



On the road to Emmaus.

THE STORY: HEB 11:1-16

Faith is being assured of the truth of something, when we can't see or prove it. God spoke the universe into existence by a word; but *faith assures* us that it's true. Abel was righteous because his offering was made *in faith*, not because his offering was better than Cain's. Enoch never saw death because he was considered righteous *by faith*, which is pleasing to God. "Without faith it is impossible to please him." We must draw near to God *by faith*, believing that He exists and rewards those who seek Him, for God cannot be seen. Noah believed God's warning, and acted on it *in faith*. He became an heir of the righteousness that's accounted to us for our faith. Abraham acted *in faith* when God called him to leave home, and promised him possession of a foreign land. Isaac and Jacob became heirs of God's Promise to Abraham, also *by faith*. Sarah believed God's promise of an impossible child, and likewise became an heir by faith. All of Abraham's seed died *in faith*, believing God's promise to Abraham – looking forward to a heavenly city, designed and built by God. Meanwhile they were aliens and pilgrims here.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What are you "looking forward to" now that Christ has come? Do you still wait for the City of God (*the New Jerusalem*)? (*Rev 21.2-3; Eph 5.25-27; 2Pet 3.13-14*)

How do you show that you are an *alien* and *pilgrim* here? (*What do "alien" and "pilgrim" mean? Mt 6.19-21; 1Joh 2.15-17*) What does it reveal about your faith?

PRAY:

Ask God to teach you not to hold too tightly to the things of this world.

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*To bring glory to God
Through the transforming of lives
By the Gospel of Jesus Christ*

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*building children into their parents...
... and families into the gospel.*

GET INTO THE STORY

LIFE OF CHRIST • LESSON 15

JESUS WALKS ON WATER

Trust Jesus enough to serve and obey him in all things.



The Disciples' Departure

THE STORY: MAT 14:22-24

Jesus had just provoked his disciples to greater faith when he told them to feed a crowd of over 5000. But they saw only an insurmountable need and their own lack of resources. When Jesus fed the crowd himself, he showed that nothing is impossible with God, if they only had faith. Jesus sent his disciples ahead of him by boat to his home at Capernaum, while he dismissed the crowds. Many lingered, however, wanting more free food, and to make Jesus their earthly king, by force if necessary (Joh 6.15). They wanted only full bellies and political power (Joh 6.26). They would not repent and believe in him for salvation (Joh 6.27-29). So Jesus left them, and went up the mountain alone to pray, for Satan had again tempted Jesus with an earthly kingdom (Mt 4.8-9). While Jesus was praying, a storm came up at sea. His disciples were alone in the boat, a long way from land, the wind beating against them, keeping them from home – night had fallen. Here is another test of their faith in Jesus. Would they trust him only for earthly things, as the crowd did? Would they trust him for anything at all, here in the darkness, and in the storm?

TALK ABOUT IT:

Are you more likely to trust Jesus for earthly things like food, clothing, shelter and safety, or for eternal things like your salvation? Why? (*1Cor 15.19*)

Is it *what* you trust Jesus for that matters, or is it knowing *who* you're trusting? What do you know about Jesus that makes you trust him? (*Act 13.38; Col 1.15-20; Eph 1.3-10*)

PRAY:

Ask God to teach you more and more about Himself and about Jesus, so you can trust Him more and more, and so your faith in Jesus will be strengthened.



The Disciples' Doubts

THE STORY: MAT 14:25-31

All through the night the disciples had battled wind and storm in their small boat. It was now after 3 a.m.; exhaustion had set in. It was now, in this darkest hour, that Jesus came to them walking on the water. Their fears took hold of them, and they screamed, doubting it was him, thinking it was a ghost – for there was no *earthly* explanation for it. Jesus encouraged them with, “I AM! Don’t be afraid.” I am the one who holds all things together (Col 1.17); I AM the one who gives life (Joh 10.28); I AM the one who forgives sin (Mt 9.2); I AM the one who commands this storm (Luk 8.25). “I AM!” Peter, still doubting, said, “*If it is you*, command me to come to you on the water.” Jesus said “Come!” Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water to Jesus. But when he looked away, trusting his earthly senses and understanding, and he “saw” the wind, he began to sink. He cried out, “Lord, save me!” Jesus laid hold of him, “O you of little faith, *why did you doubt?*”

TALK ABOUT IT:

When you doubt, who keeps you from “sinking”? (*Eph 1.13-14; Heb 7.22; Jude 1.24*) What opposes doubt? (*Rom 14.23; Jas 1.6; faith; Joh 14.1, in Jesus.*)

Why did Peter doubt *Jesus*? When do *you* doubt Jesus? What can you trust Jesus to do for you, without any doubt at all? (*Joh 6.40*)

PRAY:

Ask God to keep you steadfast in your faith, and to “lay hold” of you when your faith weakens. Ask him for eyes to see beyond this earthly realm to His kingdom.



Where is the Gospel?

THE STORY: ROM 4:13-5:2

Paul says that the law brings wrath. If obedience to the law were enough to save us, faith would be unnecessary. God promised Abraham that his *offspring* would be heirs of the world, for he would be the father of many nations. That promise rests entirely on God’s grace, not on our works, so that it extends to *all* of Abraham’s offspring – not only the obedient ones, but the ones who share the *faith* of Abraham in the promise of God. He hoped against hope that God’s promise was true; “no unbelief made him waver... he grew strong in his faith... fully convinced that God was able to do what He had promised.” Such faith was counted to him as

righteousness; and likewise our faith in God who raised Jesus from the dead is counted to us as righteousness. We are justified (declared righteous) by faith. It gives us peace with God through Jesus, and access into this grace which makes us stand. So “we rejoice in hope of the glory of God,” just as Abraham hoped in it. That makes us offspring of Abraham, and heirs of God’s promise to him.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What does placing your faith in Christ gain for you? (*also Col 1.13-14; Rom 5.1-2; Heb 11.33-34*) What might it cost you? (*Heb 11.35-38; Php 3.8*)

What does placing your faith in Christ require of you? (*1Cor 13.3; 1Pe 1.13-16; Heb 11.39-12.4*)

PRAY:

Praise God for Abraham who believed God’s promise in Christ, and for the Gospel delivered into your hands by generations of faithful saints and martyrs.



The Disciples' Devotion

THE STORY: MAT 14:32-34

After Peter began to sink, and Jesus laid hold of him, they walked back to the boat on the water and climbed in. Immediately the wind stopped. There was probably a moment of silence, and shock, and wonder (Mk 6.51). And then the disciples fell down and worshipped Jesus, no longer focusing on what Jesus had done, but on who Jesus is. This was very different from the crowd’s reaction. “Truly, you are the Son of God.” Before, they didn’t grasp the implications of feeding the 5000 – what the loaves symbolized about *Jesus* – their hearts were hardened (Mk 6.52). Once Jesus was aboard, their boat “immediately” landed at Gennesaret (Joh 6.21), a lush garden spot 2 miles west of Capernaum. The terrors of the night were now a distant memory. In daylight, with Jesus beside them, things were looking up...

TALK ABOUT IT:

What are you trusting Jesus for that may seem impossible for you to do? How do you keep your eyes on Jesus so you can ‘walk on water’? (*Isa 33.15-17, 20-22*)

What can you do to ensure you look to Jesus for *who* he is, and not just for *what* he can give to you? How does that bring you peace? (*Eph 2.13-22*)

Optional: read the lyrics to the old hymn “Turn your eyes upon Jesus.” Discuss.

PRAY:

Thank God that you can trust Jesus, and you can look to him for everything you need to fulfill what he has called you to do in his name.