

FOUNDATION OF FAITH!
GOD THE FATHER
PART 9

We are currently in a series I call Foundation of Faith and we are specifically in a section looking at God the Father. We have seen who He is, His natural attributes, His moral attributes. And as we have seen all that God is, as much as we can with our finite minds and in the time frame we had, it should cause us to live a certain way. It should cause us to live out our faith in a way that would be pleasing to Him. It is not that we are trying to earn our way into heaven or work our way into heaven. It is not that we are trying to repay the Lord for what He has done for us. Then what is it? Let me share this illustration with you and you will see why we do what we do for the Lord or at least what we should be doing for the Lord, pleasing Him. We are told,

There was once a married couple who didn't love each other. The day they got married, the husband handed his wife a list of chores for her to follow. He insisted that she do all the tasks on her list every day. The wife worked hard to accomplish her assigned duties, but she was miserable as she performed them. Ironing his clothes, preparing his meals, cleaning house - every task was burdensome. Although she obeyed all his rules, she never enjoyed a loving relationship with her husband.

Then one day her husband died. After several years had passed, she fell in love with another man and got married. The new husband never required her to do anything, much less a list of jobs. Instead, he showered her with love and did everything he could to make her happy.

One day this wife was joyfully cleaning house when she discovered her first husband's list of commands tucked away in a drawer. As she read the paper, it dawned on her that she was performing every task on the list, but now she was serving with joy instead of misery. Her love for her second husband inspired her to automatically do the same jobs that her first husband had required. She had served her first husband out of duty, but her second husband out of love.

God wants us to serve Him out of jubilation, not obligation. Legalism adds weights to our work, but love gives wings to our service.

- Kent Crockett, Making Today
Count for Eternity, pp. 159-160

I know you have heard me say this before, but if you are anything like me, you need to hear it again and again. Even Peter said that in his epistle, that even though they knew this information he was going to keep reminding them and even after his departure, after he dies, he will leave a testimony behind of these things! In II Peter 1:12-15 Peter tells us, **“For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.”**

Thus, that is what I am doing here. Now think about this. We do not **HAVE** to serve the Lord; we **GET** to serve the Lord! We don't **HAVE** to come to church; we **GET** to come to church! We don't **HAVE** to worship the Lord; we **GET** to worship the Lord! You see, we don't **HAVE** to do anything if we truly don't want to but the Lord is so good, He is so gracious that we **GET** to do these things for Him. And when you approach this with a childlike faith, it is beautiful!

Remember when you were a child and your dad or mom let you do something for them, say for the boys cut the grass and for the girls cook dinner. Sorry, I am not being chauvinistic but that was my era of growing up. Now the first time you did it you were so excited, I get to cut the grass or cook supper! And please understand your dad or mom could have done it faster and better but they let you do it. But then, after time, it was not so exciting. Now you feel that you **HAVE** to cut the grass or cook the meal and you are no longer doing it out of love, but it now has become legalistic. You feel forced to do it. That joy is gone. That excitement is gone. The work has not changed but your attitude towards the work has!

That can also happen in our Christian lives, our Christian walk. When the Lord first asks us to do something we are excited, we **GET** to serve the Lord! But then, over time, as you do this over and over again, it is no longer that you **GET** to do this, but now you feel that you **HAVE** to do this and it becomes a chore instead of a privilege! And when that happens, you will lose that joy; you will lose that excitement that God chose you over a donkey to do His work! You see, you have lost that perspective and the work has not changed, but your attitude in the work has!

If you are in that position at home, at work, at church, wherever you go and whatever you are doing, repent and return to your first love Jesus Christ. Have that childlike faith that is honored to serve the King of kings and Lord of lords! Have the correct perspective of the situation, that the Lord does not need you but He will use you if you are willing to walk by faith and understand that you **GET** to serve the Lord, you don't **HAVE** to!

Now in saying that, let's continue looking at how we are to respond to God in light of all that He is, in light of all that He has given to us. Last time we looked at two reasons. The first is that we are to walk in a way that would please God. And the second reason is that we are to worship Him. Pretty simple and pretty straight forward and we are going to continue looking at these ways we are to live out our faith in light of all that God is!

3. WE ARE TO SERVE HIM FAITHFULLY

In light of all that God is we are to respond to Him or serve Him faithfully. Listen to what we are told in I Chronicles 28:9-10, **“As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. Consider now, for the Lord has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong, and do it.”**

Here we see David speaking to his son Solomon, giving him words of wisdom as he is passing on the kingdom to him. And David's instructions to Solomon are simple. He tells his son to not only know the Lord, but to serve Him with all your heart, be focused on Him. Be faithful to Him. Make a conscious decision to do these things and you will find true joy. The tragedy is that it took Solomon his whole life to figure out that what his dad said was true. Solomon thought he would find joy in building projects, books, studies, material possessions, entertainment, but none of these brought him joy. Then, at the end of his life, this is the conclusion he came to, **“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all.”**

Ecclesiastes 12:13.

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“All has been heard; the end of the matter is: Fear God [revere and worship Him, knowing that He is] and keep His commandments, for this is the whole of man [the full, original purpose of his creation, the object of God's providence, the root of character, the foundation of all happiness, the adjustment to all inharmonious circumstances and conditions under the sun] and the whole [duty] for every man.”**

In other words, he is speaking of just being faithful to the Lord, walk in His ways and that is our duty, that is the way we are called to walk. You see, we too have the same information as Solomon, may we learn from his mistakes and be obedient to the Lord's command, for that is where true joy is found in knowing the Lord and serving Him, being faithful in our walk! And think about it. Is God interested in having us be famous or faithful? It does seem obvious and yet we do the opposite.

Years ago there was an actor named Marlon Brando who was in a movie called *On The Waterfront*. And in that movie one of his lines was, “You don’t understand! I coulda had class. I coulda been a contender. I could’ve been somebody, instead of a bum, which is what I am!” And many feel that way as they attempt to be somebody instead of being what God has called them to be. You see, you will never find true satisfaction, true joy doing things that you were not created for. It is only when you surrender to the Lord, obey His calling for your life, be faithful to Him that you will find true joy. And you know what, you will be somebody, not in the eyes of man necessarily, but in the eyes of God and that is more important in light of who He is and what He has done for us!

Again, the world doesn’t get us because they don’t see what we are doing as worthwhile, that it is amounting to anything and the reason they do is that they are looking at it through human eyes instead of eyes of faith that trust in the Lord knowing that what He has called us to do He will accomplish. And granted, it may not get the praise from this world, but God is honored. Let me illustrate this with the following story. We are told,

Clarence Jordan was a man of unusual abilities and commitment. He had two Ph.D.s, one in agriculture and one in Greek and Hebrew. So gifted was he, he could have chosen to do anything he wanted. He chose to serve the poor. In the 1940s, he founded a farm in Americus, Georgia, and called it Koinonia Farm. It was a community for poor whites and poor blacks. As you might guess, such an idea did not go over well in the Deep South of the ‘40s.

Ironically, much of the resistance came from good church people who followed the laws of segregation as much as the other folk in town. The town people tried everything to stop Clarence. They tried boycotting him, and slashing workers' tires when they came to town. Over and over, for fourteen years, they tried to stop him.

Finally, in 1954, the Ku Klux Klan had enough of Clarence Jordan, so they decided to get rid of him once and for all. They came one night with guns and torches and set fire to every building on Koinonia Farm but Clarence's home, which they riddled with bullets. And they chased off all the families except one black family which refused to leave. Clarence recognized the voices of many of the Klansmen, and, as you might guess, some of them were church people. Another was the local newspaper's reporter.

The next day, the reporter came out to see what remained of the farm. The rubble still smoldered and the land was scorched, but he found Clarence in the field, hoeing and planting.

"I heard the awful news," he called to Clarence, "and I came out to do a story on the tragedy of your farm closing." Clarence just kept on hoeing and planting. The reporter kept prodding, kept poking, trying to get a rise from this quietly determined man who seemed to be planting instead of packing his bags. So, finally, the reporter said in a haughty voice, "Well, Dr. Jordan, you got two of them Ph.D.s and you've but fourteen years into this farm, and there's nothing left of it at all. Just how successful do you think you've been?"

Clarence stopped hoeing, turned toward the reporter with his penetrating blue eyes, and said quietly but firmly, “About as successful as the cross. Sir, I don’t think you understand us. What we are about is not success but faithfulness. We’re staying. Good day.” Beginning that day, Clarence and his companions rebuilt Koinonia and the farm is going strong today.

- Tim Hansel, Holy Sweat, pp. 188-189

You see, who are you serving, this world or the Lord? When you serve this world you will be serving for your own power, your own fame, your own fortune. But when you serve the Lord you will be serving Him and serving Him faithfully. We see this illustrated for us in II Chronicles chapter 16 as king Asa returns from victory over the Syrians. Well, it was not really a victory, Asa paid off Ben-Hadad not to attack him but to attack the Northern Kingdom of Israel. And Asa was pretty happy with what he did, kind of smug you might say.

Then a seer by the name of Hanani came to see him and he rebuked Asa for what he did, for not trusting in the Lord, not being faithful to the Lord. He said, “**For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars.**” The New Living Translation puts this verse like this, “**The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. What a fool you have been! From now on you will be at war.**” II Chronicles 16:9.

What I want you to see here is that this verse is important to us because it tells us that God wants to use us. I am amazed that He does but He does and He is looking for people to work through. The key here is not how strong we are, just that we are available. God wants to show Himself strong through what He does through us. You see, we don't have to have degrees, be intelligent, be wealthy, be good looking, be tall or short, big or small, strong or weak, just available to be used by Him. God is calling us to be available and thus, we must be faithful then and walk as He has called us to do!

Jesus said in Revelation 3:8, **"I know your works. See, *I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.*"** Jesus is saying that He has opened the door of opportunity for us and no one can shut it except by our own lack of faith, by not walking through that door. You see, we can't open the doors of opportunity, we only have a little strength, all God asks us to do is to take those steps of faith and go through those doors to be used by Him.

And please understand that it may not work out the way we think it should, but God is faithful and nothing will thwart His work, His plans. We must remember that and be faithful to what He has called us to do! Let me show you what I mean because as we look at things through our own eyes, we may not see what God is doing. But if we can learn to trust in Him, it is amazing what we can see. We are told,

An elderly preacher was rebuked by one of his deacons one Sunday morning before the service. "Pastor," said the man, "something must be wrong with your preaching and your work. There's been only one person added to the church in a whole year, and he's just a boy." The minister listened, his eyes moistening and his thin hand trembling. "I feel it all," he replied, "but God knows I've tried to do my duty." On that day the minister's heart was heavy as he stood before his flock. As he finished the message, he felt a strong inclination to resign.

After everyone else had left, that one boy came to him and asked, "Do you think if I worked hard for an education, I could become a preacher - perhaps a missionary?" Again tears welled up in the minister's eyes. "Ah, this heals the ache I feel," he said. "Robert, I see the Divine hand now. May God bless you, my boy. Yes, I think you will become a preacher."

Many years later an aged missionary returned to London from Africa. His name was spoken with reverence. Nobles invited him to their homes. He had added many souls to the church of Jesus Christ, reaching even some of Africa's most savage chiefs. His name was Robert Moffat, the same Robert who years before had spoken to the pastor that Sunday morning in the old Scottish kirk. Lord, help us to be faithful. Then give us the grace to leave the results to you.

- Source Unknown

You see, are we looking for praise from man or from God? Are we willing to look at things through the eyes of faith, maybe not understanding fully what good can come from a situation and yet be faithful in completing the work? Or will we become discouraged and disappointed and drop out of the work we are called to do because we have looked at things through the eyes of flesh instead of the eyes of God, the eyes of faith?

Remember the Parable of the Talents in Matthew chapter 25, starting in verse 14 where we are told, **“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’**

Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’ But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’” Matthew 25:14-30.

Notice what Jesus is telling us here. He is saying that he holds us accountable for what we do and what we don’t do. And when the time comes He will come to settle accounts. Now this is not speaking of judgment for punishment but of rewards. You see, we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ as Christians. Notice what Paul tells us back in II Corinthians 5:6-10, **“So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”**

It should be our goal to complete the task that God has set before us, using those talents He has given to each of us. But too often people get involved and when things get tough, where there is work involved, they drop out and they don't finish the task. And notice what the Lord is looking at as we do serve Him, it is our motives. In I Corinthians 3:11-15 Paul tells us, **“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”**

What is motivating you to serve? That too is important, and all that is done out of a fleshly desire, that will be burned in the fire, and you will not be rewarded for that, but you will not lose your salvation.

And the Lord is showing us that if we are faithful in the little things He has entrusted to us, He will give us more. It is amazing the people who want titles or positions and yet are unwilling to do the little things. Do you really think I would place someone into a leadership position when they are not even responsible for the little things? Of course not, and neither will the Lord. In a sense, this life is a proving ground, a test, and our rewards will be the position we get in the Kingdom Age.

And please understand that it is not how great or how big your ministry is, but how faithful you are to it! One had five talents the other had two and yet both were rewarded for their faithful service. It is as Jesus said in Luke 12:48, “. . . **For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.**”

And as you look at the unprofitable servant, I hate to say this but these are nothing more than excuses for being lazy! And in these excuses he is blaming God, he is saying that God is hard, that God is demanding, that He is a taskmaster and God is dishonest. You can say that if you want to, but it is untrue and you will still be held accountable for what you didn't do. In fact, the true picture of Jesus is given to us in Matthew 11:28-30. And this picture is very different from what this person was saying. We read, “**Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.**”

That is our Lord and this man tried to use the excuse that he was fearful, and the Lord sees right through that and says that it was not fear that stopped him from serving, but his laziness! Ouch! He was wicked because of his concept of God, and his actions were empty because he was lazy.

And look at what His excuses caused him to do! Absolutely nothing but bury, hide what he had, and it is amazing the excuses people will have not to serve the Lord. I love the picture the Lord gives us of a sluggard, a lazy person. In Proverbs 26:13-15 we are told, **“The lazy man says, ‘There is a lion in the road! A fierce lion is in the streets!’ As a door turns on its hinges, so does the lazy man on his bed. The lazy man buries his hand in the bowl; it wearies him to bring it back to his mouth.”** First of all he makes an excuse that a lion is on the road; it was too dangerous to go out. Then, he sleeps so much that when he turns he sounds like a squeaky door. And lastly, he is so lazy that when he eats, he can’t expend enough energy to lift the spoon to his mouth, so he just puts his face in the bowl! That road or that path is an unfruitful one and thus, don’t go down it!

You see, if you are faithful to what the Lord has given to you, He will give you more. It is not how much you have, but what you do with what you have that Jesus is speaking of. And if you don’t use it, He will take what He has given you and give it to another who will use it. He is not going to give you more when you aren’t using what He has given you!

Now as some read this about the unfaithful servant they may think he lost his salvation, but that is not the case. You see, this person must be unsaved for he is being cast into outer darkness, the lake of fire, Gehenna. Also, in saying that, some will come to the conclusion that we must work our way into heaven, for this person was lazy and was cast out of heaven into outer darkness. That is wrong. First of all Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:8-9, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”**

We are saved by grace and not by works. Then what is Jesus saying here in this parable? It is not a works salvation or a work your way into heaven but a salvation that works! It doesn't save you but it does show that you are saved. James makes this point very clear when he says in James 2:14-18, **“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”**

Again, works just shows that you are saved!

And thus, we are faithful to the Lord in light of all that He is, we walk by faith and do those things the Lord has called us to do because we love Him and desire to please Him! And so, **WE ARE TO SERVE HIM FAITHFULLY!**

4. WE MUST BELIEVE IN FAITH

The forth point I would like to make in regards to how we respond to God in the light of all that He is may surprise you but we must believe in faith. In other words, if we are saved we have come to Him in faith, we have believed in faith that Jesus is our Savior and Lord of our life and now that this has happened in our life, we must also walk by faith. If we have trusted Him for our salvation can we trust Him in our daily lives? We need to!

Paul, in Hebrews 11:6 tells us, **“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”** The Living Bible puts this verse like this, **“You can never please God without faith, without depending on him. Anyone who wants to come to God must believe that there is a God and that he rewards those who sincerely look for him.”**

Paul is saying that apart from faith there is absolutely nothing that pleases God that you can do or say, absolutely nothing. I know you might think I am going overboard here but notice what Paul says, that, **“without faith it is impossible to please Him.”** It is ***“IMPOSSIBLE”*** to please Him apart from faith! That means no religion will please Him because religion is man’s way to work his way into heaven. No genealogy will please Him, it doesn’t matter who your descendants were. Even good works do not please God because again, they are done to appease God or work your way in. Thus, without faith you can’t please God and thus, you must believe in faith, you must believe in Jesus!

Now here’s the thing. Can we put into practice what we know even in the difficult situations we face? Can we have faith in God that no matter what we do, He has His plan and His purpose for our lives, even when we have done things that are wrong? You see, too often when we get into trouble, we think that two wrongs can make a right. What I mean is that when we do something wrong we try to minimize the affects of what we did or correct them by doing something else that is also wrong. Let me share this with you. This is a true story and you will see what I mean. We are told,

For years I enjoyed packing up my guns and some food to head off into the woods. Even more than the hunting itself, I enjoyed the way these trips always seemed to deepen my relationship with friends as we hunted during the day and talked late into the night around the campfire. When an old friend recently invited me to relive some of those days, I couldn't pass up the chance. For several weeks before the trip, I had taken the time to upgrade some of my equipment and sight in my rifle. When the day came, I was ready for the hunt. What I wasn't ready for was what my close friend, Tom, shared with me the first night out on the trail.

I always enjoyed the time I spent with Tom. He had become a leader in his church and his warm and friendly manner had also taken him many steps along the path of business success. He had a lovely wife, and while I knew they had driven over some rocky roads in their marriage, things now seemed to be stable and growing. Tom's kids, two daughters and a son, were struggling in junior high and high school with the normal problems of peer pressure and acceptance.

As we rode back into the mountains, I could tell that something big was eating away at Tom's heart. His normal effervescent style was shrouded by an overwhelming inner hurt. Normally, Tom would attack problems with the same determination that had made him a success in business. Now, I saw him wrestling with something that seemed to have knocked him to the mat for the count. Silence has a way of speaking for itself. All day and on into the evening, Tom let his lack of words shout out his inner restlessness. Finally, around the first night's campfire, he opened up.

The scenario Tom painted was annoyingly familiar. I'd heard it many times before in many other people's lives. But the details seemed such a contrast to the life that Tom and his wife lived and the beliefs they embraced. His oldest daughter had become attached to a boy at school. Shortly after they started going together, they became sexually involved. Within two months, she was pregnant. Tom's wife discovered the truth when a packet from Planned Parenthood came in the mail addressed to her daughter. When confronted with it, the girl admitted she had requested it when she went to the clinic to find out if she was pregnant.

If we totaled up the number of girls who have gotten pregnant out of wedlock during the past two hundred years of our nation's history, the total would be in the millions. Countless parents through the years have faced the devastating news. Being a member of such a large fraternity of history, however, does not soften the severity of the blow to your heart when you discover it's your daughter.

Tom shared the humiliation he experienced when he realized that all of his teaching and example had been ignored. Years of spiritual training had been thrust aside. His stomach churned as he relived the emotional agony of knowing that the little girl he and his wife loved so much had made a choice that had permanently scarred her heart. I'm frequently confronted with these problems in my ministry and have found that dwelling on the promiscuous act only makes matters worse. I worship a God of forgiveness and solutions, and at that moment in our conversation I was anxious to turn toward hope and healing.

I asked Tom what they had decided to do. Would they keep the baby, or put it up for adoption? That's when he delivered the blow. With the fire burning low, Tom paused for a long time before answering. And even when he spoke he wouldn't look me in the eye. "We considered the alternatives, Tim. Weighed all the options." He took a deep breath. "We finally made an appointment with the abortion clinic. I took her down there myself."

I dropped the stick I'd been poking the coals with and stared at Tom. Except for the wind in the trees and the snapping of our fire it was quiet for a long time. I couldn't believe this was the same man who for years had been so outspoken against abortion. He and his wife had even volunteered at a crisis pregnancy center in his city. Heartsick, I pressed him about the decision. Tom then made a statement that captured the essence of his problem...and the problem many others have in entering into genuine rest. In a mechanical voice, he said "I know what I believe, Tim, but that's different than what I had to do. I had to make a decision that had the least amount of consequences for the people involved."

Just by the way he said it, I could tell my friend had rehearsed these lines over and over in his mind. And by the look in his eyes and the emptiness in his voice, I could tell his words sounded as hollow to him as they did to me.

- Tim Kimmel, *Little House on the Freeway*, pp. 67-70

You see, there was a lack of faith here in what was done. Yes, the daughter had sinned and she needed to repent and get right with God and God would forgive her. And yes, she was now pregnant out of wedlock and to correct this sin, they sinned even more by making her have an abortion. Thus, two wrongs did not make a right.

Now, if she had the child and kept it, that would have been difficult but God would have seen them through this. If they had given the baby up for adoption, again, God would have seen them through this. But they did not obey the Words of God, they did not walk by faith but by sight and they made her have an abortion and God is not pleased with that.

And the question for us is this. "Do we believe in faith?" In other words, no matter what we are going through, no matter how difficult things may get, do we have the faith to be obedient or to do it our own way? And when you think about it, when we do it our own way, it really never works out for us. But, when we surrender to God, when we obey His Word, when we walk by faith we are showing God that we believe in Him, we have faith, the faith that He has given to us and because of that we are able to walk accordingly!

And the only way for your faith to grow is to stretch it, to use it, to see that God is faithful and as we trust in Him He will stretch us! You see, we can know all the truths about God. We can learn all His promises to us. We can read His Word over and over again. We can study the Hebrew and Greek text. We can read all the commentaries on the Bible that are out there. But if you don't apply these things to your life, your faith is empty and it will not grow. Let me show you what I mean as I begin to rap up this study this morning. We are told,

In 1893, engineer George Ferris built a machine that bears his name - the Ferris wheel. When it was finished, he invited a newspaper reporter to accompany him and his wife for the inaugural ride. It was a windy July day, so a stiff breeze struck the wheel with great force as it slowly began its rotation.

Despite the wind, the wheel turned flawlessly. After one revolution, Ferris called for the machine to be stopped so that he, his wife, and the reporter could step out. In braving that one revolution on the windblown Ferris wheel, each occupant demonstrated genuine faith.

Mr. Ferris began with the scientific knowledge that the machine would work and that it would be safe. Mrs. Ferris and the reporter believed the machine would work on the basis of what the inventor had said. But only after the ride could it be said of all three that they had personal, experiential faith.

- Source Unknown

See, do you have the faith to step out, to move forward. Like George Ferris, his wife and the newspaper reporter believed that this Ferris wheel would work based on what the inventor had said but they then needed to show that their faith in what he had done was real, and thus, they stepped onto the Ferris wheel. Do you believe in what the Lord has said? I bet you do but now you must take it a step further and walk in what He has said! You, in a sense, must step on the Ferris wheel even on a windy day!

And thus, in the light of all that God is, all that he has shown us, **WE MUST BELIEVE IN FAITH!**

Let me leave you with this to think about. We are told,

A large home had fine plate-glass windows that looked out on a beautiful garden. A bird outside tried to catch a butterfly that was inside; the bird flew against the window while the butterfly flew up and down trying to get away. The butterfly could not see the glass and expected at every moment to be caught; the bird did not see the glass and expected at every moment to catch its prey; yet the butterfly was as safe as though a wall of stone were between them.

We who are Christians must not forget that the invisible presence of Christ is between us and every difficulty in life. There is nothing that can touch us unless it passes through the will of God in Christ. Our Lord has shown us that we are between His hand and the Father's. “. . . neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. . . . no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand” (John 10:28-29). This is why the believer is so sure.

- Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Timeless Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching*, pp. 256-257

May we not forget that! May we not lose sight of that! And thus, in light of all that God is and all that He has done for us, may **WE SERVE HIM FAITHFULLY** and may **WE BELIEVE IN FAITH!**