

A close-up photograph of a red granite surface, showing a mix of reddish-brown, tan, and grey mineral grains. The texture is rough and crystalline, with some visible cracks and mineral veins.

Red Granite **21 Daily** **Devotions**

THE FEARLESSNESS OF FAITH

**brought to you by
Marshall Jones**

**Published by
Red Thread Poets**

Red Granite

**Daily
Devotions**

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The contents of these Daily Devotions, are based on quotations from The Holy Bible, King James Version, and the inspired writings of Marshall Jones, and include but are not limited to his opinions expressed; permission to use previously published materials included; and any advice given or actions advocated are solely the responsibility of the author, who assumes all liability for said work and indemnifies the publisher against any claims stemming from publication of the work.

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ENDORSEMENTS

From: Jessica Reavis-Christensen,

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=forged%20by%20fire%3B%20iron%20sharpening%20iron>

I'm a former Recreational Leader of the New Lisbon Correctional Institution and I have to say that I am SO thankful for the 9 months I got to spend in prison. I would have never understood the need for prison reform if it wasn't for my experience.

When I was hired at N.L.C.I., I came in with the understanding that my position was to help rehabilitate the men to become successful citizens of society. I encouraged them to put the work in during their time, so they would have the tools to thrive in their freedom. Well, administration did not like that. The administration was threatened by the joy and empowerment that I brought to Recreation. They didn't like that the men were choosing healthy outlets, they didn't like that the countenance of the general population was lifting, they didn't like that the men were excited to be treated with humanity rather than unimportant scum. My time in prison was cut short because of the administration feeling threatened by the atmosphere I brought to the dark institution. Light is not wanted within those walls and that is something I believe needs to change.

After 40 days of unpaid administrative leave, I was terminated on Friday, December 13th 2019 for "not passing probationary standards". It didn't matter that all the programming I had added and built upon was changing the atmosphere in the institution for the better. They needed a scapegoat to get rid of me, and "not passing probationary standards" was it. Friday, December 13th was a day of sadness but also a day of resolution. As I drove away from N.L.C.I., no longer employed by the DOC, I made a pivotal decision to write Marshall Jones.

Marshall Jones was one of four inmate workers that assisted me in my Rec Leader position. He lead fitness classes, reffed all competitive events, assisted setting up Rec events, helped encourage men that came to Recreation, and counseled the men to prepare for their release. Marshall's conduct spoke for itself and I could see he was a man of his word by the actions displayed. He worked hard in Rec and Marshall worked even harder doing his time by becoming a published author of his first book, "A Raven's Meal". While working with Marshall, I learned he was serving a double life sentence, and I was shocked he would be there for the rest of his life. The reason I was shocked was because Marshall lived more freely within the walls of that prison than any other person I've met in my life. How is that possible? It was possible because of the faith he so boldly lives. Marshall was incarcerated at 21 years old and has served 17 years of his sentence. When I drove away from N.L.C.I. I decided I wanted Marshall to know that he was remembered by someone. I wanted him to know he made an impact on my life by living the way he did within the walls of prison. I wanted him to know that despite the circumstances, I wanted to extend the olive branch of becoming his friend. Writing Marshall Jones was one of the best choices I have ever made in my life.

I believe so many men like Marshall are deserving of a second chance. This is something I wouldn't have ever understood if I didn't have my time in prison, working closely with the general population. There is a deep need for prison reform and Marshall is the perfect story of a cast away finding redemption. I know how many second chances I have had. I believe it's time for those who have proven rehabilitation exists, get their second chance. To make evident their efforts aren't for nothing.

From: Kelli

Comment from Kelli, who read the Climb, a poem by Marshall on Red Thread Poets Website
www.redthreadpoets.com/the-climb/

Re: The Climb, by Marshall Jones

This poem personally speaks to my heart because I know the struggle of many who are fighting for their freedom from incarceration. Prisons are full of people who have been given unmerciful harsh sentencing who are just wanting to be given a chance to redeem themselves in society to help others. God wants to use those who have surrendered their hearts to His Son Jesus Christ who's incarcerated to become the mentors for our youths in today's culture. God has a plan for every individual's life. Keeping people confined to incarceration who God need to be Ambassadors for His Kingdom is certainly not the answer. Treating all people how one would want to be treated should be the defining moment when passing a judgment onto others. Love and mercy covers a multitude of sins. God and the Lord Jesus are expressing love and mercy everyday towards all people and humanity must practice in doing the same. God Bless all who read this comment and take it to heart.

From: Peter W Stevens,

Friend to the Founder of Red Thread Poets (Our Triune God). www.redthreadpoets.com/category/100-poets/peter-will/

I met Marshall through Jessica. We have become very close brothers in just a few short months emailing everyday. I live north of Toronto in Canada and was building a website to glorify God and honour poets. Red Thread Poets. Marshall sent me his poems, i have his book a Raven's Meal and he is one of our honoured poets on the site. HOWEVER it is his daily devotionals under the 'banner 'RED GRANITE' that show his anointing - they are high impact for me every day. We post them in Facebook under Red Thread Poets, and recap them on the website. <https://www.redthreadpoets.com/daily-devotions/>. Marshall is DEARLY LOVED, peter

INTRODUCTION

The Faithfulness of Faith is the 3rd of the Series drawn from Red Granite Daily Devotions.

The first was Psalm 91 and the second Loving You.

Faith is the mastery of fear by entrusting our lives completely to the Word of God.

In this 21-part in depth study into faith, we will discover that faith is birthed by the Word of God, extending itself through the believers bold enough to walk in it. We will recognize it is time for us to abort fear, understanding that our loving God never gave us fear in the first place! It is also time we embrace the Bible's importance on our development in faith. Faith has activated miracles of healing, brought the dead back to life, has proven vital to salvation, and faith has manifested the supernatural power of God right here on earth.

Where there is faith lies the ability for families to be made whole, for prodigals to find their way home, and faith is a necessity to abolish stagnancy in a believer's walk. A life led by faith is one that is absent of fear, one that embodies the living Word of God, and one that will bear evidence of God's faithfulness moving in their lives. Through Scripture, and its many examples, we will explore together to reacquaint ourselves with the Word of God, discovering that, absent the Word of God, there is no faith.

Want to be fearless in our walk with the Lord? Seize faith!

Bless You!
Marshall

This Study Series was first posted on Red Thread Poets Facebook page commencing on March 13, 2021, and is also available at <https://www.redthreadpoets.com/daily-devotions-1st-quarter-2021/>

1. Hebrews 11:1 - faith is the substance of things hoped for

What is faith? Is it belief in a desired outcome? Is it what produces an unwavering stance about a person, place, or thing? What are the building blocks of faith? Why is it so necessary in the lives of believers? Over the next two weeks, we are going to dive into faith and establish its identity and purpose that God intended for it. We will understand the difference between faith and belief, and we will understand that, absent the Word of God, there is no faith. Faith produces salvation, faith produces fruits meet for repentance, and faith produces the abundant life Christ came to this world for us to have. The truly successful people in this world may not have an abundance of wealth, but they are rock solid in their faith, and their faith became their wealth. Our faith is as good as currency in the kingdom of God, and if applied correctly, will invite God's good purpose to come into our lives. Today, we will look at Hebrews 11:1, faith defined.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

The word "faith" means "a firm persuasion, reliance, assurance, a belief in the truth of someone or something." When we have faith, we are exercising confidence in what we believe. In Hebrews 10:35, the Bible says, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward." Faith is not something God forces us to have, and He gives us the choice on whether to keep our confidence or cast it away. There is a reward for those who remain firm in their faith, and God doesn't leave us hanging when we are faithful in Him. In Romans 10:17, the Bible says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The word "hearing" means "instruction or teaching". So our faith comes by "instruction", and "instruction" by the Word of God. Think about this with me. If, when we are instructed in the Word of God, faith comes, then that means that our faith is fused into the Word of God. There can be no faith without the Word of God or a Word from God! Hence the difference between faith and mere belief. I can believe it will rain in five minutes, while it is sunny out with no clouds in the sky, and claim I have faith, but what would my faith be attached to? Faith must have substance!

The word "substance" means "foundation, guarantee, of proof". Let's look at construction for a second. When we build a house, we find a location, dig into the earth deep in order to lay our foundation. The foundation is the most important thing in a house and requires the most care. If anything is messed up in the foundation it will show up eventually on the surface and may even cause the house to be destroyed! In 1 Corinthians 3:11, the Bible says, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." If no other foundation can be laid but Christ Jesus, then the foundation, or substance of our faith is Christ Jesus. It would make sense that faith comes by instruction and instruction by the Word of God, because the foundation of our faith is the Word of God. In John 1:1, the Bible says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In John 1:14, the Bible says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." So, this confirms that Christ is the Word of God, the only foundation we can lay, so therefore He is the substance of our faith. The phrase "of things hoped for means "things entrusted in, things expected". In Jeremiah 17:7, the Bible says, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is." When our hope is in the Lord, we will find out, that we don't need a lot of what we thought we did before!

"The evidence of things not seen"

The word "evidence" means "proof". In 2 Corinthians 4:18, the Bible says, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." If we can physically see it, faith serves no purpose, because faith is about seizing what is unseen. Faith is entrusting ourselves to the Word of God so that the promises, if applied correctly, will materialize into reality. In Genesis 12:1, the Bible says, "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee". In Genesis 12:4, it says, "So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran." Abram didn't physically see the land, but God's Word was all the proof he needed when he left everything to go after God's Word. Abram believed the land existed because God said it!

May we come to understand faith to be the foundation which causes the execution of God's word!

2. Hebrews 11:3 - through faith we understand

We have a beginning, and our beginning came from the Word of God. Creation came to be because of the utterances of God, speaking things into existence. Before He spoke, the earth was without form and void, darkness covered the face of the earth, and there was water everywhere. God turned that into the world we live on right now, and the intricacies of His creation leave no doubt as to His existence. People who don't believe search for a "cop out" explanation by saying they believe there is "something out there" but they don't believe it to be God. With creation comes authority, and if a person can't believe in God as Creator, then how can they have faith that all things will work together for their good? To place faith in the Creator is to place faith in the plan the Creator has for the world. Today, we are to look at Hebrews 11:3, understanding God's creation through faith.

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

The word "understand" means "exercise the mind, to comprehend". When we understand something, we have processed it in our minds, put it to test, and have developed a concrete stance about it. The "we" in this are believers, because there will be many that won't believe, so they won't understand. In Colossians 1:16, the Bible says, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him". When we place our faith, our assurance, our confidence in this Word, then we know that everything we are, and everything the universe is came from God. If we wanted to know about Amazon inside and out, from start to finish, then the person to seek out would be Jeff Bezos, correct? Seeking our

understanding from the Creator about our origins, purpose, and future will ensure that everything we receive will be accurate. It is easy to trust in the Word when we are receiving it directly from the source!

The word "worlds" means "the universe as an object of creation and existence". The word "framed" means "to complete thoroughly, to set in order". Please pay attention to the word "framed". It is past tense. So the universe was completed thoroughly from the past!!! In Genesis 2:1-2 the Bible says, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made." So on the seventh day, God rested because His job as Creator was done. Sometimes, we as believers fail to really embrace that a Word from God is all we need, and that word was already spoken on our behalf. In Psalms 33:6-7, the Bible says, "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses." Think of the word framed again. Frames house pictures, paintings, and they serve as borders for whatever is inside. Everything operates within the boundaries God sets! His word set the boundaries, and the reason why so many people fall short of reaching after their purpose in the Lord is because people are trying to operate outside of the boundaries God sets. In Romans 12:6, the Bible says, "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith". Even our gifts are under the boundaries God sets for us individually. Whether it is the universe or the gifts in his people, we are all the framed word of God.

"so things which are seen were not made of things which do appear"

The phrase "were not made" is speaking about works of creation, so this phrase means "were not created by God". God's Word produced creation from nothing that previously existed. In Genesis 1:3-4, the Bible says, "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness." When God called for light, it appeared, and it says that God SAW the light. Remember, it was dark before God called for light, so the light could have come from anything already in existence. In John 1:5, the Bible says, "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." This proves that God created "something out of nothing", because darkness couldn't understand what light was while the world was in darkness! God's word in creation gives us a firm foundation to stand on, and a full understanding of how true His word truly is.

Our faith must start at the beginning with creation. If we don't embrace and place our total confidence in God as Creator, then our "faith" is truly blind.

3. Hebrews 11:8 – by faith Abraham obeyed; he went out, not knowing whither he went

"To obey is better than sacrifice". We have heard this quote from 1 Samuel 15:22, but do we really understand how important obedience is to faith. God doesn't mind our offerings, our sacrifice, our praise,

but none of that means anything without obedience. Obedience and faith go hand in hand, because there is no such thing as faith without obedience, or obedience without faith. Faith requires us to believe the word we are given by God, which will cause us to obey it and carry the Word out. Sometimes, the word we are given won't seem to make any logical sense, but God doesn't abide in the realm of our logic or our expectations. God has a plan for our lives, and our obedience makes His plan a lot easier to carry out. Surely, the Person that devised the plan knows better than the people that are living out His plan. Today, we will look at Hebrews 11:8, the parallels of faith and obedience.

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."

"By faith". Faith has to be the cause of our movements, and our movements in faith always produce the intended purposes of God. In Romans 4:20-21, the Bible says, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform." Faith is much bigger than us, and in my opinion, we have the easiest job in believing and obeying the Word of God. Unbelief hinders our faith and facilitates disobedience. If we don't believe in the directions we are given, nor reverence the Person who is giving the directions, then the odds of us not carrying out the directions are very high! If we don't follow the directions then we don't get to the place God intends, which is a loss for everyone. In John 11:9, the Bible says, "Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world." Abraham didn't stagger at the promise, because he saw the light of this world, which is the Word of God. He seized it!

"When he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for inheritance"

The word "call" means "to bid, to invite to come forth". In 2 Timothy 1:9, the Bible says, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began". This just isn't any calling. When God calls a person, they are called according to His purpose and grace. This call will sometimes cause us to separate ourselves from everything we have trusted in before, and AFTER we obey the word of the Lord, then we will receive our inheritance. The word "receive" means "to take hold of". This implies that, while it is available to us, we still have to grasp it for ourselves. The word "inheritance" means "possession from heirship". In Ephesians 1:13-14, the Bible says, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." When we are called, we have to trust God's word to be true, and act upon what it says. We can't receive the inheritance by lip service, telling God we believe in His Word but won't move from our position. Faith will require vulnerability to His design for us to take hold of God, who is certain about His plans for us.

"Obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went"

The word "obey" means "to heed or conform to a command or authority". This command or authority comes from God, and when Abram received the word from God, He answered the call by obedience. Our attitude

towards the command God gives is not of real concern to God. In Matthew 21:28-31, the Bible says, "But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." God knows that sometimes we will rebel for a season, but if we obey the Word of God, we will be doing His will. Obedience activates faith! Abram, had no clue where he was going, but his trust in God was the only thing that mattered, and because he was obedient, he was identified as one of the champions of faith.

May God's word cause our own obedience to activate our faith.

4. Titus 1:9 – holding fast the faithful word

Just as faith goes hand in hand with obedience, our faith is attached to the Word of God. It is the foundation by which we build our house, and it is the power source of our walk with the Lord. Show me a faithful person and I will show you someone who lives by the Word of God. In Matthew 4:4, the Bible says, "But he (Jesus) answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Do we live by the Word of God? Are we willing to sacrifice our success, our independence, our plans and our future for what the Word of God commands for us to do? How important is the Word of God in our lives? It has to be the driving force behind our decisions, it has to be the motivation behind our purpose, and it should be the direction our testimony points to. Today, we are going to look at Titus 1:9: effective communication by faith in the Word of God.

"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

The phrase "holding fast" means "to cleave to, to adhere to, to be faithfully attached to". The image I immediately get is marriage, because in Genesis 2:24, the Bible says, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." This was the first time the word "cleave" was used, and it described the person that came from under the security he had to cleave to his wife, joining himself to her, the two becoming one flesh. Well, this is the same relationship God wants us to have with the Word of God, a marriage, where we come out from under the security of the world we once knew to cleave to the Word of God, the two becoming one flesh. In John 1:1, the Bible says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Then in John 1:14, the Bible says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." So Christ is the Word of God. We are the Church. Christ is the Bridegroom, and we are the bride. In Ephesians 5:23, the Bible says, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." Ephesians 5:25-26 says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse

it with the washing of water by the word". This union with us and the Bible should be seen the same way as a marriage, and it is just as important! In Ephesians 5:22, the Bible says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." Submission! We as the Church have to submit completely to the Word of God the same way we submit to Christ! They are one and the same! This is why the Bible is urging us to "cleave to" the faithful word. Do we ever stop to really embrace the fact that the Word of God is faithful to us as believers! A faithful husband attends to the needs, wants and desires of his wife, the same way Christ does for the Church. When we see our relationship to Christ and the Word of God as a marriage, it may vastly change our attitudes about it all.

"As he hath be taught"

The word "taught" means "instructed". There is a huge difference between sharing something about the Word of God and teaching the Word of God. Teaching implies showing a person the Word and then showing them how to ultimately apply the Word of God to life. In Colossians 1:28, the Bible says, "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:" The purpose of teaching is to thoroughly equip the person being taught everything they need to know so they can be completely able to cleave to Christ for themselves. In Galatians 6:6, the Bible says, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." The student fellowships with the teacher, so both teacher and student are assured that the instruction is received accurately. Instruction is vital to the faith!

"That he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers"

Cleaving to the instruction in the faithful Word of God makes us equipped to use the Word of God effectively. The phrase "sound doctrine" means "uncorrupted instruction". In Acts 20:28, the Bible says, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." The true Word of God should be our only defense, our means to feed the Church. We cleave to the Word of God fully, and then take what we are taught to encourage and admonish other people in the truth, so they can receive the Word of God just as we have.

5. Hebrews 11:6 – but without faith it is impossible to please him

Does God really exist to us? Are the same miracles Christ performed available to us today? Are our churches flooded with faith, or are they overpowered by religion, by rituals, and by people too afraid to experience the power of the Holy Spirit at work? We must be a Church, a body of believers, who are living according to the Word of God, activating the truth and the promises possessed in the Word. Do we present ourselves before the Lord ready to be used by our God according to His design, or are we still trying to chart our own spiritual course according to our own desires? We should desire to live lives pleasing to God, lives that bear evidence of His power, and with a testimony that establishes that our God's hand is still powerful and present? Sadly,

some people have no real experience with God, just a head knowledge of God no different than many a world leader. Today, we will look at Hebrews 11:6, having a faith that is pleasing to our God.

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

The word "faith" is "a firm assurance, reliance, a belief in the truth of something or someone". We can't please God without faith. In Romans 10:17, the Bible says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Our faith is attached to the Word of God, so if we are without faith, then we are calling our God a liar and discounting the truth in His word. In Romans 8:8, the Bible says, "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." If we are in the flesh, the Word of God is not in use, it is not being relied upon. We can't use the world's tools trying to please God. In Romans 8:5, the Bible says, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." The main reason a lot of our churches aren't moving in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit is because they have become, or always were, churches without the true teaching of the Word of God, so they are essentially churches without faith. Our churches must mind the things of the Spirit because the Bible says in John 4:24, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." So faith requires a spiritual experience that can only begin with the Word of God being taught, believed and applied as the Word instructs. This type of experience pleases God.

"For he that cometh to God must believe that He is"

The word "cometh" means "to draw near unto Him in prayer, sacrifice, worship, devotion of heart and life". This requires a full commitment. In Hebrews 4:16, the Bible says, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Boldly! The people who come boldly unto God believe that they have every right to be in His presence. In Job 1:6-7, "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." Now explain to me how Satan presented himself before the Lord without reservation, but we are the children of God and we won't present ourselves before the Lord? We as believers must come before God, to experience His presence, to empty our cups before Him, to make ourselves low and decrease so the power of the Holy Spirit can increase. We have to draw near to God with purpose. "He is" is the same as saying "He exists". We must believe that our God is real and very much alive! Would we go to the house of a person whom we don't believe in to live there? That would be pointless, correct? Well, sadly it is the same scenario if we are professing to be believers while our hearts don't believe that God is present, or that He hears us, or that He answers our prayers.

"and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him"

The word "rewarder" means "a person who repays any good deed". In Isaiah 40:10, the Bible says, "Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him." We have to believe that our God is powerful enough to do the things we ask of Him. In Genesis 18:14, the Bible says, "Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto

thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." Sometimes, our reading the examples of faith will give us a clearer record of just how powerful and capable our God is. Can you imagine a 100 year-old and a 90 year-old getting pregnant? Talk about reversing the clock! To "diligently seek" means "to search out and investigate, in order to worship.

Do we really believe that our God is alive, ready to reward the faithful who search him out? Are we the faithful?

6. Hebrews 11:11 – because she judged him faithful who had promised

When God's involved, it's NEVER too late for His word to activate and bear fruit in our lives. So many people looked at me in this midst of my sin, and thought I was past saving, that I was past healing, that I had gone too far in the wrong direction to make it back. I am here to testify that God showed me that His power is capable of cleaning up anyone* in any state they find themselves in, but our faith is definitely a requirement. Electricity is powerful and has the capability of turning the lights on without any problem, but if the switch is never flipped, the lights won't come on. We have to receive the Word of God as truth, allow the seed to be conceived within us so we will birth faith, which manifests the power of God in our lives. Today, we will look at Hebrews 11:11, the birth of miraculous power through faith.

"Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised."

The word "strength" means "miraculous power, force, or might". The phrase "received" means "to take hold of, to seize for oneself". The phrase "conceive seed" means "to cast in a fertilized egg". Now let's put this together. Sara believed in the Word of God, even though the thought made her laugh, and she seized the certainty of the Word of God. When she seized the Word given, it activated the miraculous power that allowed her to bring a fertilized egg to term. In Genesis 17:19, the Bible says, "And God said (to Abraham), Sarah thy wife, shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him." The provision for the promise is already accounted for! God knew they were going to have a child, that the child was going to be a son, that his name was going to be Issac, and God already had a covenant prepared to be established with him. Isaac's name means "laughter", because God knew they would laugh with incredulity, but not out of impossibility. Even when it sounded ridiculous, they still believed! In John 1:12, the Bible says, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name". When we receive the Word of God in our hearts, God turns that into power to establish our identities in Him. In Luke 8:11, Jesus says, "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God." Take the baby in the womb out of the equation and put the Word of God in its place. It operates in the same manner; we are filled with the Word of God through faith, the Word turns into miraculous power and that power brings the seed fully to term, according to God's will. The impossible can be done because of the Word that has produced power in our lives.

"And was delivered of a child when she was past age"

The phrase "was delivered of a child" means "to produce or bring forth life from the womb". In Luke 1:36-37, the Bible says, "And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible." WITH God! See, our problem is we try to conceive seed without God, trying to understand Scripture without the Holy Spirit's teaching, and we try to do the impossible without God's miraculous power. I was barren, chasing after my own path and my own outcome, but when I allowed God to come into my heart and fill me with His Spirit, the impossible happened. Do I pat myself on the back for this transformation? Absolutely not! I seized the Word of God and allowed it to have residence, and God transformed me into everything He already had prepared for me since the beginning. Some people said it was too late, or I messed up too bad, but with God, all things are possible! The phrase "past age" means "beyond the appointed time for man". In Isaiah 55:8, the Bible says, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD." God's timing cannot be explained by man.

"Because she judged him faithful who had promised"

The word "judged" means "to deem or consider". The word "faithful" means "trustworthy". The word "promise" means "to assure of truth, to assert something respecting oneself, to swear by". In Hebrews 6:13, the Bible says, "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself". God is putting His character, identity, and name behind what He promises, because He is never going to fall short of His Word. In Romans 4:21, the Bible says, "And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform." Do we consider God trustworthy in fulfilling His promises? The Word of God gives birth to miracles to those who receive the Word of God in faith, trusting in God to do exactly what His Word says.

It is never too late for God!

7. Hebrews 12:2 – looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith

In order to really understand our faith and how our faith works in the life we live now, we have to watch examples from people who have succeeded in the faith. Hebrews 11 gives us numerous examples of titans in the faith, like Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Rahab, Joseph, Moses, and David to name a few. God always provides us examples, to not only show that walking in faith can be done, but God also shows us HOW we can walk in faith. There is no greater example of faith than Jesus Christ, the Person by which all of our faith as believers comes. Without Christ, there is no salvation, no Holy Spirit sent to teach us all things, and no Church built either. Christ was present with God in the beginning, and He is still alive and seated at the right hand of the Father. There is no greater example of faith than Christ and today, we will look at Hebrews 12:2, to behold he Author and Finisher of our faith.

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God".

The phrase "looking unto" means "to consider attentively". So God desires for His children to understand faith by studying the example of Christ. In John 3:31, the Bible says, "He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all." Our example should be Spiritual, from heaven, and our example must have authority. In John 1:3, the Bible says, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." We must also consider attentively that all things were made by God, and so everything necessary for our faith is already created by God. In John 1:32, the Bible says, "And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him." Our Great Example of faith has the Holy Spirit upon Him. Christ isn't just some man that walked the earth. We must really embrace Him as "God robed in flesh" to understand how he is the Author and Finisher of our faith. The word "author" means "one who makes a beginning, the source". The word "finisher" means "completer, perfecter, one who accomplishes a goal and wins a prize". In Revelations 1:8, the Bible says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." This is why we as believers must look at Christ as the source of our faith because everything began and ended with Him.

"Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame"

The word "joy" means "bliss, enjoyment, delight". In John 8:29, Christ says, "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." Christ knew when He had to go to the cross that God was with Him and His sacrifice would be pleasing to His Father. That brought God joy and brought Him joy. In Hebrews 2:9-10, the Bible says, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Not only would Christ be crowned with glory and honour, but we would have access to glory because of His sacrifice. That also brought joy to Christ. To "endure the cross" means "to patient under, to bear under the dying on the cross as atonement for our sins." It brought Christ joy to please God by dying on the cross. Does it ever bring us joy when we are obedient to the Word God gives us? The phrase "despising the shame" means "thinking against disgrace". That means Christ didn't consider the disgrace of taking the world's sin upon Himself, but chose to swat it away, choosing to please God instead.

"and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God"

The phrase "set down" means "established as". The "right hand" is reserved for the highest seat, the place of the highest honor. When a person is at the right hand, they are also viewed as having the strength of the person they are standing next to. In Hebrews 1:3, the Bible says, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high". When Christ took His seat, His work was

finished, and our lives now bear the testimony of His sacrifice. Christ is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the perfect example of the faith we walk in. He received the Word of God, believed it to be true, and carried it out despite the suffering that would result. Our shining example of faith!

8. Romans 5:1 - we have peace with God

Our world is stripped of peace. War, rumors of wars, violence, acts of terrorism foreign and domestic, and contention abounds in our society. It shouldn't surprise believers because Christ warned us in Matthew 24:6, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." This is inevitable, and sadly we see this Scripture manifested in our daily news reports. The absence of peace goes hand and hand with the godlessness that has flooded our world, but it also comes from a lack of faith in the body of believers. Faith is security, and with security, we have peace, correct? If our alarm system is armed, and the doors and windows are locked, our sleep will be sounder because unless the alarm goes off, there is nothing to fear, so no reason to lose our peace. If only our faith was that secure! Today, we will look at Romans 5:1, real peace given by faith in Jesus Christ.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:"

The word "justified" means "to render or declare righteous, to absolve from the consequences of sin and admit to the enjoyment of the divine favor". In Isaiah 32:17, the Bible says, "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." There is always a course of action behind the declarations of our God, some tangible benefit or punishment behind His Word, depending on which side of the coin we are on. Righteousness isn't just a quality. It is an action that produces a result, and that result is stillness and security! Justification doesn't produce anxiety, but peace. In John 16:33, Jesus says, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." The Word of God is supposed to usher in peace into our lives, because its truth gives us a firm foundation for our feet. Christ overcame the world, so we have access to the same victory in Him. In 1 John 5:4, the Bible says, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Do we understand that our faith gives us the power to overcome the world, because it is by faith that we are saved and thus born of God? The word "faith" here means "unwavering confidence in Christ's death as the ground of justification before God, saving faith". This just isn't mere belief. This is the foundation of our salvation, or our security in our salvation, our place in Christ is established forever. In Romans 3:28, the Bible says, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." People are still under the mistaken impression that they have to follow the law to be justified by God, and there is absolutely no peace when a person is walking while trying not to step on cracks. Christ died, giving us access to salvation and eternal life, so the Word of God can transform our lives. We were never designed to be our own righteousness!

"We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"

The word "peace" means "tranquility, arising from reconciliation with God and a sense of divine favor". In John 14:27, Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." There is peace the world gives and real peace that Christ gives. It comes from our standing with God through faith in Christ Jesus, and the security of being a member in the kingdom of God. The world tries to offer peace in its possessions; money, sex, drugs, material possessions, power, but every one of them have a very fleeting satisfaction, requiring us to continue to go after them. God doesn't want us to equate peace with feeling good, because feelings have no security and can change as swiftly as the wind does. In Colossians 1:20, the Bible says, "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." When we as believers understand that it is faith in the blood of Christ that gives us access to reconciliation with God, we will develop more peace in where we stand spiritually. In Romans 4:5 the Bible says, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." When we are secure in our faith, which should be in the Word of God, we have a foundation to build our faith on. That foundation is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. It is only by faith in Jesus Christ that can we be made righteous. If we have faith, then we KNOW this as truth!

May peace come through faith, and may we be secure in the Word of truth!

9. Romans 4:20 - but was strong in faith, giving glory to God

Sometimes, it is extremely hard to stay strong in faith. Things happen, producing events that rip the heart in pieces, but as believers, we have to look beyond what is happening to the promise that God has for us in His Word. Just because we are knocked on our butts doesn't mean the Word is any less true than it has always been, and just because some of our ordeals seem unpleasant, doesn't mean that it isn't included in the promise God has for us. The Israelites traveled through the wilderness on their way to the promised land, but who would've known that the wilderness produced an unbreakable strength that would allow them to seize AND protect the promise? What God has for us, and the road we take to get us there, at times won't make a bit of sense, and may seem like we are actually going in the opposite direction. It is when things don't make sense that we must cleave even harder to the Lord and commit ourselves even more to the promise. Today, we are going to look at Romans 4:20, pressing through to the promise.

"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;"

The word "staggered" means "to be in strife with oneself, to doubt, hesitate, or waver". The person Paul is speaking about is Abraham, who is the father of many nations. A profound lineage to Christ came from someone whose wife was barren at first! Despite what it appeared to be, despite what capabilities he felt he didn't possess, he didn't waver, doubt, or hesitate. Abraham was put to test multiple times, being told by God to leave his father's home and land to go to a land he would show him. He was told he would have a son

in his old age, and his descendants would number the stars in the sky. He was told to sacrifice his son, the same promise he was given! Neither time did he doubt the Word of the Lord, nor hesitate when God gave him a command. He carried the word out as given. In James 1:3-4 the Bible says, "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." We have to see our faith all the way through in order for the promise to manifest itself in our lives. If we doubt, waver, hesitate, or wrestle with ourselves, we will hinder and frustrate the process of faith, and what faith will transform us into. God doesn't will for us to lack anything when our faith is complete. We have to see the completed process even as we find ourselves in the wilderness, or under testing, because it will change our view of what we deem to be sufferings. Abraham didn't waver at the promise. He believed in the promise and went after it in faith.

The word "promise" means "a pledge of divine assurance of good". The promise was the birth of a son. The promise made both Abraham and Sarah laugh, but they both believed. In Hebrews 10:23, the Bible says, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)" We must fully embrace God's faithfulness first before we can place our faith in Him. If we don't see God as faithful, then how can we ever trust His Word? We must speak our faith out loud and then hold our position, trusting the promise to come. If God said it, it must come to pass, all we must do is remain rooted in His foundation. In 2 Peter 1:4, the Bible says, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." The promises of God allow us to partake in the divine nature, this newness we have as believers in Christ, so absent the promise, there is no access to the divine nature where we can experience the Holy Spirit of God.

The word "unbelief" means "faithlessness, disbelief". This really implies a refusal to believe. Ouch! Abraham didn't look at his age, nor did he see what hasn't happen previously as the evidence of what it to come. God said it, so Abraham considered it done and made room for it. In Mark 9:23, the Bible says, "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." It is really that simple, but this is the hardest thing for us to do as believers because either we are not relying on the Word of God for our belief, or we are asking for stuff outside of His will.

"But was strong in faith, giving glory to God"

The word "strong" means "empowered". Matthew 9:8 says, "But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men." The strength of our faith should produce an outcome that gives God the glory. It should bear evidence, causing others to give God the glory. Our faithfulness should bring glory to God and shine a light on His faithfulness.

Our faith may open the door for someone else to place their faith in Christ.

10. Romans 4:21 - and being fully persuaded

Faith requires us to surrender our strength, our knowledge, and our vulnerability to God. That isn't always easy to do, because a lot of times, it will require us to let go and trust that God has a firm hold of everything we have prayed for. What type of confidence do we place in God, especially in periods of uncertainty or difficulty? Does His Word reign at the times we are completely confused, not knowing where we should go? The only sure path at times like these is the Word, and it is only through God that the road we must take will be clear. Many will falter because logic and mental reasoning will always distort the faith that is required for God's will to be done. We have to abandon all paths but the path the Word of God lays out for us. It is not about relying on our faith, but relying on God's faithfulness, that He will fulfill the Word given. Today, we are going to look at Romans 4:21, persuasion in the promises of God.

"And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."

The phrase "fully persuaded" means "completely assured, to know entirely". This means we can't keep anything back from our faith, nor prepare for contingencies. There is no such thing as a back-up plan when it comes to faith. In James 1:5-6, the Bible says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." When we ask God for anything according to His will, we can't ask and then question whether or not our prayers and petition will be answered. We are supposed to ask in full assurance that God hears us and is already responding to our requests. The person that wavers is flipped upside side down and tossed around like a ragdoll. In James 2:5, the Bible says, "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" We don't have to have any monetary wealth as long as we are rich in faith. We are members of the kingdom of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and that makes us heirs to all the promises of God directed towards us. It is our job to be completely assured that the Word of God is true and applicable to us right now.

The word "promise" means "to announce oneself, to offer for a responsibility or service". Consider it like this. When God promises something to us, He announces Himself, by saying "Here I AM". Then God goes a step further by saying "I AM at your service". Do we really appreciate this, God being at our service by fulfilling His word? In Acts 2:39, the Bible says, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call." God has extended His promise to all He has called, to His children, and God fulfills His promises. In 2 Corinthians 1:20, the Bible says, "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." God doesn't say no to His promises, but He says, "So be it". There isn't a situation outside of our disbelief where God's promises won't come to pass. We have to be believers that ask the Lord in expectancy of Him giving us what we prayed for according to His will. This should not be seen as a "free for all", where we ask God for anything that comes to mind, anything we want whether it is according to God's will or not. In James 4:3, the Bible says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." Faith is not a selfish quality, and our requests should always please God and position us to fulfill His purpose in our lives. That is why Matthew 6:33 is so important, because Jesus says, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his

righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." If we seek the kingdom of God first, and God's righteousness, then what we ask will conform to His will and He will honor it.

"He was also able to perform"

The word "perform" means "to make or do". We have to believe, in faith, that the Lord God is able to DO the things we ask of Him. Would we ask someone who couldn't drive to drive us cross country? Absolutely not? In Matthew 9:28-29, the Bible says, "And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you." Our faith activates the promises of God, and our faith only goes as far as what we are completely assured about when it comes to our God.

The faith of a mustard seed can move a mountain and cast it in the sea. How great is our faith in God's faithfulness? How completely assured are we that God is ready to bring His word to pass in our lives?

11. Hebrews 11:33 - and being fully persuaded

Our faith carries power. Our faith carries authority. When we start to understand that our faith manifests the spiritual realm here on earth, then we will understand why the enemy tries so hard to attack our faith. Satan doesn't want us operating in our God given authority, nor does He desire for us to know who we are in Christ Jesus. If the enemy can distort our vision, then he can all but assure that we conquer absolutely nothing. In Romans 8:37, the Bible says, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." We are not just conquerors. We are more than conquerors! The Bible teaches us that faith is more than just belief, but it is operating in the assurance that the Word of God is not only alive but extremely effective to fulfill God's purpose. Today, we will look at Hebrews 11:33, just some of the things our faith allows us to have.

"Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions."

Let's look at another perspective of what "faith" is. Faith is the means of appropriating what God in Christ has for man, resulting in the transformation of man's character and way of life. Faith is as good as currency in the kingdom of God and it also is the conduit for God's will to be done. In 2 Corinthians 5:7, the Bible says, "(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)" We entrust our vision to the Lord, that He knows exactly where we must go. In 1 Samuel 23:2, the Bible says, "Therefore David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah." David was identified as a man after God's own heart, and it is because he always enquired of the Lord for the direction, and he waited for the Lord to tell him what he must do. In Proverbs 3:5-6, the Bible says, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him,

and he shall direct thy paths." Faith begins with the Word of God, and when we are able to trust in His faithfulness and direction, there won't be a need for us to lean on our own understanding.

The word "subdued" means "contended against and overcame". The word "kingdom" means "dominion, people on territory under kingly rule". Sometimes, we think subduing kingdoms is something incredibly hard because we try to measure ourselves up to the numbers a kingdom may have. In Judges 7:7, the Bible says, "And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place." God purposely dwindled Gideon's army down from 32,000 to 300, so there would be no question who gave them the victory, and God alone would be glorified through them. Gideon and the army just had to seize the Word of God spoken to them and carry it out as given. They did, and they defeated a powerful foe in the process. In Joshua 6:20-21, the Bible says, "So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city." The power of faith, not the might of man, caused that wall to come flat down.

The phrase "wrought righteousness" means "to perform acts of justice, impartiality, or equity". Faith also allows us to be stewards of the Word of God and all He entrusts us to. In 1 Kings 3:5, the God says, "In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee." God essentially gave Solomon a "blank check", but all he had to do was ask. In 1 Kings 3:9-10, the Bible says, "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing." Solomon wanted to do the job the Lord entrusted to him well, more than anything else in the world, and God not only gave him that, but gave him immeasurable wealth.

"Obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions"

A "promise" is "a pledge of a divine assurance of good". In 1 Kings 8:56, the Bible says, "Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant." God doesn't fail and there is not a time where God doesn't keep His promises towards us. The first part of Daniel 6:22, the Bible says, "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me ... ". When we receive the victory by faith, let us proclaim the power of our God, who causes us to prevail!

12. Hebrews 11:17 - he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son

In faith, there is trial. Please don't think that we, as believers, can walk a lifetime of faith without a trial. In relationship, in friendships, in jobs, in businesses, there is always going to come a point where our faith is tested. Sometimes, the enemy will subject our faith to scrutiny, and at other times God will allow us to be

tested to sharpen our iron. Sadly, we live in a society where so many seem to want everything to work perfectly, and if it doesn't and that thing is tested, there is a falling away. Our faith never matures because, testing which actually matures our faith is never desired or appreciated. God is not only right alongside us when things are spectacular, but He is also right with us when we experience the fire. We are never alone when tested, and the engrafted Word in our hearts ensures that we always have great shoulders to rest upon. Today we will look at Hebrews 11:17, faith under test.

"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son"

The word "tried" means "tested with adversity in order to examine one's faith and confidence". Abraham is the "test subject", and God's request was brutal! Imagine life and death to be involved in a trial! In Genesis 22:1-2, the Bible says, "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." We are always called before we are tested, so when we are tested, it is not by accident. Nothing happens without God's approval. Usually, the sacrifice is going to be something we love, something near and dear to our heart. Matthew 19:21-22, the Bible says, "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." The rich man followed the commandments no problem, but Christ knew his heart, and his obedience to the law meant nothing, because he was unwilling to sacrifice his wealth to give his heart completely to the Lord, serving Him. His financial wealth was more important to him than the heavenly wealth promised to him by Christ Himself.

The phrase "offered up" means "to carry unto the Lord in order to give or sacrifice". When Hannah gave Samuel, her only child, to the Lord, it was in answer to a prayer she prayed to God. In 1 Samuel 1:11, the Bible says, "And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." Imagine when the time came for her to keep her word, the sadness that had to come over her. She was faithful to her word and obedient to the test, and her womb opened, giving her 5 more children! Five is synonymous Biblically with grace, so God's grace is abundant towards those who persevere under test. In James 1:12, the Bible says, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." The end of a trial has a reward, and that reward is the crown of life. We must endure trial though.

The phrase "that had received" means "to take hold of in faith AND confidence". See, faith just isn't confidence or trust, but it is moving in the confidence and trust we have. Faith produces evidence! In James 2:18, the Bible says, "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." When Abraham was told to leave his father's house to go to a land God would show him, Abraham got up, got his family together and left. When Abraham was told to sacrifice Isaac, he rose up the next morning to carry the Lord's word out. In Genesis 22:8, where

Isaac asked where the sacrifice was, the Bible says, "And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together." There is no question Abraham believed this, but it didn't keep him from obeying the word of the Lord. Abraham believed the promise, so he knew God was going to fulfill His word, so offered his only begotten son. The phrase "only begotten son" means "sole or unique son". Isaac was unique because he was the child of a promise, and Abraham was willing to sacrifice the promise to obey God.

What are we willing to sacrifice in faith?

13. Philemon 1:6 - every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus

When people see our faith, what do they see? Do they see power at work, the miraculous force of God changing circumstances in our lives for His good purpose? Do they see the favor and protection of God? Do people witness our prayers being answered and do they have a front row seat to the victory we have in Jesus Christ? How is our faith communicated to mankind? These are bold questions that require us to look within; and come to a fresh understanding of where exactly we are in our faith. God doesn't require us to be "closet believers" who never experience the power of the Lord working because our inactivity puts out our fire, greatly hindering our effectiveness. As believers, it is our jobs to bear fruit, a fruit that remains, but if we aren't moving in faith, then it would be extremely hard to bear fruit. Today, we are going to look at Philemon 1:6, the communication of our faith.

"That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus."

The word "communication" has a deeper meaning than I appreciated. It means "partnership, communion, intercourse". It refers to a mutual sharing of all life, which believers do because of their common life in Christ and mutual partnership or "belonging to each other in faith". In Romans 15:2, the Bible says, "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification." The body of Christ builds when we put ourselves in a position to serve the body of Christ. Selflessness is crucial for church building, and in Acts 4:32-33, the Bible says, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all." When the Church is in one accord, no one is thinking of themselves, but how to remain in one accord with the body of Christ? The Holy Spirit moves when we are in one accord because not only does this signify communion, but it also expresses agreement. Why does the enemy love to separate families, churches, pastors, servants, and believers? He knows that where there is no partnership, the power is limited, because there is nobody present in the body to compensate for the weaknesses that we have. With power comes grace, and with the grace of God, all things are possible. In Hebrews 10:24-25, the Bible says, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see

the day approaching." This is why we are supposed to come together, to build each other up in love and faith, to encourage and teach each other, for us all to grow together in faith.

"May become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing that is in you in Christ Jesus"

The purpose of unifying of the body of Christ to share the faith together is so our faith may become effectual. The word "effectual" means "active, or operative". We have to have a faith that is in motion, that is alive and active. In Ephesians 4:16, the Bible says, "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Every part of the body of Christ is important to the effectual working of the entire body of Christ. This is why the enemy is having a field day in the Church right now, because he is practicing a great war time strategy of "divide and conquer". Sadly, more believers are more concerned with denominations than they are with working together in Word and in truth to ensure that faith translates into power. Faith requires agreement, and faith definitely requires intercession. A king without a kingdom won't be a king for long.

The word "acknowledging" means "recognizing". How powerful can the Church be if it never recognizes the Holy Spirit that empowers us to do incredible things for the kingdom of God? In Philippians 1:11, the Bible says, "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." It is by Jesus Christ that we are filled with everything that makes us fruitful in righteousness. The phrase "good thing" means "useful or profitable to fulfill God's intention". In 1 Timothy 4:8, the Bible says, "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Are we communing with the Word of God, receiving of the Lord, so we can share what we receive with others in order to build the body of Christ? How is our faith evident?

14. Ephesians 2:8 - for by grace are ye saved through faith

Faith goes hand in hand with salvation. There is no salvation without faith, and therefore no access to the kingdom of God either. People have followed the misconception that we have to follow the law to usher in salvation, instead of receiving His Word as truth and the way to salvation. I ask myself: why do so many people fall short of this free gift, why do so many people refuse to partake in this amazing life in Christ? The only answer that helps me understand is their lack of faith due to their lack of knowledge of the Word. In Hosea 4:6, the Bible says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." If God's children are destroyed for lack of knowledge, then by knowledge of the Word of God lies the path to salvation. The path must still be received in faith in order for salvation to come to the believer. Today, we will look at Ephesians 2:8, faith's implication for salvation.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God"

The word "grace" means "the unmerited favor God shows in saving us from sin, admitting us into the divine kingdom". In Romans 3:24, the Bible says, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus". We are rendered innocent and made righteous by the grace of God. When something is expressed to be "by grace", then grace is the vehicle that produces our salvation. Grace produces the atoning sacrifice. In Romans 5:8, the Bible says, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us". This gift was already supplied before we would ultimately receive it, and it was while we were out there, still living in sin completely apart from God, God already had the sacrifice prepared for us before the world began. In Romans 5:10, the Bible says, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." The grace of God is designed to bring reconciliation between God and His children, to make everything right between us. God's idea is for us to not focus so much on the death of Christ, but the life of Christ because in His life we have access to abound in the kingdom of God by the Holy Spirit.

I want to paint a picture of grace and hopefully it will express its importance. I am standing at the edge of a cliff. Below is a canyon 500 feet deep. There is no way possible to cross this canyon to make it to the other side, which is me trying to earn my salvation through my efforts. Grace is a bridge that God erected through faith in Jesus Christ, allowing us to cross over and be saved through faith, despite us falling drastically short.

The word "saved" implies salvation from eternal death, sin and the punishment and misery consequent to sin. In Romans 4:7-8, the Bible says, "Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." We went from being cursed to blessed because of the grace of God producing a perfect sacrifice from sin through Jesus Christ. In Galatians 3:13, the Bible says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree". Grace allowed a perfect Christ to place the sins of the whole world upon Himself, becoming the curse we should've been. Then His death was a death of the cursed, causing Him to pay the penalty meant for us. In Galatians 3:22, the Bible says, "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." Salvation is a promise, and that promise is available to all who believe in Jesus Christ and receive Him as Lord and Savior. God did all of the work. All we have to do is receive the gift His love and grace has made available to us.

"It is a gift of God"

A gift is given, and when God gives a gift, it was already prepared for the people who will receive it. In Matthew 16:17, the Bible says, "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." No man is capable of giving us the gift of salvation, neither is any man capable of giving us a spiritual gift either. In John 6:44, the Bible says, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." God draws His children to receive salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. We don't even control what drew us to the Lord!

The Word of God gives the path to salvation, but it is our job to receive the Word in faith.

15. John 8:12 - I am the light of the world

A huge part of our faith is what and Who we follow. Do we follow after truth? Is the Word of God the lamp unto our feet and the light unto our path? Despite how it looks, do we cleave to the Word of God over our fears, our apprehensions, and our ambitions? What made Abram so powerful in faith? He took God's word for it when He told him to leave His father's house, even though he had no clue where he was going. When we follow after the Lord, we have to trust that His way is THE way, His truth is THE truth, and His life is THE life. If we are trying to partake in anything of these things absent the Word of God having reign in our lives, we will always come out short of what we need, because we haven't placed our confidence in the Lord. The Lord is the Light of the world, lighting the path for all who believe on His name. Today, we will look at John 8:12, another component of faith, walking in the light of the Lord.

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Christ uses the words "I am". Normally we overlook those words because they are frequently used for a person to identify themselves. What makes this different is who Christ is. In John 1:1, where it says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Couple this verse with John 1:14, which says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." These two verses establish the deity of Christ, so in Exodus 3:13, when Moses asked for the name of God, verse 14 says, "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." So when Christ uses the words "I am", it is much deeper than just mere identification. He is establishing His deity, and therefore His truth and power in His word. The word "light" means "the true knowledge of God and spiritual things, Christian piety". Christ IS what we are living our lives to be! The "world" implies the people, the order in place, the universe as a whole. The world needs light to live the way God intends for us to live. Don't think so? In Genesis 1:3-4, the Bible says, "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness." The first thing God created was light, and the first thing He did was divide light from darkness. The firsts are the most important to God. God never intended for light and darkness to dwell together, just as God never intended for us to exercise faith outside of the Word of God. How can we have faith and not believe in the Word of God, which is the light of the world? How can we exercise faith when the Word of God isn't the lamp unto our feet and the light unto our path?

"He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, But shall have the light of life"

"He that followeth" is an all-inclusive invitation, but there will be a ton of people who won't take the invitation God has given. The word "followeth" means "to be or become a disciple of anyone as to faith and practice, to practice their teaching." The word "followeth" also implies a total surrender, giving ourselves completely to Christ, and the direction He is for our lives. In John 10:26-27, John says, "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me". We can't follow Christ when we can't hear His "voice", and His voice is the Word of God and the teachings and leadings of the Holy Spirit. When we follow the Lord, he "knows" us, implies a marital intimacy

of His abiding in us and our abiding in Him. How can we call ourselves believers in Christ and then not follow His Word and not allow His word to have reign in our lives? The word "darkness" implies moral darkness, separation from God due to sin and faithlessness. Not believing in the Word of God is faithlessness, and faithlessness is darkness. In 2 Corinthians 4:6, the Bible says, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." God has given us an opportunity to know Jesus Christ by allowing His Word to shine a light in the inner most parts of us. With light comes knowledge of the Word, and with that knowledge comes faith, which then transforms us into vessels of God's good purpose. "Shall have". The result of following Christ, abiding in the Word of God. The word "life" here implies a life of bliss and glory in the kingdom of God which awaits to true disciples of Christ both now and after the resurrection. What a beautiful reward for us who follow the Word of the Lord in faith!

16. John 7:38 - out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water

What is the source of our belief? Is it the pastors we listen to, the family and friends we speak with? Does it stem from the burning desires we have? Where do we turn to for the truth? Belief is essential to the faith, but just as faith has a foundation in the Word of God, belief should also be based on Scripture. How we, as believers, pattern our lives should be based on the Word of God, but we live in a society where tons of people are racing after their own glory, after their own path, trying to construct their own purpose. In a lot of churches, God is being reduced to a banker and the kingdom of God a vault, and the "prosperity doctrine" has taken over sound Biblical truth and doctrine. The "name it, claim it" doctrine being taught has imploded the faith with nonsense, and the Holy Spirit is becoming less and less active in our lives. We must get back to the truth, so we must begin at the foundation. Today, we are going to look at John 7:38, true belief according to Scripture.

"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

The word "believeth" means "to entrust one's spiritual wellbeing to Christ." When we entrust something to Christ, we completely surrender it to His will, His direction, and His Word, accepting that as the only way. In John 14:6, the Bible says, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Christ is the ONLY way to the Father! As believers, the foundation of our faith is Christ, but that foundation can only be built by the Word of God. If faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, then we must also entrust our lives to the Word of God. In Romans 10:14, the Bible says, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Then, in the first part of verse 15, it says, "And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" So, the preacher is sent for us to hear the Word of God, which causes us to believe on the Word, especially what the Word says about Christ, and that will open the door for us to call upon Christ for salvation. After salvation, the preacher is still sent, we still hear the Word, believe on it, and we now learn how to activate the Word in our lives as maturing believers. If we never hear

the Word correctly, then we won't believe the Word of God correctly, and if the Word of God is not believed correctly, then we won't surrender ourselves to It correctly. In John 17:17, Jesus says, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." The Word of God causes the sanctification because the Word of God is truth. Why then, are so many churches preaching doctrine that scratches itching ears rather than preaching the Word of truth which leads to salvation, maturation, and sanctification?

"As the scripture hath said"

This is the condition in this verse. Remember, the word "believeth" means "to entrust one's spiritual wellbeing to Christ", not merely to attest to the truth of something. In James 2:19, the Bible says, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." Mere belief means nothing and doesn't even separate us from devils! The key condition is us entrusting our spiritual wellbeing ACCORDING to the Word of God. In John 6:63-64, Jesus says, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him." Our beliefs, not backed by the Word of God, profits us nothing, and that is why we have churches that have thousands of members, but there is more bondage than freedom in the congregations.

"Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"

The word "belly" means "heart", the deepest part of our being. The word "rivers" means "current, running water". This implies a continuous flow. In Acts 2:17, the Bible says, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." The "living water" is the Holy Spirit, promised by Christ, and when the Holy Spirit flows from the deepest parts of God's children, the Church moves in power and miracles happen. The Holy Spirit is poured upon us and we become vessels of the Masters' purpose.

If we don't entrust our spiritual wellbeing to Christ, according to Scripture alone, we will not be able to experience the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the outpouring of His power. May we become believers who are completely sold out on Christ!

17. Psalm 37:5 - commit thy way unto the LORD

Faith requires commitment. There has to be an unwavering belief, and an undistracted focus on God and the things of God. Society may teach that we can do whatever we desire under the sun and still have unrestricted access to the kingdom of God, but that is the furthest thing from the truth. How can we operate outside of the will of God and then pray and petition our Loving God, expecting Him to answer our prayers in faith? That is like bringing volleyball rules into a basketball game, expecting the game to conform to the rules we place upon it. Before we can access the kingdom, we have to commit to the King,

surrendering all we are and desire to Him. Too many are left emptyhanded, carnally minded and driven by flesh, all while professing to be of the faith. There is no faith without commitment to the Word of God, and the purpose God intends for us. When we give God what He desires, then He gives us the access to the kingdom we desire. Today, we are going to look at the Psalm 37:5, committing our way to the Lord.

"Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."

The word "commit" means "to roll onto, to entrust". Imagine with me a baby who walks up to us, slaps our leg, and the minute we look down, two small arms go in the air, desiring to be picked up. The baby trusts that we can pick them up and carry them, but the baby also trusts the direction we will take them. Something inside of them just knows they are in safe hands. That is how our God desires us to roll onto Him. In Proverbs 16:3, the Bible says, "Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established." This is no different than us seeking the Lord for direction as to what He desires for us to do with a desire to perform the things He is asking us to do. Commitment sets our mind about accomplishing the things of the Lord, so the Lord comes first in our thoughts. That is why Matthew 6:33 is so powerful when Jesus says, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Commitment requires God to be our first thought, our first resort, the first person we speak with. We understand that God has the direction we need to take to fulfill His good purpose, and we position ourselves to follow His direction. The word "way" means "course of life". In Psalm 37:23, the Bible says, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way." A person fully committed to becoming who God has created them to be (good), inclines themselves toward the Word of the Lord. There is no real commitment without the Word of God reigning in our lives. This isn't just entrusting only the good stuff either, like so many do. Commitment requires us to entrust our baggage to God as well! In Psalm 55:22, the Bible says, "Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." Allowing God to cleanse us from our baggage destroys the hindrances that keep us from fulfilling God's good purpose for us.

"Trust also in Him"

The word "trust" means "to hie for refuge". The word "hie" implies we instinctively run towards safety. God desires to be our first choice, to be so deeply embedded into our instincts where we inquire of the Lord before we go anywhere else. In Psalm 62:8, the Bible says, "Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah." At ALL times, when times are great and when we are terrified. At times where we feel the Holy Spirit's presence and at other times where we feel disconnected. Our trusting the Lord isn't about the circumstances, but it about us training our eyes and our minds upon the Lord, always seeking His Word and truth in our lives. In Proverbs 3:5, the Bible says, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."

ALL of our heart.

God doesn't want part of us. He desires all of us. Commitment in faith requires undivided trust, and total surrender to Him. This means our thoughts and plans no longer matter because we have placed ourselves under the direction of our Lord!

"And he shall bring it to pass"

God is faithful to those who aren't faithful to Him, so just imagine how faithful our God is to those who are faithful to Him! In Isaiah 55:11, the Bible says, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." We have to always rely on the Word of God, because the Word is what begins our faith, and it is the solid foundation we entrust ourselves to. God's Word and plan goes out and nothing can stop them from happening. Isn't God worth our total commitment, isn't He deserving of our faith, especially when it is impossible for Him to lie and fail?

18. Psalm 37:7 - rest in the LORD

Part of being in and of the faith, is coming to an understanding that what God has for us is for us. It is all too easy to look around as we are waiting on our promise, and to wonder why the world seems to walk around with all of their desires fulfilled while we wait without. This is a great trap, and many fall-away because they train their eyes on their desires instead of training their minds on the Lord. The famous quote of "A watched pot never boils" applies here; but think about it. Watching the pot isn't going to make it boil any faster than the designed time for it to boil, so watching the world isn't going to bring our own faith to pass. When we ask something of God according to His Word and will, it is already done in heaven, so God wants us to have rest in knowing that the promise is already done. A faithful person is a person who rests upon the Word and promises of our God. Today, we will look at Psalm 37:7, resting while we wait on the Lord.

"Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."

The word "rest" means "to be still, to be silent". This is extremely important because when we are still and silent before the Lord, that positions us to set our minds on the Lord and commune with Him. In Hebrews 3:14, the Bible says, "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end". We have to see our faith all the way through, and that requires us to rest in the Lord, even when things aren't seeming to go as we hope or plan. If we rest in the Lord in the beginning, and then get antsy and try to embark on our own path, then we are not at rest and we are not operating in faith. In 1 Corinthians 15:58, the Bible says, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." If our mind, heart, and bodies are abounding in the work of the Lord, then we are focused on the ministry of the Lord, instead of the blessing by the Lord. To be unmovable, means the enemy, doubt, fear, or anxiety doesn't have reign, causing us to be pulled from our position in the Lord. In Isaiah 30:15, "For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not." It takes more strength for a person to stand secure in faith than it does

for a person to build an empire on his own power. Even when our bodies aren't moving, our mouths still need to be still as well, because in anxiety, we can begin to speak things that can and will disrupt our faith.

"And wait patiently for him"

The phrase "wait patiently" means "to yearn for longingly". It expresses that we have this burning desire for the things we ask for in faith, but it doesn't trump our desire to experience the presence of the Lord. In Psalms 46:10, the Bible says, "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." Sometimes, God is going to require us to be still, stand silent, and just entrust our paths to His very capable hands. If we aren't at rest, then that means, we aren't at peace, and if we aren't at peace, then that means the Holy Spirit is not the dominant, presiding presence in our lives. In Lamentations 3:25-26, the Bible says, "The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD." It is GOOD, meaning fulfilling to God's purpose from the beginning. God says something is "good" when He speaks something, and it becomes exactly what He says for it to be. When God sees His children are faithful, trusting, and yearning for Him longingly, but still abounding in the work of the Lord, we are the picture of the children He created us to be.

"Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."

The phrase "Fret not thyself" means "become angry or vexed in jealousy". In Exodus 20:17, the Bible says, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's." It is important that we don't pay attention to what other people have because that is like telling God, "You have not blessed me, and you don't seem to know how!" Brutal, huh? When we look elsewhere, we can't appreciate what God has done and is doing in our lives, and it robs us, and God, of the opportunity for Him to have reign.

Waiting on our desires is unsettling and can produce nervousness and fear, but the Word of God provides promises that allow us to have rest in Him. May we seize this blessed rest.

19. Mark 11:23 - and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe

What we speak from our lips is very critical to our faith. We profess to believe in the promises of God, but then "stinking thinking" flows from our lips, soiling the very promises we are entitled to. I came to understand that I have had to allow God to reprogram my mind, to not dive into an area of pessimism and doubt because I have been conditioned by a hard life to "expect the worst". In Proverbs 18:21, the Bible says, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof." It is a tragedy for a believer to speak words of death, because by our own words, we shut the door on our God. Our words

hold power, and until we become bold in our faith to speak our faith into the atmosphere, we will continue to have dreams deferred. Today, we will look at Mark 11:23, a fearless tongue removing mountains.

"For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith."

These are the very words Christ spoke. In Hebrews 6:18, the Bible says, "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us". If it is impossible for God to lie, as Scripture as clearly stated, then we know for a fact that anything spoken directly by Christ is untainted truth. The word "verily" means "surely, truly, something said that is trustworthy". So we have Christ, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and TRUTH, saying the word "verily". Christ really wants us to trust in this Scripture, to receive its message and power. The word "say" means "to lay forth speech". That in itself means nothing without context. I quote this a lot but in John 6:63, Jesus says, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Christ is telling us that His words carry the power of spirit and life in them, so His word is not to be taken lightly! Remember, God SPOKE creation into existence, and it was exactly how He spoke it! Before we can get into the verse itself, Christ is laying the foundation for His Word, securing the truth and the power behind His words.

The word "whosoever" implies that this promise is available to ALL who are saved by faith in His name. So Christ says, "Verily, I SAY (lay forth speech of spirit, life, power, and truth) unto you (believers), that whosoever shall SAY (lay forth speech of spirit, life, power, and truth) unto this mountain". Can we see what just happened here? Christ let us know that the power of His Word has been transferred to us, so that our words carry the same power His did! The word "mountain" implies "something that rises up against us, blocking our path". Remember, Christ words are spirit and life, so we can physically remove spiritual opposition. "The weapons of our warfare are NOT carnal." Remember? We have to speak the Word of God to our mountains.

"Be ye removed and cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart"

The word "remove" means "to lift up and away", but a good visual would be "to uproot". The reason our mountains don't move because we haven't gotten to the root! The word "cast" means "to be thrown". The "sea" has always, since the beginning, been a picture of judgement. In 2 Corinthians 10:5, the Bible says, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ". This shows that we are to rebuke the thing that rises up against the Word of God, whatever it is. This can't be done with doubt, because we have to believe in the power of God behind our Word, and "doubt" means "to be in strife with oneself, hesitate or waver". Any words spoken with doubt in the heart are words without the power to bring faith to pass.

"but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith"

The word "believe" means "to be firmly persuaded". Firm means we are rooted in a position, unmovable from it. If we believe our spoken words will happen, that God will bring our words to pass, it will be so. God spoke creation into existence and now He expects us to speak His word into existence as well. In Matthew 12:37, Jesus says, "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." God has given us the ability to operate in the same authority He, Christ, the disciples, apostles, and His Church did. Do we believe in the power of our words, to manifest the spiritual realm unto earth?

What is the nature of our words? Faith? Spirit? Power? Life? What have our words brought to pass?

20. Mark 11:24 - believe that ye receive them

When we pray out our desires before the Lord, what happens next? Do we speak against the very thing we prayed for, doubting the likelihood of it happening? Does fear creep in because we have taken a bold step, and now uncertainty is robbing us of the joy of casting our desires before the Lord? Do we consider it done the minute we prayed it? What happens after we pray plays a role into whether our prayers are answered, and it is not God's fault when our desires don't come to pass because our faith wavers. We have to be bold enough to bring our petitions before the Lord, and then be bold enough to stand upon God's faithfulness after we pray. Faith doesn't work too well if there is no belief that God will answer our prayers. This is us once again calling God a liar if we pray, but don't believe in our prayer getting answered. Today, we will look at Mark 11:24, receiving our desires by faith.

"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

The word "therefore" connects two or more points. "Therefore" is meant to usher in a course of action to validate the truth of Mark 11:23. The truth in verse 23 is connected to the point made in Mark 11:22, which says, "And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God." Faith is the foundation of these three verses, but faith has to be applied correctly in order to be effective. In Matthew 17:19-20, the Bible says, "Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." God knows our hearts, those praying and operating in faith and those who aren't. When we don't get what we asked for, there are two reasons: unbelief and asking for something that is outside of God's will for our lives. In Psalm 37:4, the Bible says, "Delight thyself also in the LORD: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." When we allow ourselves to be formed by God into the people He created us to be, what we desire is going to be in line with what He desires, and we will be able to receive the things of God we ask for. See, faith is attached to the Word of God, so until we become a people who have faith according to the Word of God, our faith will continue to be fruitless.

The word "desire" means simply "to ask". In Matthew 7:8, Jesus says, "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." God desires for His children to receive what they ask for but we have to ask according to His word. In John 15:7, Jesus says, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." This is where we as believers tend to fall short in our faith. We don't abide in God, and God's word doesn't abide in us. How can we expect anything from God when we are disconnected from Him? Sin separates us, unbelief separates us, a carnal mind separates us, but it is NOT God's design for us to be disconnected from Him. The word "pray" means "to supplicate or worship". This is the act of acknowledging that: we are incapable and our God is fully capable, where we cast our cares upon the Lord, where we decrease and allow Him to increase, in bringing what we pray for to pass. The act of prayer is our positioning ourselves to have the right mind, heart, and attitude towards God and in towards what we pray for. The verse says, "WHEN ye pray". There are no "IFS" when it comes to prayer. Prayer is just as essential of the process to applying faith as belief. In James 5:16, the Bible says, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." A praying believer will see things done a lot faster than a wisher or thinker.

"Believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Let's forget about believing in the "stuff" we ask God for. Before we get to the "stuff" GOD must be believed in first! Mark 10:27, "And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible." We tend to believe in people a lot faster than we do God, and we find ourselves disappointed when the people we believe in can't fulfill our joy. We must place our confidence in God and entrust our lives to His will. We must ask of our God in expectancy that, what we pray for, as long as it lines up with Scripture and God's will for our lives personally, will be so! We can't ask and NOT place an expectation upon God to answer. Our God can not lie!

May our prayers of faith translate into promises fulfilled.

21. Acts 26:18 - that they may receive forgiveness of sins

Our faith is supposed to DO something! Our faith has power, and that power has the full capability to cause miracles to happen. It's a beautiful thing for the world to know we are Christians by our love, but it is an explosive thing when the world can identify us by our faith! Our churches are supposed to be places of freedom, where the sick are healed, the blind are made to see and the irreparably broken are full restored by the power of God. Faith is designed to bring an atmosphere completely under the authority and power of God, but it all begins with the Word of God. The Bible shows us who we are, whose we are, the purpose God has for His children, what we are capable of and what the Word of God does in this world we live in. It is our job to entrust our confidence to the Word of God and perform the things God commands us to. Today, we are going to look at Acts 26:18, faith activated!

"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

The phrase "open their eyes" refers to spiritual sight. When we walked without salvation, we were spiritually blind, unable to see our God and the direction He has ordained for His children. In Isaiah 35:5, the Bible says, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped." Even before we knew we needed it, God provided us the opportunity to see. What caused our blindness in the first place? In 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, the Bible says, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." The "god of this world" is Satan, and he has no desire for us to see the Lord! In Matthew 11:4-6, the Bible says, "Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." Christ sent word back to John the Baptist about the power of God at work in the lives of God's people. John the Baptist heard about the works of Christ from prison! The fruits of our faith are supposed to spread into the darkest places, but if we don't exercise our faith, how can the people hear?

"And to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God"

The word "turn" implies a conversion, turning the believer to the service and worship of the true God. "Darkness" pertains to "moral darkness, the absence of spiritual light and truth, the presence of sinfulness and calamity". "Light" means "the true knowledge of God and spiritual things, Christian piety". The "power" spoken of here is "the dominion, authority, or rule over a person or thing". In Ephesians 5:8, the Bible says, "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light". We have to understand what we have been delivered from, and what power we now have access to because of our deliverance. In John 12:35-36, the Bible says, "Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them." We have to walk in our light, in the true knowledge of God and spiritual things, because the enemy desires to place us back into darkness. Walking in the light allows us the ability to exercise our faith in the Word of God, and in that faith comes power! What type of parent doesn't want their children to walk in the fullness of their power and abilities? God is no different!

"That they may receive the forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me".

Our faith in Christ alone gives us salvation, and salvation gives us the forgiveness of sins. Salvation gives us an identity as children of God, and with this identity comes power! In Colossians 1:10 the Bible says, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God". God turns us from the power of Satan to the power of God, that, by faith in Christ, we can bear fruit in every good work, and also know our God even more! What separates the faithful believers

from the "church goers" lies in our ability to put the Word of God into use, and when the Word of God is in use in us the world around us is transformed!

"According to your faith be it unto you." Christ's words. What will our faith produce?

God Bless!

Marshall

WHY KJV (King James Version)

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15

This is one of my favorite Bible verses, a constant source of encouragement for me to dig deeper and deeper into the Word of God to receive truth in its deepest form. I believe it is our job as believers to study as deep as we can, and then build our way up. The King James Version of the Bible is one of most popular early translations of the Bible to English, so that is where my study begins. I have come to learn that by putting the King James Version side by side with other translations that may be easier to read, that easier doesn't always keep the deeper meaning intact. The "thee", "thy", and "ye" can be a little overwhelming at first, but as with anything else we study continuously, it will become easier to decipher.

The Bible I use, the KJV AMG Hebrew-Greek Keyword Study Bible, gives me an enormous tool to not only study the Word of God from an earlier English translation, but gives me access to study the keywords in the Scripture to find the deeper meaning of the verses I study. The more I studied the Word of God, the deeper I wanted to go. When I first started my incarceration over 17 years ago, I read the NIV version of the Bible. As I matured as a reader, I went back to the King James Version in 2007, wanting to learn the most difficult English translation. I went to the Hebrew-Greek Keyword Study Bible in 2014 and have been using it since. I recently was given a MacArthur Study Bible, NASB, which I use for scriptural cross-references and commentary purposes. I am in no way saying it is wrong for anyone to study any translation other than the King James Version, but I do suggest that everyone possesses one, so we can break down the Word of Truth side by side. It is important to go to the earliest possible translation, to see the modernized translations accurately convey the Word of God.

Studying the Word of God pleases Him, and I desire to break down the Scriptures rightly, understanding that by studying the Word of God, I am breaking down truth so I can position myself for the Holy Spirit's teaching. Whatever I learn, I then share, and by sheer repetition, I am able to retain what I learn better.

Marshall's Bio, Poems, and History

Marshall's Bio

Marshall Jones is a 38 year old man on a lifelong journey of bearing fruit for the Kingdom of God. The author of "A Raven's Meal" (RoseDog Books), a poetry collection, he aspires to target the grey areas, and the people who are terribly misunderstood by society. Believing that everyone deserves a voice, he not only shares his testimony, but he also tries to use his gifting to share other people's experiences as well. He writes from the prison system that has housed his body for 17 years, but also from the place that has been the catalyst to his freedom.



Marshall's Poems

You can view Marshall's poems at <https://www.redthreadpoets.com/category/100-poets/marshall-jones/>

History

Red Granite Daily Devotions commenced on Red Thread Poets Facebook page on November 1, 2020. The first Daily Devotional in this The Faithfulness of Faith Series was published on March 13, 2021. The Daily Devotions are recapped by date at www.redthreadpoets.com/daily-devotions/

This Series is preceded by the Psalm 91 Series of 15 Devotions, and Loving You Series if 30 Devotions.

Marshall uses these resources in his Bible Study: AMG Hebrew Greek Keyword Study Bible (KJV), Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, The MacArthur Study Bible (NASB), Webster's New World College Dictionary.