A 40 Day Devotional
Revival of Faith

The 40-day Devotional

Welcome to this 40-day devotional on Faith, based on Pastor Cash Luna’s book “Not by Sight”. We would encourage you to get the book to accompany and add depth to this devotional, although it has also been designed to stand by itself – so don’t panic if you don’t have it! Over the 40 days, we will cover each of the chapters in the book as we challenge ourselves to grow in our relationship with God and to trust Him more. Each day focuses on a simple thought, and encourages you to engage with scripture and stir your faith as you discover more about what God has for you!
Faith in God can be summed up like this: “Give yourself to the Lord”. This simple statement covers many areas, from knowing His Word – where we find our identity and code of conduct – to our attitude in every situation in life, be it large or small. Our Faith in God will be determined by our understanding of God’s power, authority and love for us.

The Lord’s prayer is a complete declaration of faith. Have you ever considered the magnitude of the declaration “Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”, or even what that means?

Ultimately, as we pray the Lord’s prayer, we are reminded that God’s system is the best system! We would all probably agree that we want to live in God’s kingdom, rather than that of the world, but what does that practically look like?

The first step to living by faith is to recognise and acknowledge that God’s system is the best and to be willing to obey it – to do things God’s way. This opens the door to a life full of expectation, along with the ability to dream and imagine.

**Matthew 6:7-13 (ESV)**

7 “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 Pray then like this:

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. 10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread, 12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

God is our loving Father and He asks us to believe in Him wholeheartedly because He loves us.

**Something to think about**

What are some of the foundational principles of God’s kingdom?

In what areas of your life have you been looking for natural solutions in priority to supernatural ones? What can you practically do to help you live by God’s system in more areas of your life?
Imperfect People

1 Kings 17:1 (ESV)

"Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.”"

(Further reading: All of 1 Kings 17 and 18)

We need to accept our human nature and recognise our flaws with humility. Humility is a vital element in our Father’s kingdom.

Prayer is our opportunity to bring our weaknesses to God and to communicate openly and intimately with Him. It is not a matter of how much time, but rather the faith we exercise when we come before our Father in prayer.

Elijah, in today’s passage, demonstrates that even while we can be rash, impulsive and overwhelmed at times (as he is!), such extreme and irregular emotions don’t need to keep us from praying fervently and effectively. Elijah was able to stop rain and call down fire from heaven, despite his own insecurities!

Whenever you pray, never look at how good you’ve been, because it’s Jesus alone who validates you and opens the way for you to come before the Father.

Something to think about

How’s your prayer life? What is one thing you could do this week to improve it?

What do you think holds you back from praying?

A prayer for the day

Father, I want to live my whole life according to Your system and Your Word. I promise to live, grow, and serve others in love.
God planned our adoption through his Son as a wonderful act of love. This is the most incredible revelation of all! The scriptures assure us that we are children of God, heirs of His kingdom, and co-heirs with Christ.

In God’s kingdom, adoption is one of the greatest privileges a person can have because He literally handpicks us for adoption as daughters and sons.

This is so important because, as heirs, Jesus persistently teaches us to ask the Father for everything because that is how we prove that we are living by faith. In fact, as we read the Bible, we see that before highlighting our obedience to his commandments, He urges us to ask in order to receive!

Jesus became the adoptive son of a mortal couple so that we, as children of mortals, might be adopted by a heavenly God. Notice how priceless His sacrifice was!

All we can do today is simply ask, receive, and be thankful for the things of God. Access the kingdom of God today! Live by faith, convinced that you are a child of your Father and your eyes will see His wonders.

Something to think about

If God is our Father, and we are truly adopted as His children, how does that change how you approach Him?

How does God’s fatherhood help us to live by faith?
More Than Conquerors

Romans 8:31-39 (ESV)

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If we claim to believe in someone, then we also believe in what that person can do. So, if we claim to believe in God, then why not have faith in His creation as well? If everything that He has done is good, how much more so are we whom He has made in His image and likeness and adopted as His sons and daughters.

Consequently, our faith in God ought to be reflected in the trust we place in our own selves as well as in the abilities and skills He has entrusted to us. All this, coupled with His grace, is the perfect combination to carry out mighty acts.

There is no reason to put yourself down or to pay attention to the voices of those who try to hold you back. God knows you, He formed you, and He knows the potential He has placed within you. You have no right to doubt yourself! Trust the creator because His works are always good, and they always have a specific purpose in mind.

Living by faith means aligning yourself with what God thinks of you and accepting the challenge of being equipped beforehand to reach great and mighty goals in life. You will face many battles, but you can do so from the perspective and strong position of knowing that Jesus fought for you first and, having conquered sin and death on the cross, made us more than conquerors as well. Believe in God and, as a consequence, believe in yourself!

Something to think about

What does it look like to be “more than a conqueror” in life? What does that mean practically? How could such an attitude affect you this week?

Though we go through difficulties, faith and obedience will always secure the victory Jesus won for us on the cross.
Deep down, we often struggle to accept the victory that we already have in Christ. When we truly learn to accept it, we’ll begin to manifest that victory in every area of our lives.

We need to learn what it means to have our identity and authority in Christ. We have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, and, thanks to that, we have recovered our original authority that we were always created to have – with God as king, and us as His sub-rulers to overcome and look after the earth! The problem is that when we sin, we suffer the collateral damage of losing faith in our identity and in our capacity to overcome our mistakes.

When you turn away from God and make mistakes, it becomes easy to lose confidence in your work, your performance and your relationships. Sometimes we can feel that our effort isn’t producing anything. We grow tired, and feel like loving, forgiving and blessing others simply isn’t paying off. But do not stop! Don’t give up!

Today, trust in the Lord and accept his redemption in your life which will restore your victory over the enemy that would like to take you down. You can overcome with the authority that now dwells within you. See yourself as a conqueror, restore your confidence in Jesus and His victory will be yours.

As the people of Israel marched around Jericho in today’s passage, they probably had moments of doubt as nothing happened for the first six days! Yet they overcame their doubts in faith and on the seventh day the walls came down. Faith overcomes the world!

**Something to think about**

*What circumstances have been keeping you down? In what areas of your life do you need to remember Christ’s victory?*

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**Joshua 6:12-21 (ESV)**

12 Then Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. 13 And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark of the Lord walked on, and they blew the trumpets continually. And the armed men were walking before them, and the rear guard was walking after the ark of the Lord, while the trumpets blew continually. 14 And the second day they marched around the city once, and returned into the camp. So they did for six days.

15 On the seventh day they rose early, at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times. 16 And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, “Shout, for the Lord has given you the city.” 17 And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. 18 But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it. 19 But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the Lord; they shall go into the treasury of the Lord.” 20 So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city. 21 Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword.

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**The Lord assures us that we have already defeated the enemy. So why do we sometimes allow Satan to win over us?**
It is said that in war, weapons are useless if one does not know how to use them. The same thing applies in the spiritual dimension. There is no point in claiming to believe in the promises of God if one is not going to have the courage to face difficult situations and see his plans fulfilled.

To challenge you (with respect!), we often tend to disguise our lack of bravery with spirituality, seeking countless confirmations from God before stepping out and doing anything. The Bible says that the “violent” take their promises by force; in other words, it is only by being decisive and taking action that you will get the victory that has eluded you for so long.

In today’s passage, we can learn a couple of things about faith:

- God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
- When it comes to our relationship with God, there are only two testimonies that really count: ours, which speaks about what He has done for us; and His, which speaks about what He has seen in us and is pleasing to Him.

Our faith must be reflected in every area of our life, demonstrated holistically. God’s grace has been designed for every area of our being and not just our spirit.

Hebrews 11:1-12 (ESV)

1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 For by it the people of old received their commendation. 3 By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

4 By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. 5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. 6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. 7 By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. 11 By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

Something to think about

In what areas of your life do you find it easy to live by faith? Where is it hard?

What is one thing you can do this week to “step out” in faith?
The Best Weapon (II)

Romans 1:17 (ESV)

17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

(Further reading: Hebrews 11 ESV)

It’s amazing how many times the Bible mentions “the righteous shall live by faith”. Faith not only guarantees us eternal life, but also provides the key to living a full life here on earth.

It is easy to say after accepting Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour that you will have your spot reserved by His side after you die. It is much more challenging to speak faith into those things God has promised you to fulfil here on earth, because for that you will have to demonstrate corresponding attitude and works. Yet that is the confidence you need to have, since it is the only way to please God.

The issue isn’t claiming to have faith, but rather using it when we face trials and difficulties in our everyday lives.

Faith is a lifestyle, not a “do something to get something” mentality. What happens if you get to the end of your life without ever receiving what God has promised you? Just like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph in Hebrews 11, you must proclaim to your offspring that they will see the promises of God fulfilled because he is a faithful God who will not lie. Faith is the best heritage you can leave your children, because it leads to lives full of expectation and purpose.

Living by faith means enjoying the present as well as the future framed with optimism. The rewards for faith are not about material things (although they can be part of it!), but rather God wants us to put our faith in His provision over every area of our lives: spiritual, physical, emotional and material.

We are the children of God and His power will always sustain us when we choose to live by faith. We just need to remember that living by faith takes a boldness and courage to fight for what we believe and take it!

A prayer for the day

Father, thank You for the heroes of the faith that we see in the Bible. Thank You for their example – that while they were imperfect like us, they had the courage to hold their trust in You even when they sometimes didn’t see the results of their promise. Help me to have the boldness to step out in faith and to trust You for things I cannot yet see.
Our God made everything with excellence, and we as His children should do no less than to imitate Him. Jesus came not only to give us the blessing of eternal life, but also life in abundance here on earth. As today’s passage reminds us, God has all power in heaven and on earth. We, on the other hand, know that we are His children and ambassadors. God wants us to be His witnesses. We have an incredible and powerful purpose here!

We have each been entrusted with a span of time that we need to enjoy and use responsibly. It is vital that we open our eyes to understand both the earthly and spiritual dimensions, because our faith is designed to uphold us in both realms.

There is a here and now, just as there is an eternal future, and both scenarios are impacted by our faith. At what point will we enter that dimension of faith that empowers our abilities and grants us the liberty that God desires for us? Don’t focus on your fears. Don’t wait for heaven. You can act now! We should be like Jesus, from whom sickness and weakness would flee and demons would scatter.

We are called to be a blessing on this earth, and we need to release and deliver God’s promises to every person. Our faith is based on the Word of God and His power. The apostle Paul taught us that his preaching was not with persuasive words of man’s wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and the Power of God (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

Something to think about

Have you ever considered that your faith affects the “here and now”? What does that mean to you?

Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

“...And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

The Lord has given us the power to bless others and conquer every enemy.
Despite David’s kingly and heroic achievements in the Old Testament, he also went through some immensely testing times. Although he had a heart after God’s own heart, there was a moment in time, during his stay in a cave known as Adullam, that he was the leader of a band of men who were in trouble, in debt, or just plain bitter. Just imagine this strange scenario for a man who had been prophesied to rule an entire kingdom!

Despite what all of David’s senses and physical circumstances were telling him, he still placed his sights on God’s objective for his life. As impossible as it seemed, that is exactly what happened.

Often, we find ourselves in similar circumstances, in our own kind of dark cave. It is often easy to think there is no way out when “life happens” in dramatic and unexpected ways. Unless our faith in God during these hard times is rock solid, we will feel that it’s all over. But if you believe in his promises of good for your life, you will fight through your battle, and retake what the enemy attempts to steal from you.

We need to care for our faith and nurture it by continually seeking after God. God’s word is true and it can supersede any circumstance, however tough.

Jesus showed us a similar attitude. He humbled himself completely to give us life. He knew perfectly well what the plan was and He obeyed it, despite the extreme suffering it entailed. Nonetheless, He endured it because He had set His eyes on the final goal, the reward, the prize (Philippians 2:5–11).

We should be willing to fight for what is ours, even when circumstances might be difficult and it appears that nothing good will come out of it.

**Something to think about**

*Where is life hard at the moment? How can you focus on the promises of God to stir your faith in those areas?*
Don’t Overlook Your Path (II)

Overcoming Pain and Rejection

Matthew 4:1-11 (ESV)

1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” 4 But he answered, “It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.””

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple 6 and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you,’ and “On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.”’”

7 Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” 10 Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’”

11 Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

Your goals and God’s promises for your life should always rise above any negative trial you may be experiencing.

Jesus’ life is an incredible model for us of how to overcome pain and rejection. Even when He was led into the wilderness after His baptism, He did not stay there, because He knew that it was just one more step in the process of blessing others and fulfilling His ultimate purpose. We see how He willingly fasted and rejected every temptation. He was strengthened in faith to do miracles and He endured the pain of the cross, rejected by even His closest friends.

If you want to come out of the wilderness as an overcomer, then you have to believe and grow; strengthening both your body and your spirit. Prepare yourself for both good times and bad, because your wilderness might be just around the corner. At all times, you need to rest and trust in the Father’s faithfulness, asking God to fill you with the strength to overcome all pain and rejection. Ask Him to heal your heart today, to cleanse you and to become a healing and soothing balm on your wounds.

Don’t complain about your problems. When you go through hard times, say in faith: “This is not my destination. It is only the path and I will endure it because my loving Father has excellent plans for me.”

Something to think about

What is your character like when you are going through your wilderness? May you be filled with patience and wisdom to overcome!
Powerful Words

Psalm 23 (ESV)

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.
3 He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.
4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Proverbs 18:21 (ESV)

21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.

It is a fact that our words can prepare us for good or for bad. That is why when we talk about faith, we have to address how we speak and how we hear.

Today’s Psalm represents a powerful declaration of faith in which David addresses his future. Although he is afflicted, he still feels anointed because the Lord takes the time to prepare a table in the presence of his enemies. Though he was obviously going through a difficult time, his attitude and language remain hopeful, and he speaks of his future in terms of blessing and optimism.

If you are a Christian, then you know that going to church will not fix your problems at the snap of your fingers, nor will it serve to numb the pain. At church, we present the Word and the direction we need to take. We cheer each other on, although no one can walk in another person’s shoes. Each one has to advance in the promises of God with faith, overcoming the past, living in holiness in the present and trusting in a better future.

Perhaps consider a change in how you speak, challenging yourself to leave out every pessimistic word. Our words are powerful and can produce effects both in our lives and the lives of those around us. Nurture yourself with God’s words, and allow His voice to be the dominant one in your life (over and above the many voices in this world!). Meditate on His truth and speak out His promises. Surround yourself with those who believe in you and encourage you and do the same for others.

God’s words, aligned with yours will ultimately release His blessing as you walk in obedience and oneness with Him.

Something to think about

Take some time today to listen to how you talk. Do you speak with faith, hope and expectation or pessimism and complaint? What can you do to change the way you speak?

Find one person to encourage today – whether in person, or over a phone call or a text. Don’t wait for tomorrow. Encourage someone today!
John 11:20-27 (ESV)

20 So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. 21 Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” 23 Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” 24 Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” 25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” 27 She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

In the Bible, we can learn much about the difference between knowing and believing. The effectiveness of his Word in your circumstance depends on your faith! If you want to see the glory of God, you must believe. There’s no point knowing thousands of Bible verses, if you are not going to believe that they are truth and that God’s promises are secure!

In today’s passage, Martha demonstrates a great understanding of who Jesus is and His kingdom, and yet Jesus still asks her the crucial question: “Do you believe this?” Despite her reasoning, doctrine and knowledge, she still struggled to believe that Jesus could raise her brother there and then. So, Jesus challenges her right in the moment, before He goes on to complete the miracle and call Lazarus out of the grave. **Belief is the key!**

When faced with uncertainty, we often act like Martha, with arguments and reasoning based on the knowledge we have and in what we can see; but we need to learn the lesson. Today, remove the stone if you know that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life! Let’s not be stubborn. We can know a lot of things, but we will only be able to see the fulfilment of those promises for which we believe in our hearts. Don’t ever let your knowledge stand in the way of your faith!

You cannot see miracles with what you know about God, but rather what you are convinced that he can do.

**Something to think about**

**How long is your list of excuses that has kept God from doing something in your life?**

**What is the ratio of knowledge to faith in your life?** Sure, we need a balance, but we cannot let worldly knowledge hinder our faith.
A Mustard Seed

Mark 6:1-6 (ESV)

1 He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. 2 And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, “Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands?” 3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.

4 And Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.” 5 And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. 6 And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching.

Matthew 17:19-20 (ESV)

19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” 20 He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”

Jesus was unable to do miracles in His home town of Nazareth because the people there only saw Him as a carpenter, and not as the Son of God. He found no faith there, only distrust and unbelief. We know that the Word of God is alive and powerful, that it is good seed and does not return void. Still, the worries of life and the deceitfulness of riches have the power to choke it and make it ineffective. Unbelief and the cares of this world can neutralize God’s almighty and limitless power (Mark 4:19)!

How do we react to this truth? Boldly proclaim your faith and defend your beliefs, for your blessing depends on it! Honour Jesus as your Lord, and He will work in your life. Be consistent in your walk. If you claim that He is your Lord, prove it. Appreciate Him, and yourself, for he has delegated authority to you. You may view Jesus as your best friend, but do not stop seeing Him as your Lord, honouring and believing Him with all your heart.

Do not take Jesus back to the carpenter’s shop. Do not see Him as the carpenter’s son, but as the Son of God, sitting on His throne at the right hand of the Father, making intercession for you and for me. If you have not appreciated Him, or yourself, ask for forgiveness.

Learn to view your neighbours as brothers and sisters in Christ, worthy of honour as well. Ask Him to open your eyes to see Him as He really is – the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Ask Him to teach you about honour and faith and to help you to do away with every bit of unbelief.

It’s time to challenge the unbelief in our lives, and to put our faith in the right place! Faith only has as much power as the object we put it in, so let’s ensure we are placing our faith in the risen Lord. Jesus taught us that our faith has the same potential as a mustard seed – it may seem small, but it can become a great tree! Such faith can be increased through prayer and fasting and grows day by day. Don’t despise small or humble beginnings – trust in a relationship takes time and effort!

Something to think about

We all struggle with unbelief. What do you make of the mustard seed analogy. Does it reassure you at all?

Perhaps commit to a simple daily prayer devotion – seeking God to understand Him more, so that you may trust Him better and be able to put your faith entirely in Him.
Mark 11:20-24 (ESV)

20 As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. 21 And Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.” 22 And Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God. 23 Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. 24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

(Further reading: Proverbs 18:21 ESV)

It is one thing to believe but it is another thing to believe and to speak. Isn’t it interesting that our Father knows what we are thinking and knows what we need but He still requires us to speak out what we believe?

Faith comes entirely out of our relationship with our Father. Any relationship requires communication and speaking. For example, it is not enough to think about how much I like the dinner you made me, the relationship will not move forward unless I actually verbalise what I am thinking and tell you how much I like the dinner. This is where an internal belief becomes an external interaction with another person. And so it is with our faith in God!

The scriptures tell us that life and death are in the power of our tongue. God said this! God has set in motion a law, which Jesus affirmed.

In faith, if we declare God’s promises or ask our heavenly Father for anything, according to His Word, we will have that which we have spoken. It is not enough just to believe; it is not enough to really really want something; it is not even enough to be in pain, or to be very happy... we need to interact with our God, and put our faith into action!

**Something to think about**

*How do the scriptures tell us that we can interact with God?*

*If everything you declare or pray today created your future life, what do you need to start to declare and pray?*

**A prayer for the day**

*Jesus, You said that by our words we would be justified and by our words we would be condemned. Show me how and help me to change my language to line up with Your language.*
Levels of Faith

Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV)

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,
9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

2 Corinthians 5:7 (ESV)

7 for we walk by faith, not by sight.

2 Timothy 4:6-7 (ESV)

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.
7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

We start this journey with God by faith. Furthermore, we live, we walk and we die by faith in God. Our whole life and being is now one of faith, but not only the faith we started with at our salvation!

God has called us to journey with Him, to move and to grow in our faith daily. We were never supposed to only live from the faith we started with at our salvation. That is always with us and is the underlying faith that all the rest is built on, but God calls us to pursue new faith, to increase our faith today.

Faith pushes forward, faith is never satisfied, faith is excellent and never settles for mediocrity. Faith constantly strives for the very best, it is confident and works hard to receive the blessing it rightfully deserves.

Something to think about

What areas of your life have you settled for second best?

Looking through the eyes of faith, what is God’s best for you in that area?

If you were to aim for God’s best in this area, what would living by faith look like?

A prayer for the day

God, help me to live confidently and work according to Your faith, always striving for the best, never settling for mediocrity.
Matthew 14:20-33 (ESV)

20 And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. 21 And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Jesus Walks on the Water
22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea.
26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” and they cried out in fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”

28 And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” 29 He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”
32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Changing Your Level

Faith is a life, it is not just about a conversion. Conversion is only the beginning: Faith is for every moment of every day. In today’s passage, Peter demonstrates that faith has different levels: firstly, when he follows Jesus, then when he steps into the boat and then again when he steps out to walk on water.

Understanding, then, that faith has different levels; if you have already got into the boat, the next step will be to walk on the water! Have you settled for a faith that keeps you in the boat, when Jesus is no longer in the boat?

Something to think about

Where are you in your faith today?

What is God speaking to your heart that is a little ‘out there’, like walking on water in a storm?

What is your next step to move your faith forward?

A prayer for the day

Lord, I choose to trust You and not the safety of the boat, I determine to seek You and take steps of faith towards You today!
Philippians 4:8 (ESV)

> Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Do you know that God is good? Do you know that He is for you and that His strength is your strength? When we know the promises of God and can be rooted in His word, confident of the end result in the midst of a storm, THEN we can be sure and positive.

God’s plans and thoughts towards us are all good and perfect. We simply need to align ourselves with His thoughts and His will no matter what the situation. This will cause all doubt, all negativity and all fear to diminish! When we trust in God will all our heart and align ourselves with the thoughts of God, there is no doubt we will see God manifest in our lives.

Something to think about

What are areas in your life right now where you need to think more positively, to align your mind with Christ’s?

Try making a list of all your negative thoughts down one side of a page, on the other side of the page write the opposite, positive thought. Now tear away the negative, throw it away and start reading and thinking about what remains, the positive words.

“God’s will for me is always good, pleasing and perfect, that is why I need to seek Him with all my heart”
Mark 12:15-17 (ESV)

15 But, knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, “Why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius[a] and let me look at it.” 16 And they brought one. And he said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” They said to him, “Caesar’s.” 17 Jesus said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they marveled at him.

Matthew 5:39-41 (ESV)

39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.

The person who understands how to be under authority is also the person who will walk in authority. There are countless biblical examples where this is shown. A couple of well-known stories would be that of David and Saul in the Old Testament and that of the Centurion that Jesus said had great faith in the New Testament. Being obedient to authority is essential to learning to walk in authority.

Jesus showed us that it is always better to give than to receive; it is always better to serve than to be served; it is always better to humble oneself than to exalt oneself and that we must go the extra mile in everything we do. He showed us another way from that which our sinful nature wants!

Sin tries to exalt and gain prominence; sin is full of pride and selfish ambition! Yet, on the other hand, living the way Jesus did will always cause us to respect, honour and do our very best for our leaders and others. We become a servant to all, even those that are mean, angry and trying to take advantage of us! Jesus wants us to realise we are not serving people when we obey them, we are actually serving God in all we do.

Something to think about

Who is an authority in your life that you have not been giving your very best to?

What could you do this week to serve this person with your best?

A prayer for the day

Father, please help me to have a humble heart, to serve others with my best. Help me to see and understand how to be under authority and also walk in the authority You have given me.

We must believe and strive in the authority that makes us the Lord’s children and His heirs.
Luke 7:3-9 (ESV)

3 When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. 4 And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, “He is worthy to have you do this for him, 5 for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue.” 6 And Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, “Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. 7 Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed. 8 For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” 9 When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, “I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith.”

You cannot walk in faith without having a degree of authority. We gain understanding and an ability to walk in authority by submitting and humbling ourselves to authority.

When we are then given any authority, we can know what it means! We have the thinking that responds to and from authority, like the Centurion in today’s passage. We become bold and confident in our authority.

Our boldness is powerful as it comes from authority that is given from the Lord Himself.

Something to think about

What are some areas you have been shrinking back from, when you know that you should be bold and confident?

What can you practically do to be bold and confident in these areas?

A prayer for the day

Father, I decide today that I will be a leader who will raise my level of faith, I am willing to face all challenges with the authority You have given me.
Matthew 9:29 (ESV)

29 Then he touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith be it done to you.”

There is faith for the mundane and everyday aspects of life (logical) and there is faith for the miraculous (illogical). We need to have faith in both areas! We cannot only have faith for illogical, or we will not live day to day in the promises of God. In the same way, we cannot only have faith for the logical or when we need a miracle (perhaps, a healing from illness or disease) our world can fall apart.

It is not ok to view faith one dimensionally. After all, our whole walk with Christ is all about relationship. God wants us to trust Him so that He can be part of every aspect of our lives. Relationship does not speak of illogical only or logical only, it has no boundary or limitation, it just is!

Something to think about

Do you use your faith in one area more than the other? e.g. Illogical versus logical?

What steps can you take to increase and use your faith in the area you are weaker?

A prayer for the day

Father I decide to have faith in you in all areas of my life, to believe You for the big miraculous things in life and to believe You for my daily food.
2 Kings 5:1-7 (ESV)

1 Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the Lord had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. 2 Now the Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman’s wife. 3 She said to her mistress, “Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.” 4 So Naaman went in and told his lord, “Thus and so spoke the girl from the land of Israel.” 5 And the king of Syria said, “Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel.”

So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. 6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, “When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Naaman my servant, that you may cure him of his leprosy.” 7 And when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, “Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Only consider, and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me.”

Wrong expectations and perceptions can easily turn to bitterness, resentment and anger. We should be careful when setting them.

It’s so easy for us to limit God by creating perceptions and ideas of how ‘we think’ He should move in our lives. When we put God in a box and decide how He needs to be, we end up missing the promises of God.

Naaman in the Bible was so close to missing out on a miracle because he put God in a box, deciding what the answer should be before God gave him the answer. There is no way any of us can know what God will do, so we may as well not bother, as it is only to our own detriment.

To avoid putting God in a box, we need to have a mindset of “Father, not my will but Your will be done” and then give everything we have to pursue the answer. God has given us a mind for a reason: we shouldn’t switch off. We need to use all we have to pursue God’s promises but remain open to ‘His’ answers at all times.

Something to think about

Can you think of any areas you have been expecting God to move in a certain way?

What can you do to ‘unbox’ God in this area and open yourself up to what God might want to do?

A prayer for the day

Lord, you and I together form a majority, You are by my side and You are my defender. I trust You to be my supplier, provider, healer and my justice. I trust Your ways are higher than my ways and always perfect for my life. Thank You so much for loving me.
In The Process

Romans 4:17-22 (ESV)

"as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. 18 In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." 19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. 20 No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, 21 fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. 22 That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.”

Where we often miss God’s best for our lives is when we agonise over what we do not have. To get out of this, we need to restore our trust in God’s Word. This will bring us back into God’s order and fill our soul with peace. A life of peace is God’s desire for every person.

Faith is never meant to be a miracle moment. It is a lifestyle. We need to search the scriptures day and night; we need to hold fast to the truth. Faith is never meant to be a temporary or a one-off event; it’s a life filled with expectation, hope and excitement of God’s goodness.

Your faith should never be momentary. Believe God at all times! A relationship does not switch on and off due to good or bad times. Faith is based on relationship and your faith needs to trust God at all times.

"Faith sustains us at all times.

Something to think about

Can you think of any areas where you have compartmentalised your relationship with God to such a degree that you have stopped trusting Him?

In this area, what is one thing you can do today to restore your faith in God.

A prayer for the day

Father, I will not waver or doubt, I choose to trust You, I have an assurance that You have seen my future and it is good.
There are seasons for everything, but we need to learn to live in the moment, regardless of whether it is a joyous or a grievous one. We need to decide what we believe and never deviate. Faith never deviates or wavers at the promises of God.

We need to guard ourselves from letting our feelings get the best of us. We need to be willing to fight for what is ours, even when the circumstances might be difficult and it appears that nothing good will come out of it.

Allow yourself to feel the moment, don’t deny it. For example, allow yourself to cry if you are hurting. But feeling the moment does not have to change or determine what you believe! Your belief and faith in God does not mean you don’t feel, it just means your feelings do not define you or determine your future.

There is a season for every matter under heaven:

1. For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
2. a time to be born, and a time to die;
3. a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
4. a time to kill, and a time to heal;
5. a time to break down, and a time to build up;
6. a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
7. a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
8. a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (ESV)

Romans 8:28 (ESV)

Trust in the Lord and you’ll overcome every difficult circumstance.

Something to think about

Are there any feelings ruling your life at the moment?

What can you do to move away from feelings ruling to faith ruling your life?

A prayer for the day

Father, I believe You for instant miracles and I believe You for my daily life, I decide to not waver, I will not let feelings define me, I know You have given me the ability to feel, but my faith is in You and You alone.
Too Easy To Be True

Jeremiah 32:27 (ESV)
27 “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?

Exodus 14:15-16 (ESV)
15 The Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. 16 Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground.

We receive salvation in Jesus our Lord and saviour by simply accepting Him – putting our faith in the finished work of the cross. It’s far too common that we then think, in all our arrogance and self-righteousness, that we have a better answer than God and can, by our own works, continue in the things of God (despite the fact they were initiated by faith not works!). Obedience to God’s instruction, that we might perceive to be too simple, is a true test of our faith.

God specialises in the impossible. He never offers difficult methods because He wants us to believe in what is simple and powerful. For the person willing to ask, believe and obey, anything is possible!

Never let your reasoning take the place of your faith. If your situation is complicated, then it’s time to simplify it through faith. Believe for the impossible today!

Something to think about

Do you have areas in your life that feel complicated?

Take a moment to write down 3 ways you can trust God and simplify this situation.

A prayer for the day

Lord, I know You can do mighty wonders in my life, I turn away from any doubt as I know You will always have the best and simplest answer for my life.

Faith in God’s ability to do the impossible should be the driving force behind obeying His simple instructions.
Follow Their Faith

Hebrews 13:7-8 (ESV)

7 Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

We need to be careful in making sure that we don’t listen to just simply anyone. We need to follow and be like those whose teachings have been proven with visible results. God is always our first - the one we go to and the one we rely on with all our heart. However, He will also send people into our lives to help us. This doesn’t mean we aren’t trusting God. On the contrary, every good thing in our life comes from Him: Just as He provides our food from many different sources, so He provides us with wisdom and knowledge from many sources.

Something to think about

Who are the people in your life where you have seen their fruit and they would be a positive influence on your faith?

A prayer for the day

Lord, help me to see the people in my world that will strengthen my faith and those that will not. Send people into my life that I can encourage and that can encourage me, I trust You and love You.

“Learning from others means obeying and humbly recognising that someone else knows more.”
Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, live righteously, and He will give you everything you need. Of course, God wants us to prosper in all things and to have every need supplied, but it will only be as a direct result of our intimacy with Him.

Our conviction of God’s love needs to be fully believed and demonstrated, otherwise it will just be an abstract concept, void of impact. Faith is tangible and effective, designed to totally transform our lives if we become as children who love, admire, believe and obey Him.

Romans 1:17 (ESV)
17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

Something to think about

Are your eyes on God, do you see Him or do you see the issue as the focus of your prayers?

How can you get God back as the focus of your life in areas where He is not?

A prayer for the day

Father because you are faithful, I will be also. I decide to be firmly steadfast in my trust and love for You Please lead me, help me and teach me in this new season of life.
Always leave your life open to the leading of God. When we believe Him, we will normally begin to think about “how” - but remember God has always got an easier plan than you. He is trying to keep your life simple. He simply wants trust and obey Him, and He will give you the “how”.

God’s instructions and promises, which He challenges us to believe, are often so simple they risk ridicule in today’s society. “Love others as you want to be loved yourself”. “Ask and you shall receive”. Never allow yourself to conform to the world’s way of thinking, and the patterns of culture. Trust God’s Word with your whole heart and strive to follow His leading with an open heart at all times.

**Something to think about**

**What areas of life are you possibly trying to figure out ‘the how’ yourself?**

**What can you do to surrender these areas to God and seek Him first?**

**A prayer for the day**

Father, help me to be soft in heart, open in mind and humble in spirit at all times, I desire to serve and love you at all times. I lay down my ‘How’ so that I may take up Yours.
In today's passage, Jacob agrees to work for Laban for seven years to earn his daughter Rachel's hand in marriage. After seven years of patiently waiting, Laban tricks him into marrying Rachel's sister, Leah. In an immense display of patience, Jacob agrees to work for another seven years so that he can marry Rachel, and he does so. Each person the Bible speaks of who had great faith, also had patience in moving towards a goal that was not instantaneous. Faith is the raw energy we must use to reach the God goals in our lives (those dreams and visions for our futures that utilise the gifts He has given us in order to build His kingdom).

Most of us would have grown incredibly anxious, frustrated and desperate in Jacob's situation. We often throw away our own dreams and make compromises on things that really matter when we allow negative emotions to lead to impatient decision making.

The cure for such anxiety and impatience is the Word of God. Listen to it, read it, meditate on it and learn it so that it can become the foundation of your life at all times. A deep relationship with God is key to having peace in any situation. Believe and be patient, and your story will also be told as an example of faith that achieves great things!

**Something to think about**

*Which of your life goals are you currently compromising upon based on impatience?*

*How could you season your faith to see these goals become a reality with patience?*
A New Season

2 Cor 1:20 (ESV)

“For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

(Further reading: John 11:1-44 ESV)

God does not see time the way we do. We always want immediate answers, but God moves outside of our linear view on time. Time dwells in God, not the other way around.

This can encourage us when we find ourselves in new seasons of uncertainty, having to exercise patient faith in God’s promises whilst simultaneously needing to make important decisions and take action in our present situation.

In John chapter 11, Jesus declared that Lazarus’ sickness would not result in death. He then waited two days before heading to visit Lazarus, by which time Lazarus had died. Finally, when everyone around him thought that it was too late, that time had run out, Jesus took action and raised Lazarus from the dead, confirming his previous declaration.

Part of life consists of learning from confusing moments and persevering with patient faith. Real patience is evident when, regardless of how much time has gone by, a person not only continues to wait but also springs into action, not confusing patience with passivity.

It is never ‘too late’ for God to fulfil His Word, and He always will, in His time. Never give up in dire or bleak circumstances, keep acting in faith. Stand firm in every season, trusting God.

Something to think about

Is there an area in your life in which you are being impatient, or confusing patience with passivity?

How could you spring into action in this situation, whilst remaining patient and trusting God to fulfil His word?

2 Cor 1:20 (ESV)

For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

Hear and obey His Word. Everything else will follow in due time.
Corporate Faith

Mark 2:3-12 (ESV)

2 And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. 4 And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. 5 And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” 6 Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” 7 And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts? 8 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’? 9 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— 10 “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” 11 And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

Matthew 18:18-22 (ESV)

18 Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

Let us worship the Father together, thanking Him for His blessings and praying for one another’s needs.

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

21 Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” 22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

Have you ever gone through a difficult situation and only made it through it thanks to the love and support of other people? Or perhaps you have been the one to love and support a friend through a tough time, helping them to overcome whatever they were facing?

Sacrificing to help others is one way of seeking the kingdom of God and putting our convictions into action. It may not always be as dramatic as paralysis being healed, but one thing is for certain, there is power in unity! The same applies to our faith.

Jesus promised to be wherever two or more are gathered in His name. The problem is not about God being present when we come together, but it’s about us having a right and willing heart, free of bitterness and resentment, and full of sacrificial love.

Something to think about

Have you surrounded yourself with people who can help you grow in your relationship with God?

What could you do to better stand with them in faith and pray for the needs of one another?
If you have never had any doubts, fears, or worries, how can you know that you have faith?

Jesus stated that of all men born of women, none compared to John the Baptist. John was used by God to baptise people and to keep alive the moral condition of both the Jewish and Roman people. As a prophet, he was so important that even soldiers, publicans, and people in government would consult him, and he always told them that they needed to change their ways.

Yet even John had his moment of doubt when he was imprisoned for telling Caesar’s representative in Judea the truth. Doubting his faith in Jesus, he sent his own followers to inquire whether Jesus really was the Son of God, something that he himself had announced as the truth in the first place!

We can often have similar feelings and concerns when we face adversity. There are times when we are so convinced that we are on the right path, but then some obstacle appears, or something causes us to stumble, and we begin to doubt our previous convictions.

It’s important to remember that the issue is not about doubting, but about how we handle those moments of weakness.

A person of faith draws near to God in every moment, both when things are going well and when His help is needed.

**Something to think about**

*Have you allowed doubt, fear or worry to creep into any area of your life?*

*Spend some time looking for a few more examples of people in the Bible who chose faith over doubt. What lessons could you learn from these people to help you overcome your doubts, fears and worries?*
As humans we have thoughts, emotions and a will. All three areas are interconnected and they determine our conduct. We need to learn to manage them properly, especially during difficult times. If we do, God will always lift us up in due time.

Worry and affliction should never choke out your faith; they should always open a way for it to grow. Much of our lives are played out in a battle between faith and feelings, each fighting to take control of the steering wheel. Ultimately, we get to choose who drives our lives.

When we truly believe in the Word of God, believe that He is for us, that He can do abundantly more than we could ever ask or imagine, that we are made righteous in Christ and empowered by His Holy Spirit, then we can choose to act according to this faith.

Once we are fully persuaded that God cannot lie, our faith overcomes our feelings, and we begin to thank God for His blessings, even before we have received them in the natural.

God will always work when we act according to faith over how we feel.

**Something to think about**

*List a few areas of your life, and ask yourself whether faith in Jesus or feelings are driving each area (for example: relationships, finances, health, etc.)*

*For those areas currently being led by feelings, what could you change to express faith in Jesus, rather than your own understanding?*
As human beings, it seems that we can allow fear to take hold in relation to pretty much anything.

Acrophobia: the fear of heights  
Trypanophobia: the fear of needles  
Claustrophobia: the fear of enclosed spaces  
Arachinutyrophobia: the fear of peanut butter sticking to the roof of the mouth...

Whether we have a fear common to many people, or a particular disliking of peanut butter, fear can paralyse us emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and even physically.

Gideon is a classic example of how fear can do this to us. God had chosen and equipped him to deliver the people of Israel from the abuse of the Midianites. When the angel arrives to talk with Gideon, he finds him hiding in a winepress, and he is afraid to step out into all that God had called him to. Throughout his story, he constantly displays fear, anxiety and doubt as he tests God by asking him to perform signs, rather than simply trusting God’s promise and acting on it. When he eventually does put his trust in God and obeys in action, the Israelites are freed from years of oppression.

We were not called to live under such fear, but we have been given a spirit of power, love and a sound mind. No one and nothing deserves your fear, except God Himself. Fear is actually a type of negative worship. Don’t hide what you have, but rather, fearlessly invest your talents, time and finances because God is with you every step of the way.

**Something to think about**

What is it that you are fearing? How can you give this to God, trust Him to handle it, then take it on fearlessly?

**A prayer for the day**

Jesus, I thank You that You took everything that separated me from You upon Yourself, and defeated it upon the cross. I thank You that You have given me a spirit of power, love and self-control, and that You have equipped me for such a time as this to reach all of the potential that You have put within me. If You are for me, nothing can come against me.

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2 Timothy 1:3-8 (ESV)

3 I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. 4 As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. 5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. 6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God,
Gratitude is an indispensable virtue and a powerful expression of faith that brings peace to the heart. The power of gratitude is intensified when we give thanks in advance, as Jesus did many times before seeing the miracle for which He was asking the Father. God has given us a promise that while the righteous may fall and suffer, they will rise again and find deliverance from Him. The righteous person (someone made righteous not by their own works, but by their faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ) can be confident that victory is waiting right around the corner.

In Psalm 103, David writes about how blessing God’s name is of great benefit to him and how it rescues him. However, in order for him to have written this, he must have first experienced everything he mentions: iniquities, illnesses, and the sensation of being in a deep pit.

Each one of us could write our own psalm about difficulties we have faced and how God gave us victory. Perhaps you are going through a testing time in the present. Do not lose faith. Keep your head up, your eyes fixed on the promises of God, and thank Him for them.

Our love for God is demonstrated when we worship Him for who He is, our Father and powerful Creator. God is the same yesterday, today and forever, worthy of our worship no matter what our present circumstances may look like.

Something to think about

Spend some time in prayer, thanking God for who He is and all that He has done for you.
We’ve all seen movies, or read books, that show loving fathers laying down their own comforts in order to help their kids reach their full potential whilst enjoying the journey. Perhaps you’ve even been lucky enough to have an earthly father who raised you in the same selfless and caring way.

If our earthly fathers are capable of this kind of love, how much more does our perfect Father in heaven want us to enjoy our lives in relationship with Him?

God has given us many gifts, and although He calls us to serve others and lay our lives down to partner with Him in seeing the reality of Heaven established here on Earth, we are also supposed to enjoy the journey!

After the initial sense of freedom and ecstasy we may have experienced when we first decided to follow Jesus, we can sometimes make the mistake of allowing ourselves to become stressed out and feel overly burdened with all the demands that seem to be associated with following Jesus. We then find it difficult to disconnect from all of our cares and concerns, but the Word of God calls this vanity! (Ecclesiastes 1:13-14).

Our jobs, our families, our health, our church community: these are just some of the gifts God has given us. Whilst glorifying Him with them, we can enjoy, have fun and find happiness from them too! Doing so is an expression of faith than He is who He says He is, our loving Father.

**Something to think about**

*Are there any gifts that God has given you that you are treating more like chores or unhealthy burdens?*

*Spend some time in prayer thanking God for these gifts again, and ask Him to help you shift your perspective so that you can enjoy these gifts.*
Yesterday we thought about the gifts that God has given us and how we should enjoy them. All of these are nothing compared to the most beautiful and valuable gift God has ever given us, one for which we cannot be thankful enough: Jesus!

Yes, the salvation, grace, mercy and love given to us through His life, death and resurrection are what open the doors to everything else.

Jesus made it possible for us to enjoy this greatest gift of all in two ways:

1) The eternal life waiting for us
2) The abundant life He grants us to enjoy in the present

He defeated Satan, who seeks to steal, kill and destroy all purpose and joy in our lives, so that we may have life, and have it to the full!

Don’t wait any longer.

A prayer for the day

Fearlessly say: “Jesus, I welcome You into my mind and heart. Today, right now, I take the greatest step of faith. I want to be born again, to learn from You, to be filled with the joy that is beyond understanding. I receive You as my Lord and Saviour”
The Main Ingredient

Erick Bernabé Barrondo García is a Guatemalan racewalker who competes in 20km and 50km walk events. In the 2012 London Olympics, he won the silver medal for the Men’s 20km Racewalk. It was the first Olympic medal won in Guatemalan history.

The road to an Olympic podium is never easy for anybody, but for Erick there were extra challenges. Coming from a background of severe financial difficulty, he faced hunger many times whilst many other athletes had dieticians preparing meals for them! He could not even afford to buy running shoes in his size, so he had to use a pair of his mother’s shoes at first. However, he had a dream in his heart, faith that it would become a reality, and determination to put action to his faith. He made history.

In today’s passage, we read about Hannah who was barren, and yet ended up giving birth to the prophet Samuel. After making a vow that she would give her son to God if He allowed her to have one, Eli the priest approached her and told her to go in peace and receive what she had asked for. Similar to Erick the racewalker, Hannah’s chances of seeing her dream become a reality looked unlikely to those around her. Yet, after receiving the promise of a son, her faith drove her to get up and keep walking into the promise over her life.

Something to think about

What dreams has God placed in your heart?

Are you allowing any limitations or obstacles to decrease your faith level, or are you putting your faith fully in God?

Ephesians 3:20 (ESV)

20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us.

(Further reading: 1 Samuel 1:1-20 ESV)

Stop crying, get up, keep walking, recover your sense of purpose, and allow your faith to drive you to success.

Ephesians 3:20 (ESV)

20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us.

(Further reading: 1 Samuel 1:1-20 ESV)
Have you ever had somebody do something extremely generous and selfless for you, purely because they cared about you and wanted to express that love for you? For example, perhaps they bought you a spontaneous gift, or did a favour for you that changed your day (or life!) for the better. Now imagine finding out later that they only did it so they could later manipulate you into doing something for them. The results of their actions would actually end up negatively impacting your relationship with them, because motivations reveal the heart, and the heart matters to us, just as it does to God.

To have faith for something that isn’t grounded in love can be a powerful distraction that diverts us to big but negative consequences. There are many examples throughout history of people who had faith for something, but with wrong motivations. For example, Hitler. His motivations were dreadful, and his vision for society certainly wasn’t grounded in love, yet he had had faith that it could become a reality.

God’s Word assures us that faith which operates through love is what has the most value in our lives. Love is vital in order for us to do God’s work, because God IS love. He has given us talents and gifts for the purpose of loving and serving His people, helping them and us to grow in intimacy with Him.

1 Corinthians 13:1-2 shows clearly that without love, we are nothing. The Greek word used here is agape, which is the word used to refer to the limitless, selfless, unconditional love of God. When our faith is motivated by agape, is motivated by God. Whenever it isn’t, we are following something else entirely.

A prayer for the day

Think about the vision, dreams and goals that you have. Are they grounded in and motivated by the unconditional love of God?

Wherever you discover that they are not, come humbly before God and pray for help to change your heart towards being motivated fully by His love.
As we get close to the end of this 40 day devotional, we hope that through scripture and devotion, you have learnt more about the power of life-giving, soul-transforming faith in Christ and how it can move your world forward! It is our essence. We are people of faith, and this faith expresses itself in LOVE. Although there is much in all of our lives that is still “hoped for” and “not seen”, we can have a confident hope, a genuine tangible substantial belief, that Jesus is at work in us, our circumstances and those around us. He is with you today! Now the challenge is to put it into action. Remember, as James teaches us: Faith without works is dead.

"Think practically for a moment: who can you love today? Perhaps it might be simple as sending someone an encouraging text. Perhaps you could buy a colleague a coffee. Perhaps there’s someone struggling whom you could visit – in hospital, at home or at work.

Love involves risk! It’s daring. It’s adventurous. It’s exciting. It’s costly! Go out and show Christ’s love to someone today. Don’t sit back. You never know what might happen, as you sacrifice a little bit of yourself to help somebody else!"
Final Thoughts

Matthew 6:5-15 (ESV)

5 “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

7 “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 Pray then like this:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

And so let us finish as we began: with the ultimate prayer of faith that Jesus teaches us to pray - His kingdom come! As we’ve seen, faith is never just for us. The fruit of our faith brings heaven to earth; bridging the gap between God’s beautiful, precious kingdom and our lost and broken world. As the people of God, we can live boldly and sacrificially knowing that while we are in this world, we are no longer of this world. We are ambassadors for Christ, making His appeal to a world that desperately needs Him. As you step out in faith, you step into your God-given purpose and continue your journey to becoming everything you were created to be.

Pray today as Jesus teaches us in our passage. Pray boldly. Pray confidently. Pray passionately. Let’s believe God is going to do a miraculous work in our generation, awakening His people and reviving us by FAITH.