

SERMON TITLE: What is Faith?

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 8:5-13

DATE: November 27, 2022

PASTOR: Charlie Boyd

SERIES SUMMARY

In Scripture, we find the life of faith is often a difficult journey. But true faith in Jesus will show itself in tough times and display the reality of Jesus to a watching world. In the same way, we're called to give voice to our words and action to what we believe. This is how our faith can make a transformative difference in our lives and the lives of others. On this side of eternity, a faith not applied is worthless and will make no difference. The book of James regularly asks us to put our faith into action so others can witness the reality of Jesus in our lives. As we turn towards Christ, our faith journey will be purposeful, fruitful, and sustain us through any difficulty we face.

SERMON SUMMARY

Today, we are "pushing pause" on our James study to dig deeper into a biblical definition of faith. I think you would agree that the most important and most basic question for a follower of Jesus is: What is faith? So, we all need to be on the same page when it comes to faith because, according to Scripture, the faith that saves you *eternally* is the same faith that saves you *temporally*—that is, that saves you and keeps you and brings you through the trial of this life right here, right now (cf Col2:6-7). In both the OT and the NT, faith is trusting that God is who he says he is and that he will do for you what he says he will do. Faith is trusting that God will keep his promises to you. In the OT, faith was believing that there is One, True, and Living God—an all-wise, all-powerful, all-loving God who keeps his promises. The same thing is true in the NT. Faith is believing that the One, True, and Living God came to this earth in the person of Jesus, who lived and died and rose from the dead to forgive our sins and to bring us back into a personal relationship with God. And Jesus promises that if you put your faith and trust in him, he will keep his promises to you. Faith is trusting that God—that Jesus—is who he says he is, and he will do for you what he has promised to do. And when you enter into a relationship with God through faith in Christ, you grow in that same faith becomes the lens through which you view all of life. The story of the Roman centurion's servant in Matthew 8:5-13 illustrates the nature of biblical faith.

SERMON SCREENSHOTS & KEY POINTS

1. It's possible to grow into a life-transforming kind of faith.
2. A faith-based relationship is what God has always wanted—not simply obedience. When there is trust, obedience follows.
3. The story of Jesus and the centurion in Matthew 8:5-13 illustrates the kind of confidence in Jesus that honors God and astonishes Jesus.
4. Your faith—your confidence in God—is the lens through which you view and interpret all of life. It determines how you make sense of the trials of life. It determines IF you will move through those trials with a growing confidence in God or not.
5. Nothing honors God and protects you more than a growing confidence in God.

COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS

Review: Ask the group how they continued to think about and apply last week's message.

"What opportunities did God give you to live by heavenly wisdom rather than earthly wisdom?"

- Why is faith more important than obedience (i.e., good works)?
- Before hearing this message, how would you have defined "faith?"
- Charlie defined biblical faith as "trusting in who God says he is and what God says he will do for you."
 - How does that definition work itself out in both the OT and the NT?
 - Think about any relationship. What does "trust" imply? What happens to the relationship when trust is broken?

Read Matthew 8:5-13 together.

- How would you describe the Roman centurion's faith? How does his faith manifest itself in his words and actions?
- How is it possible for us to have that same kind of faith?
- What did you learn from the sermon? Where did God illuminate truths from his Word? Was there something you'd never heard before or something you were reminded of?
- What is one action step you can take this week to continue to grow and apply heavenly wisdom in your life or to others around you?

The following resources have been a great help to us in preparing messages for this sermon series: *The Letter of James (NICNT)*, by Scot McKnight; *James (ZECNT)*, by Craig Blomberg; Mariam J. Kovalishyn; *The Epistle of James*, by Peter Lange & J.J. Van Oosterzee; *The Letter of James*, by Douglas Moo. Also, I (Charlie) have benefited from the teachings of Tim Keller, Andy Stanley, Tim Mackie and the Bible Project, and others whom I will credit during my messages. I have adapted and borrowed insights and illustrations from these men and incorporated them into the messages in this series.