

Sunday Sermon Review: Week of April 2nd, 2023

Sermon: What is Faith?

Speaker: Pastor Sam Johnson

Icebreaker

- We all have some particular talent that could help bring the word of God to LifePoint's new Tiny Town campus. What is YOUR talent?

Discussion Questions

Introduction

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

- Faith is a gift from God. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. It's believing that God is going to do what He said in the Bible. Is your faith in God strong or weak? Why?
- Faith is putting your confidence in the personality of God. His personality never changes. How have you seen God remain steadfast, even while the world around you was changing?
- Faith is the key that opens up all closed doors. What doors have been opened by God in your life? Have you allowed your faith in God to lead you through those doors?
- How does knowing God's personality help your prayers?
- What is the difference between praying with faith-based intention and praying just to check the box? What does it mean to pray with certainty?

Faith must always have purpose!

Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

- Do you know what your purpose is? In what ways has God revealed to you how He wants to use you? Are you praying to God for a purpose?
- We can't go back and redo the mistakes we've made. What mistakes are holding you back from God's purpose? What would help you overcome them?
- How has your faith helped you press on and live for Christ?
- Do you pray for what needs to be done or for God to show you what YOU need to do to fulfill your purpose? What's the difference?
- How do you discern your will versus God's will?
- God had a purpose in leading Pastor Sam and Joyce Johnson to build seminaries around the world. Their faith made all they've accomplished possible. How can your faith in God help you toward His purpose in your life?

Faith always risks something.

"And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." (Mark 10:17-22)

- You must be willing to risk something in order to have faith. Pastor Sam and Joyce braved arrest as a suspected CIA agent in Portugal in order to build a Bible School. Still, their faith allowed them to

continue to build a huge complex that is used today to teach the people of Portugal about God. What are you willing to risk?

- In Mark 10, Jesus said, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” He didn’t necessarily mean that we should all sell everything and go into full-time ministry. Rather, he was telling the man he lacked the faith to follow Jesus. Is your faith strong enough to follow whatever God asks of you? Why or why not? (Give examples.)
- The rich man wasn’t willing to give up his possessions to follow Jesus. Why do you think that is? What do you have trouble giving up to walk with God?
- Share a time where “a leap of faith” led to something great, for either you or someone else you know.

Faith always confesses what it believes.

- Faith is demonstrated by confessing the word of God is true, that Jesus has never left us, and that the Holy Spirit is living in us. How has the confession of Jesus as your Savior changed you and your life?
- In Luke 9:20, Jesus asked Peter “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered, “The Christ of God.” How did that simple confession demonstrate Peter’s faith? How does it also demonstrate your faith? What other ways do you see yourself confessing what you believe in your daily life?
- When someone looks at your acts and deeds, does your outward confession of faith accurately reflect your faith in Jesus? What do you think?

The perfect test of our faith is obedience

- What’s the problem with having faith but not being obedient? What about being obedient without having faith?
- Dareth Ly is a native Cambodian who escaped after four years of torture as a captive of the Khmer Rouge. He was sent to a home in St

Paul, MN where he was raised by a family who adopted him, and he went to Seminary and was called to be a missionary in Cambodia. Dareth did not want to go back to where he had been tortured, but he obeyed God and went. How hard do you think obedience was for Dareth? How would you have responded if you were in his shoes?

- In what ways can you be obedient to God now? What's stopping you?

Now What?

Encouragement: When you accept Christ as Lord of your life, you receive the gift of faith. Faith is a gift from God that can't be earned. Faith is the confident assurance that something we want to happen, will happen. It is evidence of things we haven't yet seen. Faith is confidence, trust and belief that God will do what He says in His Word. And as we draw closer to God through prayer and studying the Bible, we can grow our faith and make it active! Being faithful turns trust into action. And remember, faith always has a purpose. There's always a goal or a mission when we move in faith. As we move in faith towards that purpose, we also have to remember that faith always risks something. There is always a cost when following the Lord, but it's worth it because God loves us and wants what's best for us. Confess that because God is faithful, you'll be faithful, too. And what is the perfect test of our faith? That we obey God and love Him. Get to know God, hear what He has to say to you, step out and trust God's got you and go make a difference.

Ask:

- Up to now, where have you been putting your faith?
- Are you confident in the personality of God - that He never changes?
- Are there risks that God's been asking you to take but you haven't listened? Why?
- Do your outward expressions accurately display your faith?
- What are you believing God for? What is something you can do in faith through obedience to God in order to respond to His call?

Challenge: Spend more time getting closer to God this week. Spend more time in prayer and studying the Bible. This week, serve someone in a way that makes you feel a little uncomfortable. Get outside of your comfort zone and do something that will make a difference in someone's life. Invite people who you don't know to Easter service. Pray with your spouse. Bring your kids to church. Ask God how you can step out of your comfort zone and into obedience.

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank you for being such a loving Father. Thank you for your never changing, steadfast character. Thank you for being a God that never changes, that does everything you say you will do. We thank you for loving us so much that you've given us the gift of faith. We're so blessed to have such a powerful gift. It's a gift that moves mountains, that opens locked doors, breaks habits, and for that, we praise you. God, help us grow our faith. Help us to pray more and spend more time in your word. As we grow in faith, speak to our hearts and our lives and move our faith into action. Open our eyes to see the purpose you've placed on lives. Show us where you need us to trust you more and take a risk. Search our hearts and anything that we need to confess in order to take possession of our purpose, we confess and repent. Give us the strength, wisdom, perseverance and confidence to stay obedient, no matter what comes our way. Strengthen our belief so that we can do everything you have called us to do. We trust you. Amen.