

DEVOTIONS AND NOTES FOR OCTOBER 6-11

Sermon Notes for October 5 "Feel the Burn"

- 1. Faith is something to be guarded, strengthened and cared for lest it becomes corrupted or diluted.**

"Now follow the example of the correct teaching I gave you, and let the faith and love of Christ Jesus be your model. You have been trusted with a wonderful treasure. Guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit, who lives within us." -1 Timothy 1:13-14

- 2. Faith is not something we do but it defines what we are.**

"So I ask you to make full use of the gift God gave you when I placed my hands on you. Use it well. God's Spirit doesn't make cowards out of us. The Spirit gives us power, love, and self-control." -1 Timothy 1:6-7

- 3. Faith is born of enduring and overcoming challenges.**

"This is why I am suffering now. But I am not ashamed! I know the one I have faith in, and I am sure he can guard until the last day what he has trusted me with." -2 Timothy 1:12

Monday, October 6 Read Psalm 137

This is a painful psalm of regret and lamentation laced with anger and a very "un-Christian" urge for revenge! In short it is a brutally honest cry to God in the midst of suffering. Yet it is included in the scriptures and reminds us even in our most difficult moments we must never forget God's goodness and presence. As Christians, how does such faithful (if bitter) endurance make us more gracious to others, empathetic with another's suffering and even more Christ-like (as opposed to hate-filled and vengeful)? Discuss this with God in prayer today.

Tuesday October 7 Read Lamentations 3:19-26

This is a hard passage but most of us have felt at least a little like this at one time or another. What strengthens the writer's hope and what keeps him going? What evidences of God's goodness in your life can you hold on to? Reflect a bit on v.26. How does holding one and waiting strengthen us and increase our faith?

Wednesday, October 8 Read Habakkuk 1:1-4;2:1-4

The main message of Habakkuk is to trust in God's sovereignty and justice, even when faced with overwhelming evil and injustice, in other words to stand firm and have faith. Of course faith is easy when we are not challenged but can it truly be considered faith if it is never tested? Look closely at 2:4. What makes one proud and what does it mean to live by faith?

Thursday, October 9 Read Luke 17:5-10

Vv. 9-10 here can come across as pretty sharp, but the disciples did ask for an increase in faith! Think of it like someone asking for stronger muscles but not actually exercising. In light of this passage, how would you define the nature of discipleship? What role does our faith play in that what does the metaphor of the mustard seed mean here? Read this through a few times reflecting on what Jesus might be saying to you particularly?

Friday, October 10 Read 2 Timothy 1:1-14

Paul warns Timothy about being "ashamed" of his calling to share the Good News of Jesus and against a spirit of cowardice. What obstacles do you meet in your daily life that reduce your own boldness as an evangelist and witness? Read this passage through again. What prescriptions against wavering are offered here to you personally? What happens if you replace the word "suffer (vv. 8, 12)" with "sacrifice?"

Saturday, October 11 Read Psalm 37:1-9

After some rather grim readings this week, how does this psalm help orient us towards a positive attitude towards both God and the world around us? Notice the actions we are called to: trust, take delight, commit, refrain from anger and wait. How might these sorts of actions serve to shape us?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

PART 1: Warming up

1. Read Psalm 37:1-9 aloud with the group. Then discuss the following:

- In the midst of challenges and pressures, how does this psalm help orient us towards a positive attitude towards both God and the world around us?
- Notice the actions we are called to: trust, take delight, commit, refrain from anger and wait. How might *practicing* these sorts of actions serve to shape us? Can you give some specific examples of what these actions would look like in your daily life?

PART 2: Pushing Back

1. Read Luke 17:5-10 Share: Vv. 9-10 here can come across as pretty sharp, but the disciples *did* ask for an increase in faith! Think of it like someone asking for stronger muscles but not actually exercising. Discuss the following:

- In light of this passage, how would you define the nature of discipleship? What role does our faith play in that what does the metaphor of the mustard seed mean here?

2. Read 1 Timothy 1:1-14 aloud, each person in the group taking one verse in turn. Then discuss the following:

- If our faith is something to be guarded, strengthened and cared for lest it becomes corrupted or diluted, make two lists in the group: 1.) things we must guard against or that cause our faith to be corrupted and 2.) ways we can specifically guard, strengthen and care for our own faith and the faith of those around us. What does the Holy Spirit give us that can help in this?
- If Faith is not something we do but it defines what we are, what is the difference between the two? Read Habakkuk 1:1-4;2:1-4. The main message of Habakkuk is to trust in God's sovereignty and justice, even when faced with overwhelming evil and injustice, in other words to stand firm and have faith. Of course faith is easy when we are not challenged but can it truly be considered faith if it is never tested? Look closely at 2:4. What makes one proud and what does it mean to live by faith?
- Faith is born of enduring and overcoming challenges, or put another way, a faith that is not challenged is no faith at all! Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not? What would Paul or Habakkuk say to this concept?