

When Faith "Doesn't Work"

FAITH:

What We've Learned So Far

Hebrews 11:6 & 4-40/ James 2:20-26/ Proverbs 3:5-7/ Mark 9:14-29 & Matthew 17:19-21

- ✓ Biblical Faith trusts God enough to **do what He says**
- ✓ Biblical Faith isn't what **rescues** us – it's what **guides** us
- ✓ Biblical Faith **steps out**, even when filled with **fear** and **doubt**

FAITH:

The Marshmallow Principle

- ✓ Do I judge God's goodness by **this life** or **eternity**?
Hebrews 11:6/ 1 Corinthians 15:19/ Psalm 73

FAITH:

Two Things They Forgot To Tell Me In Sunday School

❶ Where Faith Can **Lead Us**

Hebrews 11:32-40/ Daniel 3:1-28/ Job

- Sometimes faith will lead us **out of** hardships
- Sometimes faith will lead us **through** hardships
- Sometimes faith will lead us **into** hardships

❷ Faith's Great **Reward**

- Even faith's heroes didn't get all they were **promised** – **during their lifetime**
Hebrews 11:13-16; 11:26; 11:39-40

- But they got all they were **promised!**
Hebrews 11:39-40/ 1 Peter 1:9/ Psalm 73

FAITH:

A Powerful Lesson From Job's Terrible Trial

Job 1-2/ Job 13:15/ Job 40:1-42:6/ Hebrews 10:35-39/ Psalm 73

- ✓ God is **God** – I am **not**
- ✓ It will be OK **someday**
- ✓ So I won't **quit!**

Growth Group Homework

For the week of February 14, 2010

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching on *When Faith "Doesn't Work,"* was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY

1. Larry listed the three places that faith can lead us. Can you think of a time in your life when faith led you out of hardship, through hardship, or into hardship? If so, explain.

2. How we answer the question, "Do I tend to judge God's goodness by this life or eternity?" can be very revealing – and challenging. What did you think when you first heard him ask it?

How do you think you would have answered the question before hearing the sermon?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. As much as we might desire to have a Christian life free of hardships, the Bible teaches us that hardships can play an important role in developing our faith. How do the following passages help us understand this role and the attitude God wants us to have towards them?

Romans 5:3-5

Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; [4] perseverance, character; and character, hope. [5] And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. [NIV]

James 1:2-4

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, [3] because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. [4] Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. [NIV]

Romans 8:28-30

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. [29] For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. [30] And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. [NIV]

What is most challenging for you in accepting what these passages say about hardship?

In what ways can the truths in these passages be helpful to you in handling difficult times in your life?

2. Perspective is a powerful force during those times when our faith “doesn’t work.” How could 1 Peter 1:3-9 help shape our perspective during times when it seems like “my faith isn’t working”?

1 Peter 1:3-9

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4] and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, [5] who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. [6] In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. [7] These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. [8] Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, [9] for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. [NIV]

What hope does this passage offer you in your life right now?

Is there anything you find difficult to relate to in this passage?

3. We heard this weekend that it will be okay someday, so we should hang tough and not quit. God is committed to meeting us in the midst of life’s challenges to help us persevere through them. What encouragement do you find in the following passages for continuing to trust and follow God even when the going gets tough?

Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. [29] Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. [30] For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." [NIV]

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, [4] who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. [NIV]

2 Corinthians 1:8-11

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. [9] Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. [10] He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, [11] as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many. [NIV]

John 14:1-4

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. [2] In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. [3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. [4] You know the way to the place where I am going." [NIV]

One verse often quoted during hardship is 1 Corinthians 10:13. Can you think of any ways this verse could be misused to apply to situations dealing with hardship instead of temptation?

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. [NIV]

Is there a time in your life when you experienced the rest, comfort or hope talked about in these verses?

TAKING IT HOME

The lesson from Job's terrible trial is that God is God and I'm not, and it will be OK someday, so don't quit. Can you think of an area of your life where you need to be reminded of this truth?

PRAYER REQUESTS

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