

A wooden cross is centered in the image, made of two weathered wooden beams. The background is a smooth gradient, transitioning from a warm yellow-orange at the top to a muted green at the bottom. Overlaid on the cross is the text "FORTIFIED FAITH" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The text is split into two lines: "FORTIFIED" on the top line and "FAITH" on the bottom line. The letters are slightly shadowed, giving them a three-dimensional appearance as if they are floating or attached to the cross.

FORTIFIED FAITH

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The content of this book was adapted from the “Fortified Faith” sermon series by Pastor Tim Gilligan. Alyce Youngblood edited and Cleanline Creative designed this book.

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I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

GALATIANS 2:20





Meadowbrook
CHURCH

OUR MISSION

is to help people move from where they
are to where God wants them to be.



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LIVING BY FAITH

Scripture repeatedly encourages Christians to walk and live “by faith.” (See 2 Corinthians 5:7, Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11 and Hebrews 10:38 for just some examples.)

Christians are not meant to live by what we see, feel or think. We do not live by cultural or peer pressures. Rather, we live by faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us (Galatians 2:20).

Our faith is not just faith unto itself; it is faith in God and His Word. It connects us to His power and His promises. We see this modeled for us by figures like Abraham, sometimes referred to as “the father of faith.” Romans 4:21 tells us that Abraham was “fully convinced that what [God] had promised He was also able to perform.” This is perhaps the most succinct definition of faith.

Faith is total trust and confidence that God will come through.

There is nothing that God cannot do, cannot help or cannot fix. Faith takes Him at His Word. This is how we overcome in this life.

FORTIFY YOUR MEASURE OF FAITH

As powerful as faith is, it still needs to be fortified. **There are other graces and disciplines that we need to add to faith, ensuring it is robust and resilient.**

Romans 12:3 tells us that “God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.” This measure or portion of faith is dynamic; it can grow or shrink, it can be strong or weak, it can be active or absent.

The primary way Satan will try to interfere with your faith is through your beliefs. Your beliefs govern your life. It can seem as though everything around you is designed to contradict or confuse your beliefs and thus erode your faith. There is virtually nothing out there, in culture, media or the world around you, that builds your faith—so *you* must.

Start by being watchful of what forms your beliefs. You *need* to hear the Word of God taught. Don't just rely on online pastors and spiritual influencers to teach you. Get planted in a church—in the house of the Lord—to build up your beliefs. This rootedness will allow you, and your faith, to flourish.

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

ROMANS 1:17

WHEN STORMS ARISE

Let's look at one memorable moment in Jesus' ministry (found in Mark 4:35–41) that reminds us of the importance of fortifying our faith. Jesus and His disciples are on a boat when a major storm arises. The disciples, alarmed, wake Jesus, who has been sleeping in the stern. He rebukes the wind and the waves, calming the sea. Then He turns to His disciples and wonders, ***"Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"*** (verse 40, emphasis added).

The disciples had every reason to be confident and trust in Jesus. They had witnessed His miracles and heard His teachings. Yet, in a time of crisis, even their faith was shaky and in need of fortification.

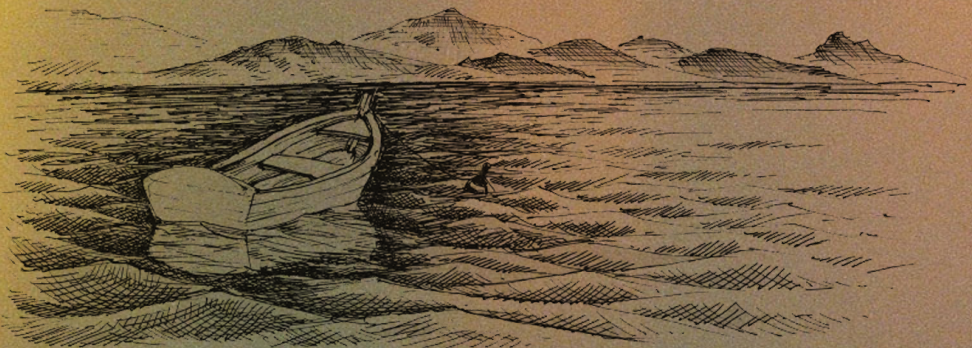
Today, Jesus might say some of the same things to you: *Why are you so fearful? Why are you often worried or troubled? Why are you having a hard time sleeping? You know that I am good and can be relied on—so, what happened to your faith?*

MAKE EVERY EFFORT

The Christian life is serious business. It is not an extracurricular activity, a side hustle or a hobby.

In 2 Peter 1:5–8 (NIV), we are urged to “make every effort” to fortify our faith—to add to it goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, mutual affection and love. These qualities aren’t just nice-to-haves; the passage goes on to say these traits will keep us from losing our way or being ineffective and unproductive. Fortifying our faith is key to being fruitful in life and staying connected to God (verses 8–11).

God has given you a precious measure of faith. How are you stewarding it?



KEY FAITH COMBINATIONS

FAITH & LOVE

One of the most well-known passages in the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13, offers us a reminder that our faith needs reinforcement. **“Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing”** (verse 2b).

This is one of the most vital combinations that fortifies our faith: faith *and* love.

God’s love is *agape* love, the highest form. We do not naturally possess this kind of love, but we receive it from Him. God has love *for* us. He also demonstrates love to us. His love is received *within* us, and, when we let that love work and make us whole, it flows *through* us.

1 Corinthians 13 gives us a beautiful picture of what this holy love looks like: “Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails” (verses 4–8a).

Dozens of times in the New Testament, we find faith and love coupled together. And through these verses, we learn that love makes faith work. **Love energizes and activates faith** (Galatians 5:6, AMP).

Maybe there’s something you have been believing God for, but it’s not happening. Perhaps you know Scripture well and feel you have all the “right” knowledge, but your faith life is stale.

The problem may not be your faith! The problem may be that you are lacking love. When you are out of step in love, you are out of step in faith.

Like a lamp plugged into an outlet, faith is activated and powered by love. Do not give up faith; do not “throw out the lamp!” Instead, check your connection, your energy source: love. Have you perhaps been irritable, selfish, unforgiving, proud, boastful, rude or jealous? Or are you walking in faith *and* love?

... I keep hearing about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people.

PHILEMON 1:5 (NLT)

FAITH & GRACE

To understand faith, you must understand grace.

Without grace, faith becomes about works—about what we *do*. But our salvation is granted and our deepest needs are met only through God's unmerited goodness and favor. **“For by grace you have been saved through faith,** and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast,” Ephesians 2:8–9 tells us.

Without a grasp of grace, you'll end up trying to earn what God wants to freely give to you. As The Message interprets Matthew 6:31, “What I'm trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with *getting*, so you can respond to God's *giving*.”

The power of faith and grace working in tandem is revealed across the two realms of this life: the natural and the spiritual.

The natural relates to our senses, what is seen and felt. This is where we experience pain and need. The spiritual is unseen. This is where grace abides and our needs are met.

Faith is the key to the unseen. It reaches into the spiritual and pulls what we need into the natural.

You might think of grace as a container or vessel. Within it is everything that God has promised, prepared and provided. Faith releases what grace contains.

What do you need? The Word of God reveals what is available, if we only have faith to release it: salvation, forgiveness, wisdom, provision, protection, peace, guidance and so much more. **For every problem there is a promise.**

In His grace, God is ready to provide what you need. You don't have to earn it. But you do have to trust God for it.

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

ROMANS 5:1-2

FAITH & PATIENCE

Like tending a crop until harvest (Mark 4:26-29), seeing faith come to fruition is a process—which requires patience.

The process might look something like this: You ask or put trust in God for something. You obey what He asks of you. You give thanks for His goodness and what you trust He is going to do. And then ... you wait. *This* is where patience kicks in.

While you are waiting, the devil will try to interfere with your faith by casting doubt on God's ability or timing. You'll wonder if anything is going to happen or change. You may be tempted to give up. But, as Hebrews 10:35a (NLT) says, "So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord!" **Your faith is made stronger when combined with patience.**

Hebrews 6:11-12 (NIV) encourages believers to show "diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised." Patience is the practice of this diligence; it keeps faith on the job.

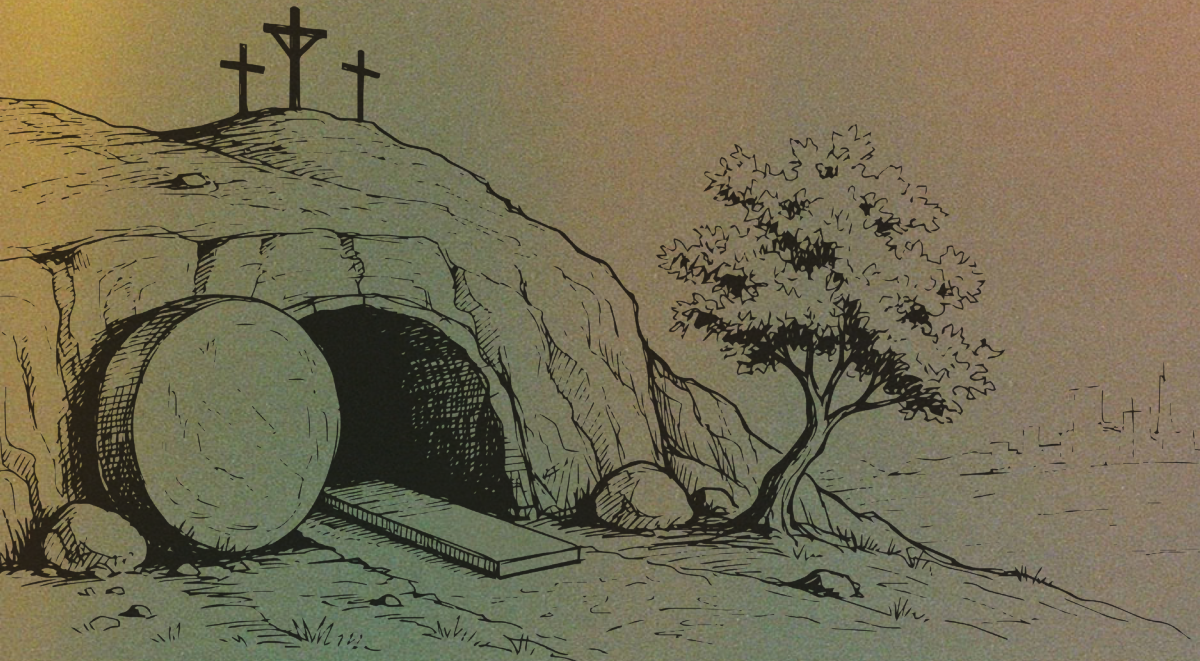
Patience is not just biding your time or putting up with something. In the Bible, we learn about patience as steadfastness and endurance. **Patience is being consistent and constant.** (*Without* grumbling. Don't run your mouth or complain while you wait! More on that to come.)

There are a few ways to come by patience: You might learn it, earn it or experience it as a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Often, when your faith is being tested, patience is being produced. In James 1:2-3, we read, "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience." You might compare this to someone's body producing adrenaline when they are in an emergency or under pressure. When your faith is challenged, patience kicks in and gives you supernatural ability to be joyfully steadfast and constant.

The gap between believing and receiving—that is where you need faith and patience working together.

Patience is the quality that does not surrender to circumstance or succumb under trial; it is the opposite of despondency and is associated with hope.

**Vine's Expository Dictionary of
New Testament Words**



FAITH SPEAKS

Everybody has a mechanism for belief; we're wired to believe in something. We are all believers, in some fashion! And belief can lead toward faith or toward fear.

You could think of faith and fear as running on the same track. They are on either side of a spectrum or continuum, operating by similar principles. You are either living by faith, or you are living in fear.

FEAR

FAITH



*Both fear and faith come by hearing.
They are both in your heart and in your mouth.
They both believe that something you cannot
yet see will come to pass.
But ...*

- Fear works against you.
- Fear is believing in something's ability to hurt or hinder you.
- In fear, you are vulnerable to being overcome.
- Fear is negative.

- Faith works for you.
- Faith is believing in God's ability to help you and to care for you.
- In faith, you are able to overcome.
- Faith is positive.

BELIEVE & SPEAK

One of the most powerful operating principles for faith and fear is words. **The very spirit of faith is that we believe and we speak. This is what causes our faith to come alive.**

Romans 10:8-10 offers a picture of just how powerful words of faith can be: “But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

If speaking in faith can produce the miracle of salvation, it can help in every area of your life.

For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

LUKE 6:45B

THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE “BUT”

When you are experiencing a challenge, be mindful of whether your words lean negative or positive—whether they focus on the problem or on the promise. In other words: *Stay on the right side of the “but.”*

You might let fear get the best of you and say, “I know Philippians 4:19 says that God will supply all my needs according to His riches in glory, **but** I am helpless in this really tough situation.”

Or you might stand in faith on God’s promises and say, “I can’t

fix this in my own power, **but** I trust that my God will supply all my needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Again: Stay on the right side of the “but.”

Faith does not deny a situation; you can acknowledge hardships and challenges! The difference is that faith also does not deny what God has to say.

And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I believed and therefore I spoke,” we also believe and therefore speak.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:13

DON'T RUN YOUR MOUTH!

The speech centers of the brain are powerful. A thought spoken gets added attention and is re-prioritized; it goes from a concept to a project, from a possibility to an expectation.

Do not use your mouth to speak against your hope. Don't run your mouth!

It is possible to have faith in your heart and have doubt and unbelief in your head at the same time. But even your doubts cannot penetrate your heart unless they go through your mouth.

The phrase “fear not” appears in Scripture well over 100 times. We know we are to resist fear and instead believe and speak in faith. So, how can you speak to and address every arena of your life in faith?

- **Speak to things.** Mark 11:23 reads, “For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.” Mountains here might represent obstacles, storms, symptoms or other things in your life that might be uncertain or difficult.
- **Speak to yourself.** What are you struggling with? What are you working on? What are you believing for? In faith, profess and go over these things with God, as often as you need to. Remind yourself of your hopes and needs and of His promises.
- **Speak to the devil.** When Jesus was in the wilderness, He spoke back with authority every time He was tempted (Matthew 4:1-11). Not only that, He responded with intimate knowledge of Scripture (“It is written ...”). No temptation—not the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes nor the pride of life—overcame Him. You can follow Jesus’ example when the devil interferes with or tempts you.
- **Speak with believers.** Surround yourself and speak with others of “like precious faith” (2 Peter 1:1). It’s so important to have other Christians in your life who you can talk faith with.

You must keep your heart and mouth working together in alignment and pointed in the direction of faith.

DAILY FAITH STATEMENTS

Pastor Tim has a “top five” of faith statements he starts his day with (“I will serve God. I will love my wife. I will be joyful. I will lead well. I will help others.”). Perhaps you want to select your own series of statements that help you to keep faith in your heart and mouth, whatever is ahead of you in your day.

Here are a few promises to trust in and speak out each day:



Today is going to be a great day.

I will not fear or dread.

God will never leave me and never forsake me.

I have favor around me like a shield.

God's grace is always enough for me.

The Lord is my helper; I will not fear.

God's mercies are new every morning.

I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.

I am strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

God saw this day.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.





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