



Building God's People

Faith

Monday 1st May – Saturday 7th May

Daily Devotions



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OUT OF THE PIT

Read Hebrews 10:35 - 11:4

"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." Heb 11:1 (NIV)

We all hate being in a pit.

You know what it's like. You start a new job with great excitement – then within a few years or months you dread getting up in the morning. Or a couple, once very much in love, who now barely talk.

We can so easily get in a pit with our Christian walk. It happens to everyone who follows Christ. There are times when everything is light and then there are times when you can hardly bear to go to church, the Bible is dry as dust and God seems so far away.

Faith is the key. Faith will help us out of the rut.

Scripture says that "faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." What is our hope? Eternal life with Christ! We do not "see it" yet, not with our eyes. Yet the more sure and certain we are of this hope, the better we will overcome the struggles and disappointments of this life. Faith will lift you out of the pit – but only if your hope is in heaven.

A wonderful old spiritual song summarises this so well –

*This world is not my home, I'm just passing through
My treasure and my hope are all beyond the blue
Where many of my friends have gone on before
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore*

What is your faith in? Where is your hope?



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FAITH'S TEST

Read Acts 7:54 - 60

While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep [died]. (Acts 7:59-60)

Faith is trusting. Trusting is faith. Faith is believing. Believing is faith. To have faith is to fully rest on the promises God has given us in Christ.

In this world faith is always put to the test. Every day it will be put to the test. Every day you will have an opportunity to trust God or to turn from Him.

Say you are going for a job interview. You want this job. You *need* this job. You know that God wants honesty, but if you just exaggerate your experience a little... Here is faith's test. Will you trust God that He knows what is best or will you follow your own path?

The essence of sin is doubting God. You will face a hundred tests like this every day. Some small, some larger. What will you do? Will you trust God?

Stephen was a man of great faith. He held on to the name of Christ even though it cost him his life. He was the first of many, right down to this very day, who would rather die than deny Christ.

How will you fare in faith's test?



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CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

Read Galatians 2:11 - 21

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

You are a dead man walking.

It's true. From the outside, people look at the church and think it's a bit like a social club. A bit like Rotary. But it's far more dramatic than that. To join Rotary you have to fill out a form. To join the church, you have to give up your life.

A wise man said that we either live for ourselves or for God. There are no other choices. Before you came to Christ you were living for yourself. That's a fact. You did what you wanted, you went where you wanted, you lived to please yourself.

That was your old self. But your old self can't join the church - it's not allowed. Doesn't meet the membership requirements. So you had to get rid of the old self. Scripture says you crucified him - killed him.

And then Christ gave you a new self - a new life in Him that is lived by faith in Him. That is who you are now - your identity and purpose and life are found in Christ alone.

Does that sound like you? Have you crucified the old self?



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IN THE STORM

Read Matthew 8:23 - 27

He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. (Matthew 8:26)

What are you afraid of?

There is much to fear in this world. Some people fear loss of health. Some fear loss of wealth. Many people live in fear of others - what they think about you, what they say about you. A lot of people fear being alone. And many, many fear death.

The disciples were afraid of drowning. Jesus criticised them for their lack of faith. Faith is the opposite of fear. Faith is the antidote to fear. Faith overcomes fear because Jesus is King.

There is nothing in this world beyond His power. There is nothing that happens apart from His will. If we believe that, truly believe it, there is no room left for fear.

Whatever storms we face in life, we know that they are in the hands of our Lord. True faith leads to true happiness, for the faithful are set free and relieved from all care. As the Scripture says "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" (Psalm 118)

So, what are you afraid of?



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JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

Read Galatians 2:11 - 21

Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law (Galatians 2:16)

Do you think you are good enough?

Our how lives we are measured and compared to other people. You go to school and get a report card that grades your ability - B for maths, B+ for English etc. You try out for the school sports team and again you are measured - are you good enough or not? Did you make the team?

You go to work and you are graded again - given a wage that says "you are worth this much." Even in our social lives we are graded. People say "He's really fun" or "She's really boring" or "He's a loser".

We are always being compared to others. Whether we want it to or not, there is a question that haunts our minds. Am I good enough? Do I measure up? How do I compare?

When it comes to God things initially look bad. We cannot "measure up" to God's standard. We miss the mark. We fall woefully short.

But God has provided a way for us to make the team. That way is through faith in Christ. If we give up trying to make the grade on our own, and just rest wholly in Him, He will open up to us the door to Heaven.

Once we have Christ we have everything that is worth having. It is the only measure that counts. Your report card, your salary, your sporting ability, your appearance - none of these is important anymore. You have made God's team.

How do you measure up?



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PLEASING GOD

Read Hebrews 11:1 - 6

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)

How can you please God?

Everyone wants to please those that they love. If you are married, you want to make your spouse happy. Parents love doing things for their children. And there's a special delight in giving an unexpected present to a friend.

But how do we please God? What can we possibly give Him? He already has everything He needs! What can we do for Him that He can't do for Himself? Sometimes it's hard to figure out how to please human beings - how much harder to please God!

But the Scripture tells us how to please God. It is by faith - by trusting Him and believing in Him as He has revealed Himself to us. God wants us to know Him and be known by Him. Faith alone allows us to do this. If we wish to please God more and more, we will cultivate, strengthen and grow in our faith.

Are you pleasing God?

