

**Adult Sunday School Class**

**Objective:** Continue to review the fundamentals of faith and apply them to our current situations.

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you Father, we pause now to acknowledge your presence..... I thank you that you always hear me. That you never leave me or forsake me and that you are an ever present help. I ask for a special anointing on this lesson plan and the time we will spend together today. Bless both speaker and listener. Open our hearts to receive a fresh revelation from your Spirit. I bind forces that would hinder and welcome the Holy Spirit as our teacher today. In Jesus name!

**Read:** Hebrews 12

Q – As you know English was not one of my favorite subjects in school. Is the word “therefore” a noun or a verb? - Neither.

Q – As an element of speech, how is the word “therefore” classified? - As a conjunction.

Q – What is the purpose of a conjunction in the English language? - Conjunctions join words or groups of words together.

Q – What are some of the more common conjunctions that we use in our everyday speech? - And, or, but, because and of course, therefore.

Q – What words or groups of words are being tied together by this author with the word therefore? - The thoughts expressed in chapter 11 about what we commonly refer to as the hero's of faith and the continuation of the author's message on the subject of faith in chapter 12.

Q – Who has the author included in the great cloud of witnesses? - All the individuals mentioned in chapter 11.

Q – Why do you believe he used the words “cloud of witnesses” as opposed to the word crowd, group or similar collective? - Not sure, but I like the thought that he envisioned them in their current surroundings, peering down through the clouds of glory.

Q – What does the first half of verse 2 mean to you?

- He, Jesus, is the source and focal point of all faith in God!
- The initiation of all divine faith transactions originate with or through Him.
- He is responsible for orchestrating the development or the perfecting of our faith.
- He is the author of the “faith chapter” in our lives.
- He provides the basic building materials that will define the depth and dimensions of our faith.
- He arranges the conditions that will bring our faith to maturity.

Q – If Jesus himself is responsible for the development of our faith what if anything is our role? - Our job is to be willing, open, available and courageous enough to follow the leading of God's Spirit.

Q – To help us better understand faith I would like to correlate it to the plan of salvation. How does the “faith transaction” work in the plan of salvation?

- This is how Paul describes it in Ephesians 2:
- 8) For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—
- 9) not by works, so that no one can boast.
- 10) For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Q – What is he describing as the gift of God in salvation? - The faith to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Q – What does he say about faith as it relates to the individual in the plan of salvation?

- It is not of yourself. Humans can **NOT**, in and of themselves, initiate the faith transaction.
- Charles Spurgeon made this statement,
  - “If God requires of the sinner, dead in sin, that he should take the first step, then he requires just that which renders salvation as impossible under the gospel as it was under the law, since man is as unable to believe as he is to obey.”
  - He later said “all damnation is of man and all grace is of God.
    - He who perishes chooses to perish.
    - But he who is saved, is saved because God has chosen him”.
  - Peter said “it is not His will that any should perish but that all should come to repentance”.
  - Paul quoting from the Old Testament in Romans 10 said “whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”.

Q – What is our role in transactions of faith?

- A willing and sensitive heart to the leading of God's spirit and the courage to follow His leading.
- To step out in confidence on the things that He has revealed to your heart.

Q – How many of you know someone who has prayed for more patience? :-))

- Why do we smile when we talk about developing more patience?
- Because we know that what James said is true.
- The way we learn to be more patient is to deal successfully with a lot of unpleasant stuff!
  - Tribulation (trials, testings and temptations) are the required elements of developing patience.
  - Who in their right mind wants more tribulation?

Q – Do you know anyone who has prayed for more faith? - You most likely do and perhaps you, yourself have asked the Lord for more faith.

Q – Do most people who pray for more faith really want to develop their faith or do they just want the results of more faith?

- Most people just want God to give them the results.
- The answers to their prayers or the things they hope for and desire to see changed.

Q – What's the difference between wanting more faith or just the results of more faith?

- More faith means trusting God in more situations where there is no evidence of results.
  - Examples;
    - More bills or expenses than income.
    - Serious illness that the doctors can't fix with a pill.
    - Wayward family members who behave like they are not interested in the things of God.
  - Once there is evidence of the desired result, faith is no longer required.

Q – How does James begin his dissertation on patience? - James 1:

- 2) Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,
- 3) because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

Q – How does this author describe faith in the introduction of chapter 11? - 1) Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

Q – Now if the basis of patience is dealing effectively with tribulations, isn't faith dealing confidently with lack or in the absence of what we hope for? - It is!

Q – Are those who pray for more faith asking God to create or continue voids in their lives, so they can learn to trust Him? - They are.

Q – When we recognize a lack of faith, what should our prayer be?

- More faith? or
- More sensitivity and the ability to follow the leading of God's spirit? - The later.

Q – Are we better advised to pray for strength, perseverance and the courage to trust God in the face of need than we are to pray for more faith?

- We are.
- One can argue this is all a matter of semantics but I believe that knowing the true definition of faith and asking God accurately for what it is you are seeking will set a proper level of expectation and improve your “batting average” or rate of success.

Q – Again, how is it that James began his statements on patience? - Count it all joy.

- Are you kidding me?
- Is he on the same planet with all the rest of us?
- He is, saying I've been through the process and let me tell you, it's worth putting up with the trials and tribulation that develop patience because **it produces a peace in the storms of life** that is invaluable or “priceless” to use the current vernacular.

Q – Can we say the same thing about faith as it relates to the voids in our lives and those in the lives of our loved ones?

- We can, faith rests in the sovereignty of God and is not dismayed by observations, circumstances or the actions of men.
- Faith “hears God say “Not to worry, I got this one!”
- Faith produces peace, the peace of God, and the joy of the Lord, that can rule in your heart and mind regardless of circumstance or outcome
- **Our job is to simply trust God!**

Q – Have we just concluded the absence of peace can be correlated with a lack of or ineffective faith? - We did.

Q – What do we know about the first step involved in solving any problem?

- It is necessary to recognize and/or acknowledge that the problem exists.
- Let's be honest with ourselves, to what degree do we really trust God?

Q – Can we initiate the acquisition of faith? Can we “pull up to the pump as it were and say “fill 'er up”? - :-))

- The “filling station” of faith is the word of God!
- The word that has been revealed to our hearts.
- We can rehearse it on a regular basis and allow the Holy Spirit to help us apply it in our situations.
- There are a number of things we can do that will help to improve the environment of our faith or our confidence in the things God has revealed to our hearts.
  - Don't entertain negative thoughts.....rather
  - Rehearse those promises of God that have been revealed to your heart.
  - Don't allow well meaning friends to get you to focus on the details of your pain or problems.
  - Focus on the goodness of God and His ever present help.
- It is God who allocates gifts and spiritual virtues, be thankful for His goodness to you and yours.

Q – Have we all been apportioned a measure of faith? - Romans 12 :3 says we have been.

- NKJV - For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

- Amplified - For by the grace (unmerited favor of God) given to me I warn everyone among you not to estimate *and* think of himself more highly than he ought [not to have an exaggerated opinion of his own importance], but to rate his ability with sober judgment, each according to the degree of faith apportioned by God to him.
- NIV - For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

Q – What are some of the things we can do to improve the effectiveness of the faith that has been given to us?

- Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.
- Ask, because the scriptures say, “you have not, because you ask not”.
- Be open and available to the Spirit of God.
- Rest in His presence.
  - Practice His presence on a regular bases.
  - Close your eyes and envision Him standing right beside you.
  - Remind yourself of His providential care with songs, hymns and spiritual songs.
  - Talk about His constant help with your Christian friends and neighbors.
- Protect the environment of the “Seeds” of faith that have been planted in your heart.
  - Don't allow others to rob you of your confidence in God by focusing on the “wind & waves”.
  - Focus on those things that God has revealed to your heart and trust in His providential care.
- Willingly enter into and maintain a spirit of worship.
- Keep the “soil of your heart” free from spiritual “weeds“.
- Keep your priorities straight, don't be consumed by the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches or the desire for other things.
- When things are not going the way you expect them to consult the Spirit of God and trust His timing & direction.
- Don't just take matters into you own hands and try to solve your problems without Him.

Q – Is discipline optional?

- No, we will all be disciplined at times.
- Either we are disciplined by those who love us or we are disciplined by our enemy and the world we live in.
- Our choice is to comply with the instructions intended for our good, like the word of God.....or..... to learn the hard way.
- “We can chase the ball into a busy street and get away with it at times”.
- However you and I know disaster awaits those who reject sound teaching and the disciplines that comes with compliance.
- God help us to yield to the instruction of our loving Lord and savior, Jesus Christ.

Q – What points did the author make about Esau?

- He described him as godless.
- He sold his birthright for a single meal.
- Afterward he attempted to recapture it.
- He could not bring about a change of mind even though he sought it with tears.

Q – What was Esau's godless act?

- A disregard for the blessings of God.
- We need to think about that when we are tempted to complain.