

Faith - Foundation of Christian Life

by Hoseah Wu

Faith is the foundation of our Christian life, necessary to please God and determine our eternal destiny and present spiritual condition.

Duration: 1:11:11

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 11:6

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on a building that was originally a school but went through various uses like a factory and a dancing studio, resulting in a messy condition. The speaker compares this to our spiritual condition before the Lord, emphasizing the need for faith to restore and make suitable places for God's people to meet. The speaker also expresses gratitude for the work of the Lord in the Glassboro and South Jersey area, particularly mentioning the foundation laid by Brother Stephen Kong. The sermon concludes with a call to relate to one another in faith, acknowledging that we are living stones and encouraging unity in prayer, thanksgiving, and worship.

Transcript

Shall we just bow our heads for a word of prayer? Lord, we are so thankful to you that we can meet as your people. You're so gracious to us. You speak again and again to us.

Even though we are hard of hearing, our hearts unresponsive, that you continue to be merciful, to speak to us. Lord, we commit this morning's time to you. We thank you for your presence with us.

We thank you for faith to believe that you are God, and that you are faithful to yourself. We just worship you. We commit this time to you.

We ask it in you, Jesus. Amen. Well, Kenny introduced me as Jose Wu, and I was told that when those brothers and sisters came back from Taiwan conference, they changed my name.

Did you know about that? You didn't know about that? Well, they called me Dana Wu. Dana Wu. So I wonder why.

And I think that came from Dan. I think Dan Boyd was the one who began all that. So I'm still wondering why they called me Dana Wu.

Do you know why, Max? Well, before I share what's in my heart, I think it's only right and proper for me to share what the Lord is doing in our area. Just very briefly. We thank the Lord for what he's doing in Glassboro and South Jersey area for the last 14 or 15 years.

The meeting in Glassboro actually began in 1971 when Brother Stephen Kong came to us for about two years. Every Friday of the month, the last Friday of the month, he came faithfully to minister the word to us. And we are very thankful to what the Lord has been speaking to us in those two years.

And I believe the Lord laid the foundation for the fellowship in that area. But we began to meet as a group, as a fellowship in the spring of 1973. When we first began to meet, there were about, I would think around 30 or so of us.

And thank God for those who are still faithful and they're still with us. We praise God for what he's doing. Then about six or seven years ago, we failed to join a group of all Chinese Christians.

They meet together on a Sunday afternoon for Bible study. And for the last seven years, my wife and I, two of us, we've been meeting with them every afternoon, every Sunday afternoon for Bible study. And the Lord began to join our hearts together.

And the Chinese group, they just come for Bible study. They have no worship time, just to read the Bible and share God's word together. As we began to share with them together, the Lord, so work in their hearts, the Lord had given them a desire to worship as his people and to come together as a local testimony.

So for the last two years or so, the two groups have been coming together on a regular basis. At least the first Lord's Day of every month, we meet together for worship and for ministry. And also every Saturday of the month, the two groups come together.

We have a family time. And when we come together for the family time, we have a large group. Usually in the 70s and sometimes we have as many as 85 to 100 if they come from the other areas.

So for years, we've been asking the Lord to provide us a suitable place to meet. Because in South Jersey, we are more or less gathered into one area. Some of the brothers, they have to drive about 30 miles or so to come to the meeting.

So we've been asking the Lord to give us a more central location that we can meet. Well, we've been looking for a place to meet for about two or three years. And then last fall, we discovered an old school building that's been abandoned for some months.

And it's available. And so we look at it and we have peace about it. And the place seems to be very appropriate for our purpose.

Well, we look at it. And we went to that place and we prayed together and asked the Lord to really seal that place to our heart. That is His will for us to purchase that place.

Well, at that time, we only had about \$12,000 or \$15,000 in our account for the building fund. But we asked the brother and sister to go home and pray about it because we do need a place to meet. And when we look at the place, we all seem to be of one heart, one mind, and have the inner assurance that this is the place the Lord has marked out for us.

And so we prayed. And then the amazing thing is that the original asking price was \$110,000. And then we did some investigating.

The assessed value of that place is about \$86,000. And so without the money in the bank account and the brother and sister we met for prayer, we give account to offer of \$86,000. And within a few weeks or so, they came down from \$110,000 to \$90,000.

So there was a big drop of \$20,000. And we offer \$86,000 because that was the assessed value. We call it account, that was assessed value.

So we offer \$86,000 even though we have a very small bank account who are purchasing this building. We thank the Lord. Within the month of November, the Lord provided everything that we need to purchase that building.

The first law estate of the month of November, about \$86,000 was placed, that law estate. And we really witnessed the wonderful hand of the Lord. Now, we have a small problem for the moment.

Because the owner of the building, many years ago, he had some financial difficulty. So I think two or three years ago, he declared a bankruptcy. And because of that, he owes quite a bit of taxes to the federal as well as to the local government.

And so during our past research, we are not able to secure a clear title because of his past financial problems. So our Christian attorney is working on this matter for us and we hope it's only a matter of time. But we are open to the Lord.

If the Lord wants us to have it, we believe He will have it before long. But if the Lord has something even better for us, we are open to that. So we do not know for the moment.

But we do appreciate your partnership in Richmond to continue to pay for us. And the place is a very run-down place. It's been abandoned for some months.

It was a school. Originally it was built as a school. And then a factory took over for some time.

And then a dancing studio took over for some months. So inside it's a big mess. So when I look at the place, I put a thought in my heart because the place actually is a reflection of our condition before the Lord.

There are spiritual lessons we can learn in any situation if our hearts are fixed on the Lord. So when I look at that place, the basement was full of all kinds of junk from the old factory, from the dancing studios. And the room was posted with all kinds of pictures and all these modern abstract arts.

And so I thought to God, that is a reflection of our condition. So it takes faith to buy that place. It also would take much, much faith to restore that place so that it would be suitable for God's people to meet.

But you know, God is a God of power. God is a God of resurrection. Out of chaos, he restores order.

And out of death, he restores life. So when we look at that place, even though it's physically speaking, I mean, nobody wants the place. But we thank the Lord that he seems to mark out that place for us.

And I told God, the place itself is nothing. The place is just a means by which we come to know the Lord in a deeper way. The place is just a vehicle, a means of knowing the Lord.

And entering into all that God wants us to enter. So we appreciate your brothers and sisters who continue to pray for us. I was told that when Brother Duncan came back from his visit to our midst, he reported to you that the fellowship in South Jersey is in good health, is healthy.

Well, it's very encouraging to hear that from our brother. But we ourselves in South Jersey, we feel very, very weak, very feeble. And so we do need your continual prayer.

Well, the Lord's been impressed upon my heart these few days on this matter of faith. So should we just turn to a few verses of scripture? And we'll see what we can discover together. You know, when I come to Richmond to look at you brothers and sisters, you know, I have this feeling.

It's like when I was in Taiwan. In Taiwan, many of the brothers and sisters, they have years and years of experience in the Lord. They're all rich in the Lord.

And when I was in their midst, it makes me, the gathering makes me very, very small, very, very humble because of the wealth that they have in the Lord. And you have a feeling. So what can you share? I'm a small brother just learning to serve the Lord.

What can I share? What can you give to a person who has everything? And brother and sister, in a sense, we have everything. When we have the Lord, we have everything. But I think the exciting thing about us Christians is that we are helping each other throughout this earthly life to rediscover what really we have, what is already ours in the Lord Jesus.

And that's exciting. We have it all. But the problem is that we do not know what we have.

And we are just beginning to discover a little bit of what we have. And when we discover that little bit, it's already so much and so great. And just imagine, when we will be delivered from all these limitations and entering into that perfect fullness, brothers and sisters, it will be beyond us.

And no wonder we are called to be worshippers. Not just in this present life. It's so wonderful now.

But imagine when we are set free from this present system. And then our worship will be perfect. Then he will be satisfied.

And that worship will last for eternity. Because through eternity, our vocation is worship, it's true. As we worship, we begin to discover more, more, more, and more of himself.

And there's no end. God is so great and so wonderful. So let's turn to Hebrews 11 verse 6. Hebrews 11 verse 6. 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. I'll read one more time.

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.

And let's turn to the Gospel of Luke. Just one phrase. Luke 18.

It's a chapter on prayer. And prayer is really an expression of our faith in him. There's no use to pray if there's no faith.

So prayer is an expression, a confession of our faith. Confession of who God says he is. And then in this passage, the end of the last phrase of verse 8. The last phrase of verse 8. It says here, when the Son of Man comes, will he really find faith on earth? When the Son comes, when the Son of Man comes, will he really find faith on the earth? Well, those who come to God must believe that he is.

Now those who are in Taiwan, our brother from Manchukuo, he says, I am. Do you believe I am that I am? The only way you can please me is to believe that I am. In other words, God wants us to believe who he says he is.

It's because who he says he is, therefore he can say what he says and does what he does. Because he is God. Faith is necessary if we are to please God.

So I believe faith is the foundation of our Christian life. We enter into this relationship with God through faith in the Son of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other way.

And then in the scripture we are exhorted to continue in this faith. So faith is a door. Faith is a way.

Faith is our life. The just shall live by faith. We are to establish this faith.

We are to do the work of faith. And then Paul in the end of the book of Galatians said we, God's people, we are the household of what? Of faith. We are to demonstrate this faith individually.

And when we come together, we are here to demonstrate this faith as well. So faith is the foundation of our Christian life. God wants us to believe who he says he is.

That what he says is true. And all his works are good, eternal, and perfect. That is our God.

So God, who says he is, and what he says is true, and all his works are good and perfect, that is our confidence in him. That is our conviction. That is our assurance.

That is our certainty. So Christian faith is not just our faith. Christian faith is just not believing that God is faithful.

Thank God he is faithful. But our faith is in the one who is faithful to himself. It is God who is full of faith in himself.

That is what God says, therefore he says what he says, therefore he did what he did. Because he has faith in himself. He is full of faith in himself.

So when we say we believe in him, we are faithful to him, it simply says we have faith in him. Our faith is in the one who has faith, full of faith in himself. So our faith is none other than God.

So faith is God. Because God has faith in himself. And he has imparted that faith in us so that we can believe who he is and what he says he has said.

And what he is doing. That is faith. Well, in Luke 18, it says, When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth? This faith and this earth, you can see this relationship there.

Because those who are the sinners, the sinners who reject Christ, they are already feeling the agony of their unbelief in the hell. They are already suffering the consequence of their unbelief. And the saints, those who are with the Lord, they are not enjoying what they had believed.

What did they believe? The Lord Jesus. So the faith has a link to this earth. It's on this earth in the midst of unbelief, God needs an instrument to show that God is worthy of our faith and our belief.

And through faith, we allow God to be God. So he can say what he says and do what he wants to do. So faith is the foundation.

The foundation of a Christian life. And also, we can see that this faith is something to be displayed, exhibited right here on earth. Because can he find faith on earth? So it's on this earth, there's an occasion or there's a need for faith.

As I say, because the sinners are already suffering. They are already suffering there as and in hell. And the saints in the present world, they already enjoy the present world.

And we here, we need to have faith. Because faith determines not only our eternal destiny, but our faith also determines our present spiritual condition. How we live.

Because we shall live by faith. Well, in this phrase, that when the Son of Man comes, will he really find faith on earth? It also shows us that faith is something very precious. It's something that Lord Jesus comes to this earth to look for.

That's why he said, can he really find faith on this earth? So God is looking for faith. In other words, God is looking for an opportunity where he can be God. And faith will allow him to be what he wants to be.

To say what he wants to say. And to do the things that he wants to do. Faith is the way.

Well, you recall when the Lord Jesus, when he was on earth, he came to an unbelieving world. There was no faith. You recall when he and his disciples came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, and they encountered this boy that was possessed with a mute and deaf spirit.

And then the Father brought the boy to the disciples and asked the disciples to cast the evil spirit out and they were not able to do it. And so they brought him to the Lord. You remember they brought him to the Lord? And the Lord sighed.

He said, oh, unbelieving generation, how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I bear with you? So whenever the Lord encountered unbelief, there's something inside of him that he sighed because of the unbelieving generation. Because of unbelief, he cannot do what he wants to do. He cannot say the things that he wants to say.

He cannot be the son of man. He cannot be the son of God. And then when they brought that boy to him, the Lord said something.

He said, if you can believe, anything is possible to him who believes. Now that is the most comforting word. If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.

This man, this boy's father, knew something. When the Lord answered those words, he knew the Lord was looking for faith. He knew the Lord was looking for faith.

And he knew he did not have faith, even though he wanted very much to believe. Then he cried and said, Lord, what I believe helped my unbelief. Or I believe helped me to overcome my unbelief.

Now it's not true with us Christians. We believe that oftentimes there's an obstacle preventing us from believing what we believe. So when the Lord told the disciple about the removing of the obstacles, removing the mountain, he said, if you have faith, you can tell this mountain to be casting into the sea and it shall be done.

Now oftentimes we interpret and say, well, that mountain is our brothers and sisters in the fellowship. They are our obstacles. If so-and-so is just not here with us, oh my, we can really move on.

Oftentimes we say it's the circumstances we face. It's my work. We have many excuses.

But I believe, as I've mentioned in the Bible, this mountain that needs to be removed is not our brothers and sisters. This obstacle that we need to remove is not our circumstances, but it actually is our unbelief. And the greatest obstacle with us individually as well as Christians is unbelief.

And because of this unbelief, God is bound. He cannot be God. He cannot say He wants to.

He cannot do the thing He wanted to do because of unbelief. Now you remember when the Lord Jesus and the disciples, they went back to His hometown. You know, that was in Matthew 13.

And we have this quotation, we have this passage in the Scripture. It says that He, when He returned to His hometown, it says that He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. He came to His hometown with disciples, and it says that He cannot do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

You see, by the way, how we restrict the Lord, how we restrict Him because of our unbelief, and with us Christians, we believe that somehow there is still in our believing, there is still an element of what? Of unbelief. That's our difficulty. And so, brothers and sisters, so I believe all through our life, this is our battle.

All through our prayer, before the Lord we say, Lord, I believe, but You help me, my unbelief. Because without faith, we what? We cannot please God. Now, maybe I'm wrong.

The Lord several times used the phrase, Oh, you little thief. Once you cast your eyes off the Lord Jesus, your faith is gone. Because He's the source of faith.

So once He's sat in view, then everything else is in view. Then faith is gone. Once the Lord is sat in view, in front of you, then faith is gone.

Because He is the source of faith. He's the power of faith. So when He's not there, faith is gone.

And so, what you look for is all that is temporal. What is to eat, what is to drink, what is to close. All my needs, all my needs.

All my problems, all my anxiety. My survival. You see, that's what worries most people.

That's what's worried. Now, I'm not saying we shouldn't be careful how we wear, how we eat, how we drink. We should be careful of God's people.

But if there's worry, these things become our occupation. But as Christians, our occupation should be the Lord Himself. Because He is the source of our faith.

Without Him, we have no faith. We cannot go on. So, that's why in Hebrews, we must fix our eyes, what? On Jesus.

He is the author and finisher of our faith. In other words, He initiated this way of faith and He finished it. And so, if we are in Him, He will see to it that we get through to the end.

Now, when you come to the book of Timothy, there's some not so pleasant things that Paul had to say in 2 Timothy. He said, there were some who departed from the faith. Now, they departed from the faith because once they had the faith, and now what? They removed themselves from it.

There's a danger. Paul gave us the warning. And then later on, Paul, in that connection, he said, denying the faith, denying it.

Brothers and sisters, we may have faith, but there's always a danger of us departing from the faith that was once given to us. There's always a danger of denying the faith that once was so real to us. So, brothers and sisters, there are pitfalls in the way of faith.

Because what? We like to see things happen. We like to touch things. We like to see something happens now.

You know, in this country, as well as in the rest of the world, we are living in the environment of feeling good. You see? So, when you feel good, it's all faith. When you're feeling good, you say, I'm on the mountain top.

When you feel good, you say, oh, I'm going on with the Lord. Brothers and sisters, feeling is very deceptive. And, thank God, at the end of Timothy, Paul told what he said.

He had kept the what? The faith. Paul did not say just he alone kept the faith. But later, if you read that passage, he tried to include everybody.

He said, there is a crown of righteousness laying up there for me, waiting for me. He said, but not just for me, but for all those who what? Who love His appearing. If there's no faith, you will not look to His appearing.

Faith is the only way you can be ready for His appearing. Because faith basically is seeing God. And brothers and sisters, if you are not living in faith, you don't want to see Him.

Because without faith, you cannot please Him. And when you are living a life that's not pleasing to Him, when He comes, there will be judgment. There will be judgment.

So, Paul said, I have kept the faith. And now I know, there is a crown of righteousness ready, waiting for me. Not just for me, but for all those who love His appearing.

Brothers and sisters, faith is the entrance, faith is the way, and faith is to prepare us for His coming. So we need to have faith. Faith is the foundation.

Faith is the structure. But faith is also what? The capstone of our Christian life. Well, so when the Lord Jesus, whenever He discovered there was no faith, He sighed.

Oh, faithless generation, how long should I be with you? How long should I be with you? And when there was no faith, He could not do the things He wanted to do. He could not do the things that He sent for, He sent down here to do. Well, but whenever there is some measure of faith, immediately His word was relieved.

His love expressed, and His work done. A few examples in the gospel. Do you remember the person who was paralytic? And they carried him to the Lord.

And when they came, the place was packed. They did not know what to do, but they didn't give up. You see, when people come and they see the door shut, well, what an excuse.

You go home and do the things you want to do. You know, in some gatherings, if you don't get here on time, Brother Kenny was saying, be on time. You know, maybe next time, Kenny and the responsibility, if you people don't come on time, the door will be shut.

And for those who really want to get in, you try to pull in somehow, one way or the other. If you cannot go through the front door, get through the front door, you will try to get through the back door. But with some, coming, you just, oh, just lost it.

Well, okay, if I have to be there, I'll be there. If not, well, I have a lot of things to do at home. So you come here, you see the door shut, oh, what an opportunity.

You turn your car around, okay, you can go do your own thing. But this paralytic, when he was there, they didn't give up. If the place was crowded, they had nowhere to get in.

You know, they're very persistent. Well, that's faith. Faith is persistence.

Faith doesn't give up. Faith can overcome obstacles. That's faith.

So faith, you say, what is impossible, is going to make it what? Possible. Well, so they went up to the rooftop, they removed those tiles, and the amazing thing, so is that they lowered that person right in front where? Of the Lord Jesus. Now, they just know where to remove those tiles, and just know exactly where to lower that person.

Exactly where? Where the Lord Jesus was. Come to Him. Be before Him.

Find our way to Him, one or the other. And that is faith. But that is not feeling.

In spite of obstacles, we want to be there. You know, in Taiwan, one of the brothers I encountered, I think he saw me in a few of those conferences. He saw me, I was in Hong Kong, I was in Singapore, we got a call, and then last year, this year in Taiwan, he said, you know, he said, Brother Jose, I've been to all those conferences.

I mean, how do you know the Lord wants you to be there? How do you know the Lord wants you to be in all those conferences? I said, you know, Father, it's very simple for me. Whenever I hear there is a gathering of people where God will speak to His people, my thought, my prayer is that, Lord, I'll be there. Unless you prevent me from going there.

Now, that's my... I never pray, I say, Lord, do you want me to be there? Or you don't want me to be there? I say, Lord, thank God, thank you that it has come back. I want to be there, Lord. Unless you say no to me.

My first desire is to be there. Unless you prevent me from going there. Now, it makes it easier for me, and it makes it easier for the Lord.

Do you see what I mean? It makes it easier for me. You see, so whenever there is a gathering of God's people, the first thing that comes to my heart is that, Lord, I want to be there. Because I believe that's where God will speak to His people.

And I want to hear what He wants to say to His people. I want to be there, to receive the blessing. And I want to be there.

Unless you say no, otherwise I'll be there. And it makes it easier, much easier. While they lower Him there, another amazing thing is what the Lord says.

He says, when the Lord, when He saw their faith, He saw their faith, what does He do? The Lord saw faith. Many of us, we try to feel if there's faith or not. And therefore, we try to generate faith without emotion.

But the Lord saw faith. And when the Lord saw faith, you see, He was free to say He wants to say. He was free to express His love.

He was free to do His work. And therefore, He spoke the word. He said, Man, your sins are forgiven.

That's what He came for. To set us free from the bondage of sin. To make us whole.

That we can pick up that thing that we've been lying down for years and walk in front of Him. So whenever there's faith, no matter how small, the Lord says, now here's my opportunity to say I want to say. Do what I want to do.

That people may believe me. Well, then later on we have another incident. The servant of the centurion.

You remember? He was a good servant. Because he must be loved by his boss. You know? In those days, they have that relationship.

But today, the relationship with your supervisor, your boss and the employees have been so mechanical. You know, you just go to work. There's no rapport.

There's no real relationship there. Well, but this servant of this centurion is different. This centurion, this officer, loved this servant very much.

So when he was sick until death, he was sick, was about to die, and then he called the Jewish elders to go to Lord Jesus. And you remember those elders, they were diplomats. They tried to say many nice things about this centurion.

You remember? You know? He loved our country. He built a synagogue. And if anybody is worthy of your help, this person is worthy of your help.

You should go there and heal this servant. Well, the Lord knows everything. The Lord knows everything.

We don't need to tell him a lot of those things. He knows everything. And then just before the Lord Jesus was about to go, this centurion sent his friends to the Lord.

You know the story. And he said, Master, do not succumb to my rule. I am not worthy for you to come under my rule because I am a man under authority.

I also have men under my authority. If I tell this one goes, he goes and comes, he comes. He said, Lord, just say the word and my servant will be healed.

Now you remember how the Lord's reaction? He stood there and he looked around. You see, he is what? He is again looking for what? For faith. And he found.

And what a joy that he had at that moment. He looked around. He said, I say to you, I have not found such what? Faith? No.

Such what? Great faith. Even where? In Israel. Now when the Lord said great faith, it was a great faith.

Because the Lord always tells the truth. Great faith. And the servant was immediately what? Healed.

So you see the importance of faith. And thank God for giving us faith. But our faith sometimes we feel so feeble, so we don't we? You see.

So therefore we need to keep the faith and we need to fight for that faith. And to keep that faith alive. There is a definition of faith from F.B. Meyer.

And let me just share this with you. He said faith is the sixth sense. We have five senses.

He said faith is the sixth sense. It makes us as sure of unseen or future things. Which we know about only through the divine word.

As we are of things which we can see. He said faith is the sixth sense. It makes us as sure of unseen or future things.

Which we know about only through the divine word. As we are of things which we can see and touch. So faith is the certainty of God himself.

Now is there any more thing that is more certain than God himself? Faith is assurance of all those we cannot see and hear. By faith they become real. Now that's why the Holy Spirit is making all those things real in us.

So the reality is already within. So faith is simply discovering what's already deposited in us. You know, in my short Christian life and the few brothers and sisters I've met and the few places I've been to, what is the most exciting? It's to discover those who believe.

We are called believers. In the first part of the book of Acts, those who believe. Those who are of the way of faith, those who believe.

And we are called believers. Sometimes in this life, it's better for us to be called believers than just Christians. Because this country is a Christian country.

You know, and everybody is a Christian. But all those Christians, they are what? Most of them, they are unbelievers. Because they don't have faith in the living God.

So I think maybe in our case, in our situation, I think it would be good for us to remind each other that we are just what? Believers. Those who have faith in God. Well, as God in me says, faith is not based on feelings.

Faith is based on God himself or God's facts. And all that the Lord Jesus has accomplished, already accomplished for us. And what is already ours.

And we are just beginning to discover. That's why on this earth, right here, in this few years, on this life, it is the most exciting time in our lives. Together, as well individually, discovering daily, weekly, the riches that is ours and the Lord Jesus.

Now when I start discovering him myself in my own home, I discover him in a very limited way. But when we come together, when we share, when we worship together, when we share the Lord together, oh, we discover him in a much, much bigger way. And that's why, you know, the Tavern Conference was so exciting.

I heard a tape of you brothers that came back and you were all in tears. Sharing what the Lord was doing over there and sharing all your experiences. It was just a wonderful discovery of what God is to his people because of faith in him.

That's it. Well, as we walk in this way of faith, the Lord often will say to us, Oh, you little faith. Or he will say to us, Oh, where is your faith? Now, I mean, if you are a person that really thinks you have faith, if the Lord says, Oh, you little faith, you'll be offended.

Or if you think, I have faith, and the Lord says, Where is your faith? You'll feel very bad. He'll say, Oh, I have faith in you. Why are you saying I have no faith, I have little faith? Well, this phrase that we, I think our brother read this morning from Romans 5. And in Romans 5, Paul used the word from faith to what? To faith.

Paul used the phrase from faith to faith. And this morning somebody was praying, there's also in John, from grace to grace. And also Paul in Corinthians, there's from glory to glory.

Well, if the Lord wants to move you from faith to faith, he has to come back and tell you again and again, Oh, you little faith. That's all. If the Lord wants to move you from faith to faith, he has to come back again and tell you, Where is your faith? To bring you to another level of faith, deeper faith in you.

We need to hear that. We don't want to hear those negative things. Because the Lord uses negative questions to bring us into positive faith.

We are all in need of faith. And thank God for saying that to us. And you know, when we can hear him say that, that means he's very close to us.

Or he's within us. So when you say, Oh, you little faith. He says, I'm available to you.

Take me as your faith. Take me as your next level of faith. That's what the Lord is saying.

So I believe as we walk with the Lord, we have to encounter again and again the Lord saying to us, Oh, you little faith. But that question is not negative, but very positive. To bring us to what? To a higher level of faith.

To discover more and more of himself. And when we hear that, he is saying, I'm making my faith available to you. The provision is here.

Belief. Believe. And believe.

All things are possible to those who believe. That's what the Lord is saying. And whenever he's on faith, he's at liberty to say what he wants to say, do what he wants to do, and be what he wants to be.

That is faith. Faith is still in him. Well, let's come down to some of the things that we can help each other.

I always think you've got an assistant in Richmond. You've got a common thing. We in Gospels are healthy.

I would say you're rich in God's assistance. You're strong spiritually. Well, you may not think so, but at least I think so.

You're stronger in mass gathering. You may not think so. Okay.

When we come together, sometimes it's very difficult, very difficult, for us to really thank God, say, Lord, we are here by faith. Because, you know, we meet every Sunday. And so it sort of gets to be a habit now.

So Sunday, just we are programmed. Automatically we come. We just do it because it's Sunday.

If we are believers, if without faith you cannot please God, so whatever we do must be on the basis of what? Believing who he is. It's because the Lord wants us to get together, therefore by faith we come. So when he's honored, then he can do what he wants to do in the gathering.

We need to believe when we come. We need to believe him when we come for prayer meeting. We have to believe him when we have faith meeting, when we share, when we have fellowship.

Because without faith we cannot please him. So we need to be reminded, faith is the way to God. Not just our initial salvation, but our subsequent individual as well as our corporate life is faith, our life of faith.

Well, when we come together, you sit here and you feel like you are dark, you know. But Peter, 1 Peter 2 says that when we come together we are not dark. We are what? We are living stones.

Now here's the fight of faith. You're very busy this week and before you come you have an argument with your wife and then when you came to the meeting you were just driving too fast, beyond the speed limit. And there's something there.

So you feel like that. So weak, so nothing. And you couldn't even lift up your head and say, Lord, thank you.

So God says, Peter, when you come you are not dark, you are what? We are what? Living stones. God says, can we praise God? When we come, thank God we are living stones. That changed our whole attitude.

In your feeling you feel like that. But God's fact says you are what? Living stones. That's the fight of faith.

So whether a gathering is healthy or not healthy is up to our faith. We enter this life initially by faith. We maintain this life also by faith.

Believing. Well, living stones. And then it says we are being built up into a spiritual house.

Stones, you come together and you have to relate. You have to relate. To be built up you have to relate.

And then some God has said something to you, you're just a little bit uncomfortable. You find it hard to relate. There's a fight of faith.

We must overcome our feelings. It's fact, not feelings. And God says, we are living stones, it is a fact.

We believe and thank him for it. Because belief that he is. And he says, we are living stones, we are indeed what? Living stones.

You don't have to think about it. If you try to think about it, you doubt, then that's not faith. It's not what you think you are.

It's what God says who you are. Well, then we come to relate. And for us it's also by faith.

That brother's prayer is my prayer. That brother's thanksgiving is my thanksgiving. That brother's song that he picked as under the road is my song.

And I enter into it. That's related. Now that song he picked may not be that appropriate sometimes.

But for us it's not the right or wrong of the external thing, but it's the motive, the intention. The song may be wrong, but the heart, God sees the heart. And I join in.

That's related. It's not what is right externally, but what you can sense inside. That's related.

We need to exercise that. Well, and then Pope Peter said now, holy spiritual house and then holy priesthood. Now this word, holy, scares people.

You know, he did call so-and-so saints. They said, okay, we are sinners, make saints. Now they feel more comfortable.

But he said, we are holy priesthood. That is a strong word. Only God is holy.

He alone is holy. There's no one like him. There's no one like him.

And then God says, we are what? The holy priesthood. Don't think, and don't try to analyze. And don't doubt.

Because when God says what you are, that's what you are, and that's what you are. And when you believe it, what God says what you are, and you say, thank God you said that's what I am, therefore I am. Then you what? Then you begin to have faith, and you will be able to function as a priest.

Then you can begin to minister. It's divine facts. What God has done.

It's not how we feel, how we analyze it. It's something who he is. And then he says, that we can offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable.

Can you imagine you and I, God, sinners, nobody, and that somehow we can offer sacrifices, spiritual sacrifices acceptable to the holy God. On what basis can we offer those sacrifices acceptable to him? On what? On what? On faith. Because without faith we cannot do anything.

Because God says we are living stones. Amen, we are living stones. We are his spiritual house relating one to another.

Amen, we are. We are holy priesthood. Amen, we are.

Because of faith and faith and faith, therefore we can by faith offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. So without faith it is not acceptable to God. Without faith it is not possible to please him.

Therefore when we offer it by faith. Now I tell you something. Because in our gathering we have Chinese brothers and sisters.

And they came from Taiwan. And then the last few years when we meet we use English. When we share, when we pray, when we worship.

And then some of these Chinese brothers and sisters, they love the Lord, they come faithfully to Israel state. But when it comes to really open up in praising the Lord globally, they are so fearful. I may not use the right word.

I may not do it quite the right way. They want to pray, they want to praise the Lord. But because of language they just don't want to do it.

So one day I confronted a brother. I know this brother, he loves the Lord. I said, brother, when you praise the Lord, I know you want to praise the Lord.

And I know the reason why you are hesitant. Because you don't feel you have the language ability. I said, brother, who are you saying those words to? Are you saying from your heart? Or are you saying from your mind? If you are saying from your mind you have to figure out all the right words.

But if you say from your heart, you just simply say what's in your heart. And loving God, the language we use in loving God is the language of the heart. Love is the language of the heart.

Love is not the language of the mind. Because mind is very calculating. So I told this brother, I said, you should pray, you should trust the Lord to give you the ability to worship him and to praise him with your broken English.

And this brother accepted my advice and brother and sister, when the first time we prayed in English, in his broken English, Chinese English, you want to put it that way, brother and sister, what a relief. The whole gathering seems to just change. There is a new, how shall I put it, a fresh faith entering in that takes you right through to the throne.

And the whole gathering was being lifted up with that broken Chinese English. And we all helped to witness to that. So God said, it's not the correctness of the external, it's the intent of your heart.

And that's why faith is not our feeling. You may not feel the words all right, but somehow our spiritual sacrifice is acceptable in his time. It's what is acceptable to God that really counts.

It's not the correctness of your words that counts, but what is to him that really counts. So we are able to offer spiritual sacrifice. And God, what a privilege.

Can you think that when we offer some spiritual thanks and praise to the Lord and he is accepting it? If he would accept the first time, God says, we should do it again. That should be your attitude. He would take it just a little bit, we should try it again.

That should be your attitude. You see? And thank God for accepting our praises. And what did George know that he accepts? Feeble, insignificant from you and I, and yet we are so pleased.

Why? It's faith. Well, one more thing. In 1st Revelation chapter 1, sometimes we come to the meeting, we have a little bit guilty conscience because about the week in the world, Revelation 1, 5 and 6, you know that passage, we cannot help it.

Because in this flesh there is still very much that is earthly. You know, we are easy to be contaminated by the things of the world. But it says here, he who loves us, Christ who loved us, now in English it's much easier to understand because love is right, a past tense, right? And washed is also right.

It's something that's been done. But in Chinese sometimes we don't have that clear tension, distinction. But for instance, don't think.

Don't question God's love. If you question God's love, that's not faith. You question love, you will not experience love.

But when you take love by faith, then you experience love. That's why in our Christian walk, experience comes after faith. There will be no experience before faith, but experience always comes after faith.

And it says here, he loved us. There's no question. When we come to the table of worship, when we look at the loaf and the cup, how can we doubt his love? How can we doubt his love? How can we doubt that we are loved? When you see that cup and that loaf, you say, we are washed.

We are washed. If we know we are loved, and our sins have been washed away in his own blood. And not only that, he said, he made us what? Kings and priests, to his God and Father.

And Father, I share this moment, these are all God's facts. And when we try to embrace all these facts, I know we believe. I know we all believe.

But in our believing, there is an element of what? Unbelief. And therefore, we need to overcome. Therefore, we need the Lord to say to us, all you need is faith.

And we have to hear the Lord say, to him that believes, all things are real, now possible. And we have to say, Lord, I believe. You help me to overcome my unbelief.

And immediately, we enter into the experience. All that is available to us. And finally, just a few thoughts.

As a God of faith, just a few phrases. Christ made us clean through his work on the cross. But in his glorification and promise, he keeps us clean forever.

He died to keep us, he died to make us clean. He lives forever to keep us clean. Now do you believe that? Do you believe that? He died to make us one in him.

And he lives forever to keep us one in him. Do we believe that? He died to make us kings and priests through his God. And he lives forever to keep us alive, living in him, to serve him from now and unto the ages to come.

Now do we believe that? And God answers, that is our high calling. That's what he has done. That's why our salvation is so wonderful, so great, and so complete.

We believe he died to keep us clean, to make us clean, but do we believe that he lives to keep us clean? Do we? Do we? We believe that he died to make us one, but do we dare to believe that he lives forever to keep us one? Do we? We believe that in his death we are made kings and priests, but do we dare to believe, because he made us kings and priests, therefore he also gave us the equipment, the life, to serve him forever? Do we? And the Baptist Church is a battle of faith. In everything we believe, there is an element of unbelief, and that unbelief we must fight, must resist, and that unbelief is often felt in our feelings, and that unbelief always comes from the accusers, but thank God, Paul tells in Colossians, that we are complete in him, and thank God for saying to us, again and again, all you little faith, that is just the way, his way of moving us, bringing us to a higher, a deeper level of faith in him. And finally, faith in the end is seeing God.

Seeing God. Faith is seeing God. In seeing him, we become like him, and we will live like that too.

Now, you know the Richmond Conference is just about to begin, within a matter of a month, and I know you brothers and sisters have been praying, praying, we need to pray, but we also need to pray believing. I believe something inwardly in my spirit, I feel this coming conference is something very special. I don't know about you brothers and sisters.

I've been to all the conferences in Richmond, but somehow the Lord seems to lay a heavier burden in my spirit, for this conference in prayer, than ever before. Somehow, I sense something is going to happen. The Lord is going to say something he has never said before.

He is going to do a work he has never done before. There is something inwardly, I just feel it. And I think we need to pray, but we need to pray believing, that what he intended to do, for this conference, he will do it, because we believe him, he will do it.

So he can be what he wants to be to us, say the thing he wants to say, and do the work he wants to work. And Father, we must give all the opportunity we can for him to work, because he wants to work. So let's believe, that he will, he can, as Father Neal said, and it's done.

And that's it. Don't you worry about it. Our Father, we are so thankful, that you have deposited this faith, in our hearts, to believe you.

Lord, forgive us, of our little faith. Lord, forgive us of the obstacles that we have in our lives. Lord, that prevent us, from fully trusting you, and believing you.

We just pray, that you will help us, to fix our eyes, on your beloved son, the Lord Jesus. He is the initiator of our faith, and he is the finish of our faith. Lord, in him we began, and in him we will surely finish it.

Not because who we are, but because who we say, he is. And so we just thank you, that our confidence is not in our flesh, but our confidence is in the one, who has been raised from the dead, and now is alive forever. And to him we give all the praise, and all the glory.

In the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen. Amen.

Amen.

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