
 - iv. A silversmith was once asked how he knew all the impurities were burned away
 1. He replied simply, when I can see my reflection in the silver
 2. When others can see the reflection of Jesus in your life, even in the midst of the trials, your impurities are being removed
 3. That will come to the place of finality only when we are face to face with Him
- c. The other critical aspect of this test is how you respond
 - i. **James 1:2** – *Consider it pure joy when you face trials of every kind*
 - ii. How? By knowing that His purpose and plan for you are worth so much more than the comparatively small price of discomfort you may be asked to endure
 - iii. We have talked about this many times over the years together
 - iv. How you respond can often be one of the greatest factors in determining how long your faith needs to be tested at that time.

2. God tests our faith through commands

- a. In the NT alone there are 1050 commands
- b. Some are obvious, others seemingly unreasonable, some may sound just plain impossible
 - i. What do you do when you feel as if God has given you an impossible command?
 - ii. I can assure you it has been given to test and increase your faith

- c. Abraham was given several difficult and even seemingly impossible commands
 - i. God told him to pack up and leave his country – where am I going? – I'll tell you when you get there
 - ii. God told him to believe that He would make a great nation from his line of descendants (**Gen 12:6**)
 - 1. Did it matter that Abraham was 75 when he was told this?
 - 2. Not to God
 - iii. Then, the most challenging command of all
 - 1. Sacrifice your son
 - 2. **Gen 22:2** - *Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."*
 - iv. This has now gone from difficult to impossible
 - 1. But Abraham obeyed, and his tested faith grew
 - 2. Listen – Obey – Do – the formula for growing faith

- 3. God tests our faith through delays
 - a. If every prayer were immediately answered and we always got what we wanted when we wanted it, there would be no need for our faith to grow
 - b. Waiting builds our patience and our faith
 - i. In case you are wondering how long things take, let me share a few with you....
 - 1. It takes 6 seconds to fold a towel out of the laundry
 - 2. It takes 10 minutes for a snowflake to form as it falls through the atmosphere
 - 3. It takes 3 hours and 12 minutes to watch James Cameron's movie *Avatar*
 - 4. It takes 24 hours for plaque to colonize on your teeth
 - 5. It takes one week for bacon to lose its freshness in a refrigerator set at 32 degrees
 - ii. And here is something else to keep in mind
 - 1. The times of some of the greatest testing will often revolve around things that may not be very important in and of themselves
 - 2. But God will use anything, any situation to test and grow your faith – because He loves you!
 - iii. A perfect example of the time sometime needed involves the Children of Israel
 - 1. What could have been a trip in the desert for 4-5 weeks turned into one that lasted 40 years
 - 2. **Deut 8:2** - *Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.*

- Consider what the disciples prayed in **Luke 17:5** – *Lord, increase our faith*
 - Like asking God for patience, this too is a dangerous prayer
 - And it is certainly not easy
 - Remember when Abraham was told that God would establish a nation through his descendants?
 - God still had him wait another 25 years before the promise was fulfilled
 - And even though Abraham's faith wavered, resulting in the birth of Ishmael through the slave girl Hagar (**Gen 16:1-3**)
 - God was still faithful to His word

Which of these areas this morning has God been active in your life to increase your faith

- Are there difficulties in your life right now?
- Are there demands on your life that just seem to be too difficult or even impossible?
- Are you waiting and waiting and waiting on something very important that you believe God is going to supply?
- Your faith, Christian, is being tested
 - You have an opportunity to see your faith grow and become stronger
 - But are you rejoicing in spite of what is happening?
 - Are you praising God even though your life is very hard right now?
 - Are you able to still be a witness for the goodness of God?
- If your faith is, indeed, growing, you need to be able to answer “yes” to those three questions.
- Our faith is the foundation and at the core of our lives
- Give God praise and thanks when you are being tested and see what God will do in and through you when you come out the other side!