

A Verse to Live by

And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

Mark 11:22-24 (ESV)

SEPTEMBER PRAYER FOCUS

The persecution of Christians in our country is ramping up. While we still have it fairly easy compared to what Christians suffer in other countries, it still is not easy. Pray for God to increase your courage, to give you the heart of a lion. Remember who your dad is - you are a child of the Almighty God, you are meant to be a warrior not a worrier! So "In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;" (Eph. 6:16).

LIFE APPLICATION CHALLENGE

There are over 7000 promises in the Bible. Reading those promises will light a fire in your heart. Last month I asked you to write down your top 10 encouraging verses. This month write down your top 5 fears, and then find one of those 7000 promises to counter that. I know life can be hard, in fact at times it is downright brutal. But you are not alone, you have God, you have our church; we are your friends and family. We got your back. You don't have to fight this alone, call or text someone. I want you to know, you are going to be ok, whatever it is you are going through...Your Father knows, sees, cares and He will deliver. Just hang in there a little while longer my friend.

RECOMMENDED SCRIPTURE READING

Ephesians 6:10-20 - Reminding yourself to put on your spiritual armor is empowering. 1 Samuel 17 - David faces Goliath. I don't know what your "Goliath" is but let the story of a boy and His God facing a giant encourage you to face yours.

Church On Fire!

Eleventh Street Church of God | September 2020 Prayer Newsletter

From Worrier to Warrior

I have decided to do a 3 part series based on 1 Corinthians 13:13 "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." In the month of August the focus was hope; this month will be faith and next month love. My hope and prayer is this newsletter will leave you not only desiring God more but trusting Him more. I am not claiming I can do that for any of you, but I know Someone who can. And many of you know Him too. Yet we all struggle with doubt from time to time. Our faith, or lack of it, is of the utmost importance to work on and grow because "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." (Heb. 11:6)

There are two sides to faith in God: 1) the belief in God's existence and 2) belief He did and will do all He says in His Word. Faith is defined as complete trust or confidence in someone or something. Complete trust and confidence....that's a lot to ask of a person. Or is it? How can we put complete trust and confidence in a God we cannot see or touch? "No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known." (Jn.1:18) For some of us just believing God exists is a challenge. There is a simple fix for that - take a walk. Evidence of an Almighty Creator is all around us, "The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known." (Ps. 19:1-2) Paul takes this one step further saying the complexity of His creation leaves us with no excuse to not believe in God, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse." (Rm. 1:20) In fact, you yourself are evidence there is a Creator with unfathomable intelligence. "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well." (Ps. 139:14) The complex nature of your body, that every part works together in perfect rhythm, is proof an intelligent Creator made you. We don't have to prove God's existence, He has already done that for Himself. It takes a lot more faith to believe we are the products of a cosmic accident than an intelligent design by an intelligent creator.

Why do so many struggle to believe in God? I think it is pride, fear or a mix of both. We don't like believing or trusting in anything we cannot control or explain. Satan loves pride and fear, because it keeps us small minded, limits our potential, and tragically can keep us from salvation. If we think we are the most intelligent beings in the universe then we are limited by the physical laws of this world and our own knowledge. How disappointing is that? Pretty unnerving to think the only thing that can save us is...us. Last I looked, humanity is a mess. I mean let's face it, we are not very good at saving ourselves. Faith in humanity usually leads to disappointment. Eventually you will be let down, "This is what the Lord says: "Cursed are those who put their trust in mere humans, who rely on human strength and turn their hearts away from the Lord." (Jer. 17:5-6) Sadly, there are some people who won't believe simply because they do not want to. In that case there is no amount of evidence that will change their minds. Their issue isn't about lack of proof, but lack of desire. Paul

writes about those that resist God, "In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (2 Cor. 4:4)

But what about us who believe in God yet struggle to trust Him? We often hesitate to believe the promises in the Bible are meant for us too. First, let me ask, do you think He doesn't love you enough to answer your prayers and keep His promises to you? Let's deal with that. You may feel like a nobody but to God you were worth dying for, "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Rm. 5:8) I guarantee, you have infinite value beyond your ability to grasp and God cares about you, "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (Ro. 8:32)

To build our confidence in God we need to exercise our faith, and that takes trust and obedience. You may be full of fear, but doing things despite that fear is exactly what you need to do. That is how we build our faith muscle and defeat doubt. God doesn't need perfect people; He uses willing ones. The Bible is full of stories of struggle and victory, loss and restoration, fear and faith, sickness and healing, sin and salvation. The struggles you have today were someone else's struggles yesterday. In the Bible we learn how to handle situations, and how not to. Plus, God rewards us when we trust Him enough to follow His lead, "And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him." (1 Jn. 5:14-15) If God leads you to do something, do it! If you are terrified, do it scared. Faith is not a feeling, it's an action, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Ph. 4:13) You may feel incapable, too stupid, too weak or too scared but those are lies of satan. I have news for you; your feelings aren't facts. The God you serve is not limited by your limitations. "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father." (Jn. 14:12) You have a purpose and God has a plan, far greater than what you imagine. We hold ourselves back so often thinking we cannot. Well you're right, you can't on your own because what God has planned for you is much bigger than what you are capable of. When you realize this, you will become a Christian on fire! "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10) Go ahead, get excited my friend! Because the God of the impossible has called **you** to do something amazing and He will not only equip you to do it - but to do it well!

The time is **now** men and women of God to live by faith and get busy. We can no longer shrink back in fear, because satan is actively fighting for souls. Often fear is a liar. "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (Jn. 8:31-32) Warriors aren't always fearless, sometimes they just fight scared.

Watching God Work,

Carolyn Abel