

Big Faith - Part 4

Sunday, August 18, 2019
10:15 AM

As we wrap up our series on BIG FAITH I want to revisit some of the key texts we have looked at and then examine one final passage.

We began with...

Matthew 17:20

²⁰ He replied, “Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

AND

Matthew 13:31-32

He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

Through these we learned that our Faith is to be Big, not small because we have a Big God who wants us to see the Big Picture and that through this kind of faith, nothing will be impossible.

Then we turned our attention to Luke Chapter 18 and the story of the persistent widow. We focused on Jesus Words in verses 1 and 8 of that chapter ...

Luke 18:1, 8

1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and **not give up.**

8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, **will he find faith** on the earth?”

Here we learned that we walk by faith and not by sight and that BIG FAITH keeps going...

1. When the way is dark and the path uncertain
2. When the journey is difficult, long and uphill
3. When culture or the church presents a different road
4. When what you have been believing for dies

Our third message centered around the idea that BIG FAITH watches out for the Little Things

Luke 16:10

10 “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.

We said...

1. LITTLE THINGS can trip us up
2. LITTLE THINGS can be opportunities for our faith to be planted and grow into BIG THINGS

Our final thought comes from 2 passages in the book of Matthew both of which contain the same admonition from Jesus

Matthew 10:22 (NIV)

22 You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

Matthew 24:12-1 (NIV)

12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, **13** but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

This week yet another Christian leader and influencer (Marty Sampson) made the news with His announcement that he was losing his faith and was ok with it. Of course this led to another flood of discussion on social media regarding his and other recent well known Christians who have announced their own departure from the faith. For some the answer is, “they were never saved in the first place.” This seems to be the only defense for those in the once saved always saved camp. Others declare that this is simply a needed step in the development of these people’s faith and that eventually they will return with an even stronger faith. Some have posted the question, “What is happening in Christianity;” with still others giving their respective answers such as, “American Christianity is so weak and false that it offers little to believe or disbelieve in.”

While there are certainly small nuggets of truth in these thoughts, Personally I see The fulfillment of Jesus’ words playing out before our very eyes. This is nothing new, people have been turning their back in the faith since the beginning.

2 Timothy 4:10 (NIV)

10 for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted (Forsaken) me...

That's why Paul warned Timothy in an earlier letter that...

1 Timothy 4:1 (NIV)

4 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will (abandon) the faith...

...A withdrawal from relationship

A simple look at our 2 key texts would teach us that if we are instructed to stand firm that there is a possibility that some will not stand firm. Otherwise why give us the admonition to stand firm.

Matthew 24:10 (NIV)

10 At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other,

1 Thessalonians 2:3 tells us that before the Lord returns there will be a great falling away

The biggest faith we could possibly have then is a faith that Stands Firm to the end. But how can we have a faith that is that BIG?

BIG FAITH Stands Firm to the end...

1. By HOLDING on to our Love of JESUS

Having a Big Faith that stands firm to the end begins and ends with this one thing. A real relationship of love with Jesus Christ. The relationship will keep us and cause us to stand firm. It is something solid that we can hold on to. But like any relationship, we can take it for granted, our feelings of love can grow cold.

I have heard the testimony of more than one former Christian turned atheist, lament the loss of their relationship with Jesus. In the words of Charles Templeton, "I miss Him"

Our key text today says that the journey to falling away comes as our love grows cold.

Revelation 2:4-5 (NIV)

4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. **5** Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

Hold on to your love of Jesus, Renew your love for Him every day.

2. By ANCHORING itself in the WORD of God

Many who fall away do so because they fail to truly anchor themselves in the Word of God.

It is time for the church to rediscover the preeminence of the Word. And to value the teaching of the Word. We need to value truth over feeling. Truth over emotion. And what we are seeing now is the result of the church raising up influencers who did not supremely value truth who have led a generation who also do not believe in the supremacy of truth. And now those disavowed leaders are proudly still leading and influencing boldly AWAY from the truth.

John Cooper (Lead Singer for Skillet)

Ephesians 6:14 (NIV)

14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,

3. By PRACTICING The BASICS Everyday

1 Corinthians 15:58 (NIV)

58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

2 Peter 1:5-8 (NIV)

5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; **6** and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; **7** and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. **8** For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. By **GUARDING** against the **EROSION** of Sin

Galatians 5:1 (NIV)

5 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

5. By **WRESTLING** With the **BIG** Questions