

FOUNDATIONS

LESSON #1 “THE FULLNESS OF GOD: FAITH-FULL”

Intro. Tonight we’re beginning our series called the “fullness of God”.

Ephesians 3:17-19 (NKJV)

17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height--

19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; ***that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.***

1. Paul speaks of a prayer and a promise in **Eph. 3:19** ***“that you may be filled with all the fullness of God”***

a. This means being filled with what God is full of

- *Over the next several weeks we’re going to concentrate on some of the things God wants us to be filled with*
- *In this lesson we’re going to look at being “faith-full”*
- *Not as in “dependable” but as in being “full of faith”*

1. Faith is listed as one of the 3 lasting virtues

1 Corinthians 13:13 (NKJV) And now abide ***faith***, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

2. Many of us discount our faith

a. We think because we have doubts or because we’re experiencing problems in our lives we must not have much faith

3. We’re not “weird” if we struggle with believing

1 Timothy 6:12 (NKJV) Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

a. Paul calls it the ***“fight of faith”***

- *Just because we have doubts or problems that don't seem to go away after one prayer, it doesn't mean we have little or no faith*
- *It's just part of the fight*
- *Sometimes we show the greatest faith when it seems hardest to believe*

- *Hebrews 11 is a record of the champions of faith*
- *It's not a record of "perfect faith" or "perfect people" – they were pretty much normal folks like us fighting to believe God*

Hebrews 11:32-38 (NKJV)

32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:

33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35 Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented--

38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

I. WHAT FAITH _____

A. FAITH ISN'T _____

1. We don't have to feel it to have it

2 Corinthians 5:7 (NKJV) For we walk by faith, not by sight.

2. Faith isn't a feeling

- a. We really do think that if we've got faith we ought to feel something
- b. *Feelings may follow our faith (they often do...)*

3. We can't base the presence or absence of faith on a feeling
- *We don't have to feel it to have it*
4. We need to remember this the next time we're facing something where we really need to exercise some faith
 - a. Whether we need **healing**, God to help us in our **finances**, when we're worried about our **jobs**, whatever...
- *Even if we feel "nothing" we can move in faith*

B. THE SECOND THING BEING FULL OF FAITH ISN'T...IT ISN'T

1. Somehow we feel like if we have a lot of faith it will keep us from having problems
 - a. *When we're going through something, we think, "If I had more faith, I wouldn't be going through this."*
2. Hebrews 11 has been called the *faith chapter* in the Bible
 - a. It's not about people whose faith kept all their problems away

Hebrews 11:36-39 (again)

36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented--

38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,

- a. They had some very real and very severe problems
 - b. Faith didn't keep all the problems away- it helped them get through the problems
- *Their faith wasn't "inferior" because they had problems*
 - *Just because we're having problems in our lives it doesn't mean that somehow we have inferior faith*

- *Faith isn't a feeling; it isn't having no problems*

II. WHAT FAITH _____

A. FAITH IS A _____

1. Most of the people we read about in **Hebrews 11** had some kind of problem
 - a. The reason we read about them is how they responded to them

ex. *Abraham and Sarah couldn't have kids but they had a promise from God that they would and they did!*

ex. *Moses had a problem with Pharoah at the Red Sea but he believed God would help him and He did!*

B. FAITH IS A RESPONSE WE MAKE _____

1. All of us have problems- *what reveals our faith is how we respond to them*
 - a. Instead of getting mad at God, depressed, or worrying- we respond by coming to Him

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV) 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.

2. Faith is our response to God with the things we're having trouble with

- *"He who comes to God..."*

C. FAITH IS A RESPONSE TO THE _____

- *A response to who He is*

Hebrews 11:6 says, "...he who comes to God **must believe that He is...**"

1. One of the most important things about our faith is just believing that **He is**

Exodus 3:13-14 (NKJV)

13 Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?"

14 And God said to Moses, "**I AM WHO I AM.**" And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, '**I AM** has sent me to you.' "

a. When Moses asked for God's name He said, "**I AM!**"

- *Our faith is responding by saying, "**HE IS!**"*

Psalm 90:2 (NKJV) Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, **You are God.**

- *Faith is a response to who He is*
- *All through the Bible He tells us who He is; "I am your Redeemer, your Healer, your Peace, your Joy, your Refuge, your Shelter, your Father, your Strength, etc.*
- *Our faith responds to that and comes to Him when we need forgiveness, healing, peace, joy, security, strength*
- *When we come to Him, we are saying, "I believe You are!"*
- **"He who comes to God must believe that He is!"**

D. FAITH IS ALSO A RESPONSE TO _____

2 Samuel 7:28 (NKJV) "And now, O Lord GOD, **You are God, and Your words are true**, and You have promised this goodness to Your servant.

1. Faith is more than just a *belief*; it's a *response* to who God is and to *what He has said*

Psalm 119:89 (NKJV) Forever, O LORD, **your word is settled** in heaven.

- a. God's word is something *we can trust in and stand on*
- b. If it's in the Bible, it's settled

2. This will help us when we're feeling a little "off"

- *There's something we can know we can bank on and it's the truth of God's word*

ex. *“God, I feel like I’m all alone but You said You’d be with me always.”*
“God, I don’t know how you can keep putting up with me but You said Your compassion never fails.”
“God, I’m really worried about my kids but You said You are able to keep what I commit to You so I’m committing them to You.”

- *Faith is a response to who God is and what He’s said*
- *It isn’t a feeling, it’s not being problem-less*
- *It’s how we respond to our feelings and problems*

E. FAITH IS REVEALED WHEN IT SEEMS _____

1. The folks in **Hebrews 11** believed when it was really hard to believe

ex. *Enoch walked with God for 300 years.*

ex. *Faith is Abraham and Sarah believing to have a baby when they were old and it seemed almost impossible for it to come to pass. (It was impossible!)*

2. The heroes of faith in the Bible weren’t perfect- their faith wasn’t perfect

- a. They were a lot like us
- b. They simply refused to give up or give in

- ***“Great faith isn’t perfect faith, it’s simple faith in a perfect God.”***

Mark 9:23-24 (NKJV)

23 Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."

24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

3. This man was desperate, honest, and determined

- a. His boy was oppressed / possibly epileptic
- b. Jesus, “If you can believe...”
- c. His response, “I believe, help my unbelief!”
- d. “I really do believe but I’m wrestling with it. I’m just coming to You.”

ex. Often we feel the same way and feel guilty about it. If we're struggling with a health issue, have prayed about it, and haven't seen a change yet, we worry. "Maybe I'm not believing enough."

We need to bring our doubts, our struggles, our wrestlings, to Him, "I believe, help me Lord with my mental struggle."

- Being faith-full or full of faith is revealed by a determined belief in a perfect God in spite of the obstacles
- Sometimes the greatest obstacle is our own doubts
- True faith is revealed by pressing through our doubts and trusting in a God who cannot fail and cannot lie

PRAYER AND CONFESSION: Jesus, You are the Author; the beginning, and the finisher of my faith. I will not base my faith on my feelings. I will respond to You with my problems and my needs. I trust in Your character, Your word, and Your promises. I will come to You when it seems hardest to believe. I believe You will never fail me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

FILL IN THE BLANKS FROM LESSON #1

I. WHAT FAITH (ISN'T)

A. FAITH ISN'T (A FEELING)

B. THE SECOND THING BEING FULL OF FAITH ISN'T...IT ISN'T (BEING "PROBLEM-LESS")

II. WHAT FAITH (IS)

A. FAITH IS A (RESPONSE)

B. FAITH IS A RESPONSE WE MAKE (TO GOD)

C. FAITH IS A RESPONSE TO THE (CHARACTER OF GOD)

D. FAITH IS ALSO A RESPONSE TO (GOD'S WORD)

E. FAITH IS REVEALED WHEN IT SEEMS (THE HARDEST TO BELIEVE)