

In our class last week we looked at some of the characters in Hebrew 11's Hall of Faith. Specifically, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, and Moses. They all had to make the difficult choice: give in to what they could see, or trust God with what they couldn't see. What **sacrifice** might have been involved in the choice they made?

If we are to be women who extinguish the enemy's flaming arrows it means:

Choosing to live with steadfast confidence in God and His promises for us
Walking forward in truth as revealed in His Word and His personal directives for our life that aligns with it

By His power, push past the fear or doubts that seek to paralyze us in insecurity, choose instead to follow God's leading, trusting Him to take care of all else.

In reading Paul's description of faith as a protector against the enemy's attacks, we might think that we humans somehow have the power to protect ourselves if we have the right amount of faith. But, consider this:

- Faith does not control God. It doesn't make God do something. When we show faith it gives us access to what God has already intended to do for us.
- Faith does not focus on *our* depth of belief nor how much belief *we* have. It focuses on how trustworthy, true, and loyal the object of that belief (God) has proven Himself to be.
- Luke 17:5-6 "The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith". He replied, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea', and it will obey you." NIV

If you are struggling to move forward in obedience to God, you do not need bigger faith!! You just need to realize how BIG your GOD is! The more faithful and strong you believe Him to be, the more willing you will be to depend on Him. Your level of faith will always be tied to your **perception** of God. *If your perception of Him is **faulty**, your faith will be faulty.* You don't need more faith; you need a more complete and correct view of the faithfulness of your God.

Let's look up Matthew 6:30; 8:26; 16:8 The size of the disciples faith is directly related to their view of Jesus. He wants them to have a clearer understanding of His ability and His care for them. Not focusing on faith; but focusing on Him.

In thinking about a step of faith you've been personally considering throughout this study, what do your actions (your obedience or lack of) say about how you truly feel about the faithfulness and integrity of God? Circle your answer.

- I trust that God is powerful and strong, loves me and will take care of me.
- I believe God is powerful and strong, but question His love and care for me.
- I guess I don't really believe He's all powerful, and not sure He'll protect me

Choose one OT verse or one NT verse from below. Write the words that speak about the faithfulness of God. Include this in your prayers this week as a reminder of how trustworthy your God is.

Deuteronomy 7:9

Psalm 36:5

Isaiah 25:1

2 Thessalonians 3:3

1 Corinthians 10:13

2 Timothy 2:13

We can never know our level of faith by how we feel, only by what we are willing to do in obedience to God. Faith then is acting like God is telling the truth.

The truth of God is what makes having faith in God worth it. Without truth, we have nothing solid to hang our shield of faith on. So knowing the truth of God and the truth about God as revealed in His Word is critical if we want to live out our faith responsibly, if we want to experience the benefits of being protected by our shields.

Let's open our Bibles and read the story of Simon and Jesus. Luke 5:1-7, 11.

- At the end of v2 what is Simon doing?
- How is this important to the story?
- Knowing the connection between truth and faith what is important in the statement in v4 ?
- How does Simon's answer to Jesus in v5 show us some of the "flaming arrows" he might have been dealing with?
- What did Simon say that shows he employed the shield of faith?
- What was Simon and his companions' response to what happened?

Once Simon heard Jesus' command:

- He did not allow his experience as a fisherman to keep him from obeying Jesus command
- He did not allow his disappointment from the night before to keep him from obeying Jesus command
- He did not allow his own perceptions, skills or feelings to keep him from obeying Jesus command
- He didn't allow himself to be disabled by doubt or even deep exhaustion

He'd heard the truth—the Word of God—and believed. To prove it, he went where he'd been asked to go no matter his personal feelings. Jesus had spoken and that was enough.

RESULTS: Jesus words were enough that Simon was willing to:

- dirty up nets he'd just cleaned.
- enough to row his boat from secure shores to deep waters outside of his comfort zone.
- throw the nets where he was told, when he was told

Finally, enough to follow Jesus from that point forward, wherever He might lead, for the rest of his days. Hearing God and knowing His truth matters.

Your feelings can never be the final determining factor for your actions. Feelings change and are subject to external influences. Actions done in faith must be **anchored** in something more solid and fixed than our feelings. Your enemy is always hoping you'll be **swayed** by *how you feel* instead of the *steady truth you know*. He wants instead for you to feel *insecure, unloved, incapable or afraid* ! He hopes you will be directed by them, instead of following the truth of God's Word.

How is fear keeping you from walking by faith in your life right now? Is there any way you are encouraging this fear in your life instead of fighting to overcome it? Where there is fear, the enemy is nearby, seeking to stall or paralyze you from what he knows is God's best for you. But God is there to teach, guide, and lead.

Memory Verse: 2 Timothy 1:7 "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity (fear), but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline (sound mind)."

IS THERE AN IDOL TO TEAR DOWN? Yes, the idol of *fear!* An idol is something that has more sway over us than God. Tear this idol down! It is not from God.

What Did God Show Us Today?

- 1) When we show faith it gives us *access* to what God has already intended to do for us. It does not control God or make Him do anything.
- 2) Your level of faith will always be tied to your perception of God.
- 3) The *truth* of God is what makes having *faith* in God worth it.

Tell any part that fear has played in keeping you from walking by faith in your life.

Word Study:

- 1) anchored: to hold fast, bind, support, provide stability or security. Her faith was not anchored in truth but influenced by changing feelings instead.
- 2) faulty: have defects, not perfect, has errors, not to be trusted, not reliable. Depending on one's feelings to make decisions is not a reliable way to decide.
- 3) perception: understanding by using the senses, awareness or recognition through the senses. Our perception of the truth of God must be based on a more complete and correct view of the faithfulness of our God.
- 4) sacrifice: the giving up of something of value for the sake of something considered as having more or higher value. We make sacrifices in order to follow God.
- 5) swayed: to cause to lean or change, to be influenced by our mind or emotions or another person's opinion. The enemy wants us to be swayed by emotions of fear, insecurity, feeling unloved or not capable.