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The Nature of Faith

A Life of Faith Series

Hebrews 11:1-3

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A Life of Faith! I think it's safe to say that each one of us in this room here this morning longs to be the kind of person that, at the end of our days, we can look back and say, "I lived a life of faith." We long to be people like that. But I do wonder if, when we finish here this morning, if someone came to you and said, "Hey, help me understand: what exactly is faith? And what does it mean to live a life of faith?" Could you offer up a confident answer to them? See, I think this phrase: **A life of faith**, and even just this word, **faith**, is one of those words that we use so often, and we talk about so much. In some ways, it just is so inherent in who we are—we're people of faith—that I think there are times where maybe our over-familiarity with it, can start to lead to actually some confusion, maybe even a vague sense of what it is.

So, this morning we want to ask the question, "What is faith?" And, "What does it mean to live a life of faith?" Really, that's not just a question that we want to ask this morning. We're going to start asking that question and then answering it this morning, but this also introduces the beginning of our summer series that we'll be walking through from now until mid-August that is called: **A Life of Faith**. Each week as we gather together, we're going to take that chapter of the Bible that is so often called the chapter of faith—Hebrews chapter 11—and we're going to walk through that chapter and read of the names that are referenced there. They're the Old Testament kind of pioneers of faith, and we're going to use our introduction in Hebrews to take us back into those very stories and look at what that meant for them. What did it look like for them to live a life of faith? We're going to encounter some very familiar names, people we would all know immediately, names that would just roll off our tongue: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. But we're also going to look at the likes of Abel and Enoch and Rahab. All of these people stand as demonstrations of what a life of faith looks like.

But this morning, we're starting with a very basic question: What is faith? In order to do that, we're going to be in the very first three verses of Hebrews Chapter 11. So, turn with me to Hebrews 11. You can really keep a bookmark in this chapter all summer. This is going to be where we start each week, as we'll then go back and look at these Old Testament stories. But here at the outset of Hebrews Chapter 11, this chapter will kind of walk us through faith over and over again, with different glimpses of faith. The author begins with the definition of faith. What exactly is faith? Verse 1:

Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

(*NASB, Hebrews 11:1)

Faith, **the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen**. Isn't that just a beautiful verse? A beautiful statement that had a poetic ring to it, just the way the Holy Spirit

inspired that author to write that particular sentence. I just love that sentence. So often, when I'm reading through Scripture, I'll come across a verse or a phrase, and I think I just want to linger there, as it's so beautiful, just the way it's phrased, so deep. You know, some of us might think that that would be the kind of verse—Hebrews chapter 11 verse 1—that you'd want to kind of put on your wall in your kitchen or above your fireplace. Possibly, if you're so inclined to get tattoos, maybe you'd get this tattooed on your body somewhere; maybe you already have. We won't ask for a show of hands on that one. I bet if you'd run over to Mardel, that Christian bookstore, you could probably find some weathered wood that is painted in a nautical theme (because there's a lot of things in Mardel in nautical themes) that says: **Faith: the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.**

But of course, memorizing this verse, knowing it by heart, doesn't necessarily mean that we understand exactly what it means or what it entails. It doesn't necessarily mean we even believe it or live as if it were true. So, we want to walk through this first sentence kind of slowly, looking at each word for just a few moments. I want to start with this word, faith, and I want to begin by just naming some things that faith is not. It's the way our world commonly views faith, but we have to reject these definitions.

The first definition that I think is commonly used in faith is that it's something like *wishful thinking*. “Oh, I just hope it will happen,” is another way of saying it or just, “Oh, you’ve got to have faith.” You know, it's something that is a shallow-level hope, not a deep hope, but just kind of something that doesn't have much bearing on your life. We kind of throw that word out there, and it's a weak word when we use it like that. But that's not the biblical understanding of faith at all.

The second understanding of faith that I think is much more common is that faith is kind of that realm of things or ideas that you can't explain, that don't really make any sense, and that any smart person certainly wouldn't believe. But you're supposed to believe it, so we call that faith. Faith is kind of the realm of the unreasonable for some people. That's the way they tend to think of it. And somehow faith is opposed to thinking; it's opposed to reason; it's opposed to deep thought and deep consideration and exploration.

Mark Twain is that author we're all familiar with, but probably haven't read much of his works. But we're familiar with him, and he had an incredible ability to kind of sum up common sentiment, but also do it in a way that packed a punch. And he said this: “Faith is believing what you just know ain't so...believing what you just know ain't so.” Is that what faith is? Is faith contrary to thinking? Is it contrary to deep thought? Is it contrary to examining the evidence and really probing the depths of an issue? Is that really what faith is? And the answer, of course, that we have to say, is that it is not at all what the biblical portrayal of faith is. That's not what faith is.

So what is it? Again, our author says: **Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.** So, we said what faith is not. Let's start to build a positive definition of faith.

The first thing I want to suggest that you just consider is that faith is one of these words that can be translated in a number of ways in the New Testament. The Greek word that we translate **faith** is often also translated as *belief*. It conveys a sense of *trust* or *confidence*. When we say, “I have faith in God,” what we're saying is, “I believe Him; I place my confidence in Him; my trust is in Him and Him alone.” It's not contrary in any way to faith, to say that faith is essentially synonymous with the idea of *trust*. These words faith and belief and confidence and trust, they're all kinds of different ways of describing the same thing. It's casting ourselves upon God. Faith is trust. Faith is confidence.

As the author continues, he says **faith is the assurance of things hoped for**. This word **assurance** is an important word for us to consider. Some of your translations might say, *faith is the certainty of things hoped for*, or *the confidence of things hoped for*. This word that is translated **assurance** in my translation is kind of a banking word. It means something like a title deed, like a guarantee on a on a car or on a home loan, right? It is reliable; it is trustworthy. That title on my car guarantees that is my car. That is a strong and confident, sturdy word. **Faith is the assurance of things hoped for**. In other words, there is a hope for the future, and I can have rock-solid, bedrock confidence and assurance that it is real, that it is it is guaranteed to me!

As we walk through the books of the Bible at Lincoln Berean, we always do it a chapter by chapter, verse by verse. But because we're diving right into Hebrews chapter 11, we don't necessarily understand the immediate context from Hebrews 10. So let me just talk about that for a moment. The author of Hebrews is writing to a people that were being persecuted. And in chapter 10 he talks about how they faced *reproaches* and *tribulations*. They were made a public spectacle of. Now we know stories from the first few centuries where Christians were kind of escorted into the Colosseum and were just ridiculed...tortured...made a spectacle of. And then in chapter 10, verse 34, the author says this:

For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, (Hebrews 10:34)

Now I ask what would empower someone to joyfully endure the seizure of property? Unjust seizure of property! This is not the bank coming in, repossessing something because you haven't made payments. This is an unjust tribulation, coming and taking your home, taking your car, and the author says that they joyfully endured this. As he continues in verse 34, he says,

...knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.

As the author seeks to define faith, he turns to these people who are experiencing persecution. And he reminds them, he fortifies their faith, so to speak, with the idea that faith is the **assurance** that you have a God who has made promises to you, and although they are yet future, they are guaranteed! You can count on them; they are real; they are trustworthy. You can be confident. There's a future-looking aspect to faith. Faith looks forward, **the assurance of things hoped for**.

So what would it look like to live a life of faith? It would be to be grounded in the very conviction that there is a God who has promised things to us. Although we have not yet received them, although He has not fulfilled those promises, those promises are absolutely sure! We can count on them. What He has said, He will bring to pass. There's no question; there's no variance. That is a bedrock reality for us.

One commentator said, "Faith is living as if the things hoped for are real." And they're real, because they are real. It's not that I imagined that they're real. It's that we have a God that will make it so. One aspect of faith is a future expectation, a hope that we know will be fulfilled!

I think often this kind of aspect of faith is something that we turn to at times of deep grief and mourning. When I'm walking through funerals with families, I find that this is kind of an aspect of faith that we cling to. We long to see these loved ones that we've lost.

This past weekend, my brothers were in town. One of my brothers sells motorcycles, so I'm fortunate enough to be able to go on these motorcycle rides with him. And as we were motorcycling around eastern Nebraska, we drove right by the home that my grandparents used to live in, and I found myself stricken with grief. I just miss them so much. I used to spend the summers with them. I'd live at their house, and I just longed to see them again.

Now the beautiful reality that my brothers and I talked about afterwards is how we as Christians live with this glorious hope that actually there will be a day when we will see them again. We have a future hope that, just as Jesus has risen from the dead, our loved ones who have passed, in Christ, will also rise. We don't look forward to a future-disembodied state with them. We look forward to an embodied existence with them. We will once again hug those that we have lost who are in Christ. And that is a glorious hope! That is a bedrock foundational aspect of our faith. We know that God will bring things to pass, and although we haven't yet experienced the fulfillment of those promises, we are assured of them; we are convinced of them. You can count on it. Faith has this forward look that we have a God that will bring about His promises.

But then the author adds this second statement: **faith is the conviction of things not seen**, and here we get a critical kind of understanding of faith. Faith certainly has a forward-looking, not-yet-fulfilled aspect, but faith also has a not-seen aspect. We believe there is a reality that we cannot grasp with our five senses, and yet it is very real. We can count on it. This word **conviction** is a strong word. It could be translated *proof* or *evidence*, just like **assurance** is a strong word...a solid word. **Conviction** is not some subjective experience. No, it's the *evidence of things unseen*. It's that we know there is an unseen realm where God lives, and it is right here in our midst. And although we can't access it with our physical eyes, we access it through eyes of faith. We just sang about it: *A million angels fall face down on the floor*.

We think about the book of Revelation when John's eyes were opened to the reality that is always there. We just don't always see it with our physical eyes. But in faith, we know it to be so; we trust in it. We're confident of it. We know God exists. We know He has plans and purposes. We cast our

confidence on that very fact. We're grounded in that reality. So, faith is a type of trust that the unseen realm is absolutely real. We can interact with it. We live our life in such a way that believes that those things which are unseen, are absolutely reliable. That is ultimate reality, so to speak.

I think this is the place where often the world then says, “Yeah, see, this is what we're talking about—that you just know that's not true—and that's why this is kind of a fantasy land.” And they'd start to say things like, “See, faith is opposed to knowledge.” And so we've got to ask, “Is faith opposed to knowledge?” I want to suggest to you this morning, though, that faith is just an aspect of knowledge. It's a type of knowledge; it's knowledge of what is not seen. It's spiritual knowledge. It's knowledge of God and His plans and His purposes and His intent.

Faith is what life with God has always been about from the first pages of Scripture all the way to the end. God has interacted with people on the basis of faith—people casting their lives upon Him, trusting Him and relying upon Him, not relying upon themselves. That's precisely what we're going to see in the weeks to come. It's all these people who did just that. That's where the author takes us in verse 2:

For by it (that is by faith) the men of old gained approval.

By it, by faith, the men of old gained approval. It is a bit of a precursor for what we're going to walk through this summer, that these lives that we're going to look at, are lives that demonstrate a life of faith. The translation **gained approval** is another interesting translation. Hebrews is a notoriously complex book to translate; it's really high-level Greek. But you could just as easily translate this as *testimony* or *witness*. The very lives that they lived served as a testimony or a witness to the goodness of a life lived by faith, the goodness of casting all of your confidence upon God.

You know, I think this serves as a good moment to actually talk about what we're going to study for the rest of the summer. There are times when I'm walking through Hebrews 11, and I have to remind myself that these are people worthy of emulation. But I need to be careful not to put them on too much of a pedestal, because they were people, just like you and me, people filled with anxiety and filled with pressures and going through tribulations. And they didn't have it all put together. Their resumes weren't perfect. Sometimes we can start to kind of elevate people; we'd like to kind of make them into celebrities, you know, and sometimes we even call this *The Hall of Faith*, and there is a sense in that that's true. These are kind of like pioneers; they're the forebearers of a life of faith. Sometimes people call this *The Hall of Faith Heroes*, and that's also true. They embodied something that is worthy of emulation. But I always have to remind myself, because I'm so prone to kind of raise them up. I have to remind myself that the reason they are heroic is because they cast their confidence on the true hero. God is the hero! And the thing that is incredible about these people is the degree to which they cast their confidence upon God!

I had an Old Testament professor that used to always say, “Hey, when you're reading the Old Testament, never forget God is the main character. Everyone else is just a bit character.” When we

look at these lives in the weeks to come, sometimes it's easy to get caught up in the great things that happen and say, "Oh, I want to do something like that. I want to just do something great!" But we have to remember the place that flowed from—the things they said, the things they did flowed from a life of faith, and flowed from a confidence in a God that does incredible things with people that cast their trust, that place their confidence in Him and Him alone. If anything in these lives that we're going to read about is worthy of emulation, it is their faith, the place from which all of these incredible things flowed, as God responded to their trust in Him.

And now, as we move on to the last verse that we're going to consider this morning, the author introduces this linguistic device that will be used throughout the rest of the summer. He says, **By faith**, and then he's going to go on to explain...**by faith** Abraham did this. **By faith** so-and-so... and on-and-on. But here at the outset, he takes a bit of a different approach. Verse 3:

By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen has not been made out of things that are visible.

So, as the author turns towards these pioneers, you're going to begin to name them: **By faith, Abel**, and we're going to trace lives in the Old Testament all the way from the beginning of Genesis to Joshua, and we'll end on Rahab. We're going to look at all of these lives. He begins somewhere else. He begins at the very beginning. Genesis 1:1, a verse so familiar to us that probably even without even trying, we probably all memorized it. Genesis 1:1: **In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.**

By faith, we grasp that. **By faith**, we place our confidence in that. **In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.** Such a simple sentence, but so packed with profound meaning. So much significance, so many ramifications flow from what we do with this very verse. The very first verse of the Bible presents us with a choice, essentially.

Either I believe that the world that I live in was designed, was created, was put together, was granted purpose, was granted significance—all of that was done with purpose—and therefore I, as a created being, should submit to the purpose of the designer, or I believe there's no purpose. There's no design. There's no order. There's no logic, therefore there's no significance. And I have to figure out, "How do I get out of bed in the morning? And how do I live with significance?"

The very first verse of the Bible presents us with a choice. What will we do with this first verse? These are the choices laid bare, and all the questions that flow from it are questions that will have a profound impact on the way we live our life day-to-day. Who's in charge? Who's in charge of everything? Who's a good person? How do I become a good person? What's reality? What is purpose? Where do I gain significance? Either I look at the world, and I say there is a Being that created all of this, and therefore, the reason and the intent behind His creation informs the way I live, or I have to say, "I" need to come up with significance. "I" need to start to decide why all that stuff happened. "I" need to start to infuse significance into my day.

Do you ever wonder why all of these conversations we have in our world are so, you know, explosive? Because it's an incredibly threatening thing to be told that the place you're finding significance, is not actually reliable. It's a challenging thing.

What do we do with the very first verse? Do we cast our confidence upon God, or do we start to kind of makeup definitions for ourselves? Really, that's what humanity has been doing since the very first days, isn't it?

So, at a basic level, the starting point for a life of faith is just considering that there is a God behind it all, and He brought everything into existence. Everything that is seen was created by Him, and He didn't create it by taking some raw materials and starting to form it all together and shape it into what He wanted. No, He spoke, and it was...He spoke, and it was! If you just consider that for just a moment, our mind can barely comprehend how immeasurably powerful a being like that must be. He speaks a word, and matter comes into existence. Nuclear power has nothing on the power of God. Faith, grounded in the reality of God's immense power, is what allows us to live a different kind of life. What does it mean that there is a being of that immense power that, through Christ, we get to live in constant relationship with? Well, what it means is that I live in an entirely different world than someone who does not believe that. I live in a world where there is Someone that is so powerful, He brings matter into existence. And that means that no matter what I am walking through, I can count on Him. God is trustworthy; He holds everything in His hands; He is behind all things; all things exist because of Him. Therefore, no matter what I am encountering, I can trust in Him; I can place my faith in Him.

You know, throughout Scripture, it's interesting that as people are looking to kind of bolster their faith a little bit, to be more confident in God and really try to support their faith at a moment where they're walking through something precarious, so often (this is especially true in the Psalms) they will turn back to this very matter of fact that God created all things, and the fact that He created all things means we can trust Him. That's how powerful He is!

While we were in Spain, there were some long-term missionaries from Lincoln Berean, Sam and Karla Heldenbrand. They were down in southern Spain, and they were going to come visit us in Madrid and they wanted to walk through some things they were learning about prayer. So, they came to Madrid and, you know, you kind of think, "Oh, I wonder what we're going to do?" And you think, "Oh, we're probably going to start with something like the Lord's prayer or Psalm 23, or something like that."

As they began, they said, "Turn to Jeremiah 32," and that surprised me. I wasn't expecting Jeremiah 32. I don't know if any of your daily Bible reading plans have you currently in Jeremiah 32, but in case they don't, let me just give you a little bit of context. In Jeremiah 32, the prophet is sitting there in Israel, and he sees the Chaldeans are right there on the border. They're about to come in, and they're going to seize the very city of God, Jerusalem, and they're going to take over and basically run the people of God out of the land that God had given them. And as Jeremiah is seeking to understand what is going on, how could this possibly be happening, he begins this prayer.

Jeremiah 32, verse 17, and this is how he begins. He says, **‘Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You,’**

Things are going poorly. The enemies are at the gate; everything is falling apart. What is going on in Jeremiah’s mind as he turns to God in prayer? He is reminded, **Ah Lord God, you made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and Your outstretched arm. Nothing is too difficult for you.** Well, with what we are going through right now, are you able, Lord? Are you able to handle it all? You are the God of all creation; You brought all things into being. Your power is so immense I cannot possibly understand it. Nothing is too difficult for you!

Hebrews says in verse 3 that *by faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.* What do we get for living a life of faith? Do we somehow get some points in heaven for that? Is God more pleased with us? Do we get to kind of wear a tag that says we're super Christians? You know, we're at faith level 100 and other people are level 50. Is that what it's all about?

The answer of course is, “Absolutely not!” To live a life of faith means we live in a different reality. We live in a world where we have a God who is absolutely real, and His future promises will be fulfilled. His present reality is with us—although we cannot see it—but it is absolutely assured. And He is able to do anything He wants. Nothing is too difficult for Him!

What are you experiencing? What are you walking through? So often we are prone to try to go about it alone. But we, by faith, understand that we have a God who created all things; nothing is too difficult for Him. No matter what we're walking through, He is able. He is able, and He is ready to come to our aid. He is more powerful than we can possibly imagine, and He loves you. That's what we get as we walk a life of faith. We live a different kind of life.

So as we close, here's a question. We're all people of faith. If we placed our faith in Christ, we are people of faith already. So the question is, “Is it possible to grow in faith? Is it possible that a year from now let's say, or, let's say even at the end of this summer, is it possible that that our capacity to trust God, our capacity to live a life of faith could increase, such that we have more faith than we had previously? Is that possible?” And the answer I want to suggest to you is, “Absolutely! That's part of the reason we're walking through this very series, that we will become a people of rock-solid faith, trusting God more and more!”

But the next question is, “How do I do that? How do we grow in faith?” I'd like to offer just two practical suggestions.

The first suggestion is this. It's so simple that I think it's actually easy to overlook; it's easy to forget. Here's the first suggestion: **Ask God for it...ask God for it!** *“Lord, I long to trust You more. I long to be more grounded in my confidence. I long to trust You with everything. There are certain areas of my life, I just don't trust You. I long to trust You.”*

Remember that story where the father comes to Jesus and is asking Jesus to intervene and heal his son? And Jesus looks at the man and says, “Do you believe?” Do you remember what the man says in response? He says, “**Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.**” What a beautiful statement! “*Of course, Lord, I believe, but help my unbelief. Grow my capacity to trust You.*” First suggestion: Just ask. Ask God that He would help you grow in your faith.

The second one is a bit more tangible. I just want to encourage you to begin to act on the faith that you already have. **Act on the faith that you already have.** Now, we talked earlier about whether faith is opposed to knowledge, and I suggested that faith is just an aspect of knowledge—knowledge about God in His realm, and the things that are of God, knowledge of this unseen realm. And so if we wanted to grow in knowledge of something, how would we go about that?

If we wanted to grow in, let's say, knowledge of Iowa, which for no reason anyone needs to grow. *(laughter)* I'm kidding...joking. We wanted to grow in knowledge of Iowa, how would we do that? Well, we'd do it by doing two things. We'd grow in knowledge by first of all thinking about something, kind of giving some thought to it. So, we'd probably pick up some books, read a little bit. We'd read some history of Iowa; we would start to look into all of that kind of stuff. And we'd start to kind of soak our minds in this thing that we want to know more about, we want to grow in knowledge of. And of course, every time we gather together, whether it be in Life Groups, or in a class, or here at our gatherings on the weekend, we are seeking to pour our minds into the very words of Scripture, and have Scripture come to be what we think about. We want our minds to be shaped by God's word. And so we're applying thought to who God is. He, the Creator of all things.

But the second thing I might do if I wanted to learn more about the state of Iowa is, I might get in my car, and drive there. I might go to some different towns. I'd experience it. I'd talk to people; I'd look at the fields and see all of the windmills on I-80. There's just so many windmills. I'd do these things in order to experience the thing that I wish to know more about.

That is the way knowledge grows, and faith is the exact same way. We think about who God is. We think about the things of God. We start to have our mind be transformed. And we also experience His faithfulness. We take a step, and we see suddenly that, “Oh, I trust Him more.” I take a small step; I take a step of faith, and then suddenly God shows up, and I see, “Oh, He is so trustworthy. I knew He was trustworthy, but now I understand it even more, and I'm that much more ready to take another step of faith.” What might that look like?

Megan was up here earlier, and she talked about leading small groups of VBS. And for some people in the room, that might sound like the worst thing ever. Maybe it'd be a step of faith, maybe God is prompting your heart and you say, “I don't know if I can take time to do that. I don't know if I have the energy to do that. And I don't know if I can really kind of recover day-to-day. It's three hours with kids. That's a lot. But there's something in me that feels like God might be prompting me to do that.” Could I say, “Lord, by faith, I'm going to take a step. I'm just going to ask You to support me, strengthen me, show me that You're trustworthy.” Walk through that this week. I don't know, that may not be what God is calling you to do.

The other thing we mentioned was baptism. You know, and I think there are a lot of people in here who maybe don't want to get baptized, because it's a little exposing. You're up on stage; everyone's looking at you. But baptism is just a step of faith, a step of obedience, just saying, "Lord, I trust You. I am confident that You are so good. It's a chance for us to come together as a body and say, "Man, we are so moved that God has moved in your life that way." It's a chance for us to worship, and so maybe a small step of faith will be to say, "I've been resisting the idea of getting baptized for a long time, but I'm going to take that step of faith. I'm just going to see God show up, see Him encourage me as I take that step." And suddenly your faith is fortified. You have a bit more trust to take the next step.

I think sometimes we also think, "I need to take a really big step!" It's a little bit like we say, "Let's start our prayer life by praying for world peace or something like that." And we think, "I need to be like Moses; I need to take a step of faith, like crossing the Red Sea." And I would say to you, "Just start small; take a small step today of trusting God, believing Him and watching Him show up."

When I was considering different ways to kind of illustrate this, I thought of an interaction I had with my daughter, and then she told me, "Dad, you've said that before. You've told that story before, and so you shouldn't tell it again." And I said, "I don't think I have. I'm going to tell the story again." (Maybe I have.)

Lucia, when she was about two, was in our basement, and she was sitting on the back of a couch. And this couch was, you know, she's two, so it's about like one-and-a-half times her height. That's a long way for a two-year-old, and so I'm kind of supporting her, kind of holding her back. And then I thought, "You know, Lucia, it'd be fun to fall backwards. I'll catch you." You know, she's sitting there, and she kind of gave me this skeptical look with her two-year-old eyes, not so sure that would be a good idea. Now, I could have gone into a long explanation about how, you know, two years of life have proven that I am a trustworthy father, and I just think if you would think about this a bit more, Lucia, then you would understand that you can certainly trust me with this. But that's not what I did. I think she knew I was trustworthy. She had seen that she could think about that as much as her two-year-old brain could, but I knew she needed to experience it.

And so I said, "Lucia, fall back an inch." She fell back an inch. Then I said, "Let's go two inches." We went a little further. "Well, let's go four inches," and she fell back, and she started thinking this is kind of fun. And before long, Lucia is throwing herself backwards with reckless abandon because she knew Dad could be trusted...Dad could be trusted.

Faith grows by taking steps, and often it grows incrementally and almost imperceptibly. But as we step out in confidence, God will show up. He will show us that He is trustworthy. That is who He is. He is a promise keeper. His promises are sure. Even though we haven't yet seen the fulfillment, they are sure. His presence with us is absolute reality. We can trust that He is right here by our side. Although we don't see Him, we trust Him. And He is the God of immeasurable power. He brought the world into existence. He holds it in His very hand. We can place our confidence in

Him. That's what it looks like to live ***A Life of Faith***. And so we say, “Lord, we believe; help our unbelief.”

Our Father, we come to You, and we are so grateful that You are more powerful than we can possibly imagine. And we are so grateful that, in love, You sent Your Son into the world to die for us, that we might live in an unending relationship with You. We praise You for that. And, Lord, we want to be a people that are growing constantly in our conviction that You are so trustworthy. There is nothing in our life that we can't hand over to You. There's nothing that You can't handle. You're concerned about every single aspect of our life, and we want to grow in our faith, in our belief and our confidence in that. And so we ask, by Your Spirit, Lord, help us to grow in our faith, that we might be people who live lives of faith, and that those around us may look and say, “That is a good God.” And may You be glorified by that. Lord, we pray all these things in the name of Your Son, Amen.

Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE
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