

June 14, 2015  
Sermon for the Third Sunday after Pentecost  
St. Peter Lutheran Church  
Bowie, TX  
Larry Knobloch, Pastor  
2 Corinthians 5:1-10

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

2 Corinthians 5:1–10 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. <sup>2</sup> For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, <sup>3</sup> if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. <sup>4</sup> For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. <sup>5</sup> He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. <sup>6</sup> So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, <sup>7</sup> for we walk by faith, not by sight. <sup>8</sup> Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. <sup>9</sup> So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. <sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Grace, mercy, and peace from the one who touches our lives, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Walk by faith and not by sight.

As Christians, we've heard these words many times. We've heard them as good advice, "you should walk by faith and not by sight," as a command, "you must walk by faith and not by sight," and we've heard them as just a matter of fact, as the text says, "*we walk by faith, not by sight*" (2 Cor 5:7).

When we walk by faith and not by sight life gets much easier to handle.

We can keep things in proper perspective.

We know that momentary setbacks aren't the end of the world.

We know that even though death seems so final it's not the end.

We know that things that matter to the rest of the world don't matter so much to us; such as where we live, where we go to school, where we work, how much money we make, who likes us and who doesn't like us.

We live with the secure knowledge that when we make a mistake or a bad choice, we can't mess things up so bad that God can't fix them. We know that the Will of God will never take us where the grace of God can't protect us. And most important of all, we know that if we remain faithful servants of Jesus Christ, our retirement benefits are out of this world.

So, having all of these assurances from God, why do we find it so hard to walk by faith?

Why is it such a struggle for us to ignore the illusions we see and concentrate only on the facts?

There are many obstacles in our path as we try to walk by faith.

Let's look at a few of the big ones.

A friend and classmate of mine shared these examples with me, and I'm going to share them with you.

**The first obstacle in our faith walk is fear.**

A college student put together a presentation for his physics class to prove the law of the pendulum. He spent several minutes explaining to the class that a pendulum can never return to a point higher than the point from which it was released.

Next he took one end of a string and fastened it securely to the chalkboard. Then he fastened a child's top to the other end of the string. He raised the top and made a mark on the chalkboard at the point from which he released the top. He made a new mark every time the top returned.

When the top had finally come to rest, there was a series of marks from the release point to the resting top. Thus, he proved the law of the pendulum. He then turned to the class and asked if they believed in the law of the pendulum. The class acknowledged their firm belief.

The student then turned to his professor and asked if he also was committed to that belief. The professor stated that the law of the pendulum was a proven fact of physics and it had his fullest support.

The student then asked the class to follow him to the gymnasium for the second part of his presentation. From the ceiling hung a heavy steel cable, and from the cable a 500-pound weight; creating a pendulum, but on a larger scale.

. Against one wall was a table with a chair on it. The student invited his professor to sit on the chair with the back of his head against the wall.

The student raised the 500-pound weight to a point just short of the professor's nose. He then said, "If the law of the pendulum is true, then when I release this weight it should swing away and back but fall short of your nose. Do you still have complete faith in the law of the pendulum?"

There was a long pause and finally the professor said "yes." With that the young student released the 500-pound weight. It swished its way across the room, made a momentary pause at the far end of its swing, then began its rushing descent toward the professor.

As the weight began its upward climb from the bottom of the arc, the professor dove from the chair. The student then turned to the class and asked if their professor truly believed the law of the pendulum.

Their answer was a resounding no. The professor didn't stay in the chair because his fear of dying was greater than his faith in a law of physics. And this same thing happens to us. When we're not on the 'hot seat' of life's troubles it's very easy to say, 'I stand on the promises of God and I walk by faith.'

But what happens when the valley looks a little too deep, the waves look a little too high, or the pendulum of disaster is on its rapid uphill swing and we are standing in harm's way? Are we still walking by faith, or are we diving for shelter like the professor?

All too often I'm afraid we're like the professor.

The problem is that fear and faith cannot coexist. Where either one is, the other cannot be. So if we are walking around in fear, we sure aren't walking by faith.

**The second obstacle in our faith-walk is mountains.**

Jesus said that if we have faith as a mustard seed we could command mountains to go off into the sea and they would go. Sometimes I think when we read this we just pass right over it because we're not much interested in rearranging the landscape. However, we all have mountains in our lives; mountains of addictions, mountains of relationship problems, mountains of marital problems, mountains of money problems, mountains and mountains and mountains too numerous to list.

But Jesus said if we stand on our faith we can tell these mountains to take a hike – and they will.

Mountains of addictions will be brought under control, mountains of relationship and marital problems will be leveled flat, mountains of money problems will be conquered because our faith will lead us to using our money by God's standards and not ours.

However, as long as we view these life-mountains as bigger than God then our faith is actually smaller than a mustard seed and the mountains stay.

If we truly walk by faith these mountains become mole hills.

**The last obstacle to our walk by faith is doubts.**

You might call this a bad case of the "what ifs"  
Jesus told us to go and teach all nations. That means we are to be full-time witnesses.

But what if the people I work with find out I'm a Christian and think I'm weird?

What if I tell my neighbors about Jesus and they don't like it?

What if I refuse to go along with underhanded business dealings and I get fired?

What if someone sees me praying in a restaurant before I eat?

What if I tithe and then I don't have enough money to pay my bills?

But what if, what if, what if.....

Friend, if you're walking down the road of faith, you have to step off the road before you can say 'what if.'

As Christians we are sometimes so stymied by the big "what if" that we are frozen into complete inaction. And we all know that the only thing necessary for evil to succeed is for good people to do nothing.

So here's the deal, you hear a knock at the door of your heart so you open the door, right?

Wrong! Anytime anyone knocks on the door of your heart, you just say, "Hey, faith, will you get that?"

You see, when faith answers those who would call on your heart, you are walking by faith. Take today's sermon title for example; Fear Knocked, Faith Answered, No One Was There.

When fear knocks, if faith answers the door, fear runs; that's why no one was there.

Fear, mountainous problems, and "what ifs" can't get into your heart if faith is blocking the door. And if it isn't an enemy who's knocking, what then?

If the poor, the lonely, the hurting, the forgotten, the “least of these my brothers” are knocking at the door of your heart, it’s good that faith should answer.

If Jesus, himself, should come knocking, who better to answer than faith? So what kind of faith do you need to walk through the fear, over the mountains, and right passed the “what ifs?”

This kind of faith.

While on vacation, a father and his small son went hiking. The boy ran ahead and was soon on a cliff several feet above this father. The man heard his son’s voice and looked up to see the boy free-falling toward him. In mid-flight the boy called “catch me!”

His father caught him and they both tumbled to the ground. After he inspected his son and himself and found them both unharmed, the father was furious. “What were you thinking? How could you just jump at me like that when I wasn’t even looking? What made you think that I would even be able catch you?”

The boy’s face beamed as he said, “Cause you’re my daddy!” That’s the kind of faith that we need to ignore the world; to stick our tongues out at the lions that are really only paper tigers.

That’s the kind of faith it takes to see sunshine when it’s raining, to see a harvest in a barren and dry field, to see life in what appears to be death.

That’s the kind of faith it takes to walk by faith and not by sight. Not the faith of a great evangelist, not the faith of a stoic apostle, just the faith of a small child taking that step of faith, that leap of faith, and crying, “Catch me, Daddy!”

It's hard, because as we grow up, we begin to realize that our Daddies can't catch always catch us. The longer we live, the more we learn in the school of hard knocks that the world will body slam us, walk all over us and kick us to the curb without so much as a second glance.

But that is the world. As our hearts become hardened, as our faith falters, know that your heavenly Father can and will always catch you. Even when we lose our faith, lose all hope, He doesn't.

Why? Because Jesus didn't give up on you.

Your Savior was faithful all the way to the cross, for you, because you couldn't be.

When you dove out of the chair because of your lack of faith, much like the professor did, Jesus continued for you. All the way through His trial, for you, His suffering, for you and His death...for you.

You are forgiven! For your failings, for your wrong doings, for your life long lack of faith, still, your heavenly Father, your ultimate Daddy, catches you.

Not because you are good enough, not even because you show some sort of promise, but because your Savior was faithful in your stead and continues to intercede for you.

The Holy Spirit lives in your heart. You can walk by faith and no longer have to walk by sight. When you are able to stand firm in your faith, showing the world God's glory in you, praise God indeed...but when you do fail, when you do fall short, and it is going to happen again, look to Christ, feel His loving hand on your shoulder, His arms around you, as He picks you back up and puts you once

again on the path of faith so that you can walk in the faith in the forgiveness that He won for you.

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria – To God alone be the glory*