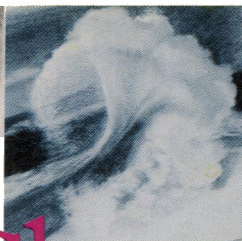




FAITH



to Change
the
World

Dr. Lester Sumrall

Faith to Change the World

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by
Dr. Lester Sumrall



HARRISON HOUSE
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *King James Version* of the Bible.

Faith to Change the World

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Faith to Change the World

Faith to change the world!

That's a little audacious, wouldn't you say? Faith not just to bless your chickens in the backyard. Faith not just to help your car run. But faith to change the world!

There is a potential in faith that can change the world. The world is changeable. It needs changing. And you're the one to do it!

It is possible that no one ever has released the total power available to him through faith. And that's saying something. Perhaps nobody ever has been totally dedicated to this use of faith—grappling with faith, struggling with faith, until they understand it and know it and reach out to change the world in which we live. You might be that one.

The Power of Faith

Natural man through natural science can explode atomic bombs, releasing megatons of destructive energy. He calls that power—possibly, as far as he knows, power at its ultimate.

But faith like Elijah had when he sealed the heavens from moisture for three years is more powerful than atomic energy. Faith like Elijah had when he prayed and ended the drought with instant and abundant rain demonstrated power beyond natural man's ability to control or even analyze.

Man can push a button and operate mighty machinery. But Moses through faith, with a lift of his hand and the speaking of a word, caused the Red Sea to open. The waters stood up and congealed on either side, the seabed dried, and more than two million people with their herds and flocks walked through without sinking knee-deep in mud. That's the operation of faith!

Faith remains to this day the greatest source of energy available to

mankind. Christians today need to learn how to release the phenomenal energy created within us by the thing we call faith. For God does not release His energy without our exercising faith.

Every human on earth has a capacity for world-changing faith built into his tripartite structure (spirit, soul, and body). No one is excluded. Anyone who will accept it can have a relationship with God that can change his world. God gives to everyone who will receive Him the measure of faith. (Rom. 12:3.) This faith releases the blessings of God.

Yet people sometimes think like this: *So-and-so should be blessed. He's gone to church for twenty years.*

God's blessings don't come because someone attended church twenty years. They come when you release something inside you that is a living, dynamic power and force and strength. That something is faith.

In this book we will deal with faith so strongly until you can say: "My faith is strengthened. My faith is heightened. My faith is made a living source of strength in God."

Decide Now to Take These Steps Toward Faith to Change Your World:

1. Know what faith is.

God is not ignorant. He cannot condone ignorance. God is intelligence. He wants us to know. He wants us to seek out and find truth. If we go our own way and don't do it, we ostracize ourselves from the mightiness of God and the glories of the Almighty.

God's Word says, *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge* (Hos. 4:6). The Hebrew word translated *destroyed* means *cut off*. God's people are cut off from His blessings for lack of knowledge.

In any land where there is ignorance of God and His blessings, there is trouble. God cannot bless unbelief. Unbelief is there because the people do not have sufficient knowledge. Knowledge brings release from ignorance. Knowledge helps people know what they can receive from God.

It is up to us to learn how to release our faith, to learn how to move with God, to learn how to say: "Lord, I know You can and will do it. I'm

as good as Abraham, Moses, or anyone else back there. I'm a child of the King, and I'm going to release the mighty power available to me through faith."

2. Accept what God says as Absolute Truth.

If you cannot accept what God says as truth, you cannot enter the realm of faith. When you walk in the faith realm, you remove yourself from this world—what the eyes see, the ears hear, the fingers touch—and place yourself into another world, the world of faith. In that world you must accept the Word of God, or you won't make it there. You must know that God is truth; He is not a liar. If God says it, it is just that way.

Moses walked in that realm of faith where God's Word takes precedence over what the eyes see. The waves of the Red Sea splashed horizontally against the land at his feet. It took a strength and a force for him to say, "Waves, stop going east and west! Go vertically right now! I'm ready!" They had to obey him.

"Oh," someone says, "I don't believe that really happened."

Anyone who doesn't believe God could and would do that is relieved from the whole subject. He won't believe God can do miracles in his business. He won't believe God can do miracles in his home.

Even religion can bind. Some religions are so full of lies people are in complete bondage. But when you come to the Word of God, it begins with freedom, it ends with freedom, and all in the middle is freedom.

To operate in the realm of faith, you must accept God's Word as absolute truth, even in the midst of contradictory circumstances. The three Hebrew children did in a fiery furnace. Daniel did in a den of hungry lions. In both cases faith in God changed what the natural eyes saw and the natural ears heard. They had a relationship with God that knew Him as Absolute Truth.

You can have a relationship with God so that you can speak and it will be done. You can speak for yourself a better job or a better relationship in your home, and it will have to be because you speak with a force and a power greater than the atomic bomb.

God wants us to have a reserve of strength only He can give. Man cannot give it. Almost everything in our society is against it. Our materialistic society says trust in that which is material.

God spoke the universe into being without anything material. He spoke, and planets were. He created them with the power and strength of His mouth. (Gen. 1; Heb. 11:3.)

We can operate in this realm, too.

You may not realize it, but your mouth is your downgoing or your upbringing. You are what you confess. You are what you confess in secret.

If you say in secret, "I'm nothing," the devil jumps on your shoulder and says, "Boy, is that ever the truth! You're no good. I've been telling you that all the time."

But if you accept God's Word as Absolute Truth, you know that He says, Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he (Jesus) shall appear, we shall be like him (1 John 3:2).

That's a different world—the world of faith which can change your world.

3. Realize that faith is an act.

Faith is not hope. You can *hope* to be a millionaire and die a pauper. But you cannot have *faith* to be a millionaire and die a pauper. Hope folds its hands and dreams, but faith is not the same as hope. Faith is an act. With faith there is always movement.

Faith says, "I have faith for a million dollars. I'll pick up a few here, and I'll take a few there. (Hey, it's growing!) And I'll take a few more here."

Hope sits on a stool and says, "I'll just sit here, and God will do something."

When you have faith, you have action. Faith begins an operation in God.

Faith is a force living within you. It's not really you. It's something else—something good, something precious, something wonderful, something God wants you to have.

Faith is more than an idea, more than an emotion.

I don't know that Abraham "felt" a spiritual thing between

Beersheba and Mt. Moriah as he took his son to offer him up. I do know the devil tormented him every step of the way. But Abraham had a thing in him called faith, and that faith was walking. It was moving and going the right direction. Faith built the altar. It laid the wood on the altar. It placed the fire upon the altar. Faith reached for the son of promise to make him the sacrifice. Movement!

When God saw that tremendous movement, He said: "Stop! I've provided a ram in the thicket for the sacrifice. Now look around to the north country a few hundred yards. That's Golgotha. Look at those three crosses."

They weren't there yet, but that was what faith had to see because Jesus said,

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad (John 8:56).

Abraham saw God give His Son because Abraham acted in faith.

Faith is an inexhaustible subject. I'm trusting this book will help you know faith better than I know faith, that you will begin where I leave off and build on the structure of knowledge God has poured through my being.

2

Obtaining Faith

I sincerely believe it is possible that no human ever has delved into the depths of the potentialities of faith. That means it's an open door for you and me to reach into.

It is so natural to lean upon that which is nearest to us, our flesh. It is so natural to rely upon our minds; it's so close by, so available. But to reach into the realm of faith is to reach into that which is unknown. God did not give Abraham a road map. Every day Abraham had to say, "Which way, Lord?" Yet the faith life is the greatest life on earth.

I would not write some of the things I'm sharing in this book, except we are living in the last days. God said through the prophet Daniel that people who know their God shall be strong and do exploits in the last days. God also said through Joel and Peter that in the last days He would pour out of His Spirit upon *all flesh*. We are about to witness the greatest display of God's power that man has ever known. God is looking for people who believe His Word.

Teaching the faith life shakes up some people. They don't want to live there. They want to live as close to material security as they can. But what will happen if it's all washed away?

I believe I'm saying this prophetically: It is God's time for faith to work. It is God's time for His miracle power to proceed.

Here are some primary principles you need to know for faith to function properly in your life.

How to Obtain Faith

The Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul said,

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17).

So faith comes out of the Word of God.

Faith does not come from philosophy. Philosophy is related to the human, which is related to the Adamic curse and the fallen nature. Philosophy cannot bring you into unadulterated truth.

Jesus said to Simon Peter, Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven (Matt. 16:17).

Only God can give information man does not have. Jesus had just asked,

Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? (v. 13).

Some said, "John the Baptist." That's spooky—they'd just cut off his head.

Some said, "Elijah." He'd already run his course.

God doesn't do duplicates. There was only one Moses; there never will be another. There was only one Elijah; there never will be another. There is only one Lester Sumrall. There is only one you.

God is the great individualist. Every leaf on every tree in all the world has something different from any other leaf. He's a Master. This simply means that you will be a person with unique faith. Nobody will have faith like you have faith, if you reach for it, grasp it, and walk in it in Jesus' name. Living faith is obtained individually by individuals from their living relationship with God and His Word.

Testimonies related to faith inspire us. But they do not generate that force and power it takes to do the job in our own lives. That comes only out of the Word of God—by reading it, absorbing it, letting it come alive within us.

The Word of God cannot build faith within us unless we permit it to become a part of our spiritual being. It cannot be just part of our repertoire of things we've read. Some people have memorized the Bible, but they don't live good lives. Memorization of the Bible, having it in their heads, is not sufficient. The Word of God has to become a working thing—working through the born-again spirit man inside you, even out through your blood system and muscle system. When the Word of God begins to work in that way, it becomes what we call faith. It becomes part of our being. So we don't just read the Bible like we read a novel or a

newspaper and expect faith to come.

Jesus said,

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you (John 15:7).

It's not just hearing the words of the Bible; it's having the Word abide in our inner being.

Some people just pray for faith. I did that for a long time and didn't get anything. Faith does not come by praying for it.

The obtaining of great faith is not an instantaneous thing as some would like for it to be. Faith is a way of life. People look at Smith Wigglesworth's ministry and say, "Oh, he was a man who had faith," as if the Lord had given him some almost magic power. Faith is more than a display of the power of God.

I personally knew Smith Wigglesworth. We worked together. We prayed together. I visited him many times in his home in Bradford, England. He was a man of such deep devotions you could hardly get to him—spiritually, I mean. He was so far out in front of you. I never heard him say one little thing against another human. He disciplined himself so that if he had anything to say about a person, it had to be good. He didn't do that by making up his mind to do it; he did it because of what was in his heart?

You can try and try to make yourself live right—and it's hard. Once in a while you say, "Whew! I'd like to be a little bit mean just to feel good." That's not what we're talking about. A person living the life of faith does right because doing right is what he wants to do. It's his real personality. It's the flow of God within him.

Faith can be that way in you. Faith can become so automatic within you that fears, phobias, and misunderstandings don't work. They're not a part of the structure God wants you to have.

God wants each of us to obtain faith through the living Word and to do what the Word tells us to do.

How to Retain Faith

God wants us to retain the faith we get. Some people are like sieves.

You can pour in blessings two or three times a week, but they're always empty. God not only wants us to *receive* faith, He wants us to *contain* faith. It's not the faith I *did* have; it's the faith I *do* have.

There is more to faith than reaching out for something. Faith must become a part of our flesh and bone, spiritually speaking. It must become so related to us until we not only *did* have it; we *do* have it. We keep our faith by walking in the ways of God every day and by dispelling fears.

There is a pattern I live by. If the devil says, "Don't go in that room, there's a boogie man in there," I don't open the door—I kick it down! I let him know immediately that he's a liar and that I'm not afraid of that door. If you allow the devil to bring fears into you, that's the absence of faith. Faith cannot dwell where there is fear. To have the perfection of God's faith, there must be no fear of the past, present, or future. All fear must be gone.

You keep your faith by maintaining a relationship with God so that you look with the eye that sees the invisible. Anyone can see the visible; you have to see the invisible. Abraham looked for a city with foundations whose builder and maker was God. He saw the invisible. Nobody else could see it.

People of faith get on other people's nerves. My mother was a woman of faith. She spoke into being things that were not. It irritated some people because they couldn't see what she knew she was going to get; and because they couldn't see it, they didn't want to believe it.

The power of faith is the ability to see that which does not exist. It is the ability to see that which the natural man cannot see.

When we returned from the mission field a few years ago, we had nothing. When I say nothing, we had less than that—we were at double zero! We had given away a church in this country and a church in that country, so we were at zero.

Then one of my best friends, a minister of the Gospel, walked up to me and said, "Lester, you're fifty and you're finished!"

It made me so angry I said, "You're a liar!"

Then I had a talk with Jesus about it. He said, "No, you're not finished. You haven't gotten started yet. Get busy!"

So I did!

Since then there has come into being our church and the work in South Bend, Indiana, that reaches around the world through books, audio and video cassettes, personal teaching and ministry, and most amazing of all perhaps, the television ministry.

God did it all. Many are being helped and blessed today, and God gets all the glory for it. But I had to see those things when they were not there.

When God said to me, "You're going to win a million souls," I'd say, "Yes, God. I believe it! We are!" I couldn't shrink back and say, "I've never seen a million souls." If I had, we'd never get them.

Faith is the realistic power of God that says, "I have the eye that sees the invisible." No one ever yet has beheld the fullness of what God can bring to pass through the fulfillment of faith if we continue to see the invisible.

But I want to make something plain: if it is for selfishness, it won't work. Jesus made no bread for Himself; He made loaves for the hungry. He fed at one time five thousand men plus women and children. They gathered up twelve baskets of fragments. Yet we cannot find where He took one bite.

You cannot work in this faith realm with the supernatural by saying, "I'm going to make it for myself." You'll miss it. Oh, God will give you plenty. God is a good God. But if you go after it selfishly, you will be working in another domain—another world. God may want you to work there. God may be pleased with you there, but it is not the world we're talking about where God does things that are beyond yourself.

Retain your faith by continuing to see with the eye of faith. If you can't see it, you can't have it. You can only have it if you see it.

Retain your faith by continuing to hear with the ear that hears the inaudible. Nobody hears it except you. To you it's like thunder. You say, "Can't you hear it?" Others say, "I don't hear a thing." Our natural ear hears our neighbors and friends, but the ear of faith hears what God says. It's listening to another world. Faith hears that which natural man cannot hear.

Faith is the power to possess things that are beyond our natural

capabilities. Faith is a strength to feel that which the average person cannot feel. When we are ready to move into that kind of world, God is ready to move in there with us to let the strength, power, and force of faith come into being.

How to Release Faith

To be effectual, faith must be released.

Joshua released his faith, and the walls of Jericho fell. He and the children of Israel acted on the Word of God. At God's command they marched silently around the walls once each day for six days. On the seventh day they compassed the city seven times, then the priests blew their trumpets, and Joshua commanded the people to shout. At the sound of the trumpets and the shouts of the people, great stone walls crumbled!

They didn't even fall the right way. When a wall falls, it falls outwardly. Archaeologists have discovered that these walls fell inwardly. Some have said it looks as though a superhuman force drove them into the ground. Get the angels of God pushing things around, and they can push them down and in as well as out.

Hundreds of thousands visit the old walls of Jericho every year. Every time some guide gives his speech, he's really saying, "God lives! God is big! God is great! God did it! This is where the walls fell inwardly!"

Yet Joshua had to have the faith to do the marching, even to do the ridiculous. I have this saying in the front of my Bible: "If I am willing to do the ridiculous, God is ready to do the supernatural."

Most people don't want to do the ridiculous. They say, "What will my neighbors think?" When people are afraid of their neighbors, they're not in the faith picture at all.

Remember that your neighbor's head is a poor place to keep your joy. I'd rather keep my joy—put there by Jesus—in my own heart.

The greatest feats in history are the feats of faith. Take Daniel in the lion's den, for instance. How would you like to have been his guest that night? I can assure you those lions never had such a sweet night. It was so peaceful. Daniel knew the powers and the forces of faith released.

Second Kings 6:1-7 relates a remarkable feat. One of the sons of the prophets was felling a beam when an ax head flew off the handle into the river and sank to the bottom. The young student cried to his teacher, Elisha, **“Alas, master! for it was borrowed.”** Elisha cut down a stick, cast it into the water, and the iron ax head floated to the top.

It was a power beyond nature—contrary to the laws of gravity. Until you're willing to fight against the laws of nature, you're not ready to release faith.

“Oh,” people say, “that's just how it is. That's just natural.”

Faith is not limited to the natural process of things. I am a supernatural light. I was raised up from tuberculosis when the doctor gave me two hours to live. That was two hundred and forty thousand hours ago! We don't have to live by things that are natural. We can live by things that are supernatural in the power of God.

The outflowing of faith is based on God's Word beyond natural processes and beyond one's natural experience.

The Lord Jesus once told Peter to catch a fish and take money out of its mouth. (Matt. 17:27.) If He had told a farmer or a bookkeeper to do that, it would have been interesting—but to tell a fisherman!

Most would say, “I've had my fist in the mouths of a million fish, and I've never pulled out a coin yet.”

That's where faith comes in! It doesn't matter what your experience is—we're talking about something beyond experience.

Some might say, “Well, that's not the way I've found it. That's contrary to the law of supply and demand. That's not how you get money.”

If Peter had talked like that, he would not have had a miracle. The law of supply and demand says: “Take a hook. Catch a fish. Take it to the market. Sell the fish. Have money.” Peter didn't do that. He caught a fish—the first fish, not the second or third—not to eat it or sell it, but to take a coin out of its mouth sufficient to pay two men's taxes.

I know someone there that day thought he was crazy. But he acted on the Word of Jesus contrary to the nature of things and to his own experience.

The force and power of faith does the unusual.

Another time Peter had fished all night and caught nothing. (John 21:3-6.) Jesus said, "Try one more time. Put your net on the right side of the boat." Natural experience would have said to Peter, "All day and all night! I'm not going to throw that net in anymore." But he didn't go by his natural experiences. He obeyed Jesus, and he caught more fish than he'd ever seen at one time.

Faith can bring to you more than you will ever be able to get any other way, no matter how clever you are. It can bring dividends you've never dreamed of. It can bring great blessing to your life. It can bring joy. It can bring peace. It can bring the supernatural. It can bring God to you.

3

What Is Faith?

Faith is a force moving deep down in your spirit.

It is possible to grasp a head knowledge of faith without faith actually being a part of your inner being. Please get that. Many have a mental concept of faith, but it hasn't been born in the inner person. Faith must be born in the spirit of man before it is effective.

Man is a three-part being—spirit, soul, and body. (1 Thess. 5:23.) The mind is a part of the soul. Man's soulish nature, his mental faculties, can give assent to a principle of truth before his spirit comes into possession of it.

Christian parents, for example, can teach a child the facts of Christianity before they are born within his heart. You ask the little fellow, “Are you a Christian?” He replies, “Yes.” “How do you know you are a Christian?” “Mommy told me so.” That does not make him a Christian. He is a Christian when he is born again on the inside.

A seminary professor can elaborate on a Biblical truth and the science of that spiritual truth to students who receive the facts in their minds, but not in their spirits. So all they have is head knowledge of that truth.

Faith to change the world is an inner force—a power beyond ourselves; a power not just ascribed to in the outer court of our minds, but born alive in the inner court of our spirits.

God alone is the giver of such faith.

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Romans 12:3

God specifically says that to “every man that is among you” (every

Christian) He has given a starting point in faith. We don't have to generate the first little bit. God gives to each of us a measure of faith with which to begin. What we do with it after that is our own prerogative. How it grows and increases has to do with the way we handle it—not with God. God gives us the starting place. It is up to you and me to pursue it and say, “This faith—I love it! I like it! I will cause it to grow!”

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.

Ephesians 2:8

We come to God through faith—through an instrument of belief, of trust, of accepting. Yet many get that far and close the door saying, “I've got it all.” No. They just got in the door. The treasure is on the inside. They haven't reached the heaps, and heaps, and heaps.

Not only do we initially come to God through faith, but all other manifestations of the majesty and glory of God come the same way.

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

What a tremendous statement! He had died to everything that was Paul. He had died to earthly ambitions. He had died to the seeking of personal treasure. He said: “I am crucified. Just as Christ gave up His all on the cross, I have given everything. Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.” He would not have been able to say, “I am crucified with Christ, ” except by this strength, this power, this force, this anointing called faith. Faith was the force and power of coming into such a life. For he said, “I live it by the faith of the Son of God.”

I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

John 12:46

Faith is a power that removes darkness. When we believe, darkness is dispelled—darkness of superstition, of misconception, of error. When we get faith in our lives, we get on the truth road. Faith brings us out of any

kind of darkness into the glorious truth of God. We are the children of light. Faith is the place of light. When we move in faith, we move into light. God wants us to live in the light.

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:1

We are justified by faith. Justified means “just-as-if-I’d” never sinned. We are made clean before the Lord by faith—not by crawling on our knees or doing penance. We are brought into a relationship with God by the power of faith. We are justified by belief. That makes faith such a strong thing.

Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Peter 1:5

You ask, “How do I live for God?”

Our security is in faith. We are kept every day by the power of God through faith. It is our faith that retains within us the strength to say *no* to the devil and *yes* to the Lord Jesus Christ.

***And his name through faith in his name* hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.**

Acts 3:16

Faith in the name of Jesus had brought about a mighty miracle. When we have faith in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we can expect the miracle power of God to function. Faith is a power.

No Condemnation

When you get into this message of faith, you can, if you don't watch it, bring yourself into condemnation by thinking, *I don't have the faith I ought to have.*

Faith is not a condemnation message.

Remember, faith is a growing thing. (2 Thess. 1:3.) Rather than

saying you don't have enough, dig around what you have. Make it grow. Rather than saying you don't have enough, add something to the faith you have on the principles of faith you will learn in this book.

The goals of faith are challenging, but never discouraging. When people say, "I'm discouraged about faith," they're not working in faith; they're working in something else. We're not talking about something that makes you sad; we're talking about something that makes you glad!

Don't speak negatively about the amount of faith you have. If you have any, you're blessed! So take what you've got and start using it. When you have a dollar in your pocket and you need five, you don't curse the one you have. You say, "I've got one. Thank God for that."

You do have a measure of faith. Learn how to use it progressively and productively to make it come alive and bless the world.

Faith Defined?

Faith is like life and like love. They are indefinable, but enjoyable. You may not be able to define an egg, but you can enjoy it. You may not be able to define faith completely and absolutely, but you can certainly enjoy it. It is as enjoyable as white milk from a black cow who ate green grass. You may not be able to follow the line and interpret everything that happened, but the milk tastes good. So it is with faith. It is refreshing, alive, light, glorious. And we must use it.

Faith is the greatest power generated on the planet earth and is the number one source of unused energy. That to me is a terrible thing. Unused power! If just the people reading this book would wake up every day and say, "I will release my faith today. I will release my trust in God today. I will release the force Abraham and Moses had within them. I will release the thing that kept Joseph alive in prison for ten years. I will release it today," an absolutely invincible power and force would be released in the earth.

Faith is positive. Faith knows. Faith is sure. If you don't have that aspect of it, it won't work for you. But it wants to work. It wants to work in your life and mine. Most of our troubles come because we doubt, or falter, or say maybe. When you get into that area, you are not in faith. If you are not sure that you're sure, you are not in the area of faith.

Faith flows from God. It is the divine essence. Both faith and love flow from the heart of God. If you can get hold of both of them, you will have life upon this earth without limitations.

I told a group of Bible school students: "Doctor Oral Roberts began as a poor person. His father was a humble preacher of the Gospel. Yet through a strength called faith, hundreds of millions of dollars have come through his hands. He had nothing natural to bring it about, no human relationships. It was the sheer strength of inward faith. He commanded that thing to come alive."

But don't begin on the wrong end of faith. Faith is a life.

A young pastor of a little church came to me so frustrated he didn't know what to do. He said, "I'm ashamed to see my people. Last Friday I stood and prophesied that by the next Monday I would have a house and it would be paid for. Monday came and I didn't have anything. I'm scared to go back to church."

"Sit down," I said. "Had you ever prophesied before?"

"No."

I said, "Why didn't you keep it to yourself then? Test it one time. Every car on the road was tested before it came out of the factory. You're still in the factory. Why didn't you give it one test?"

Give it a test. Before you tell the Lord you want a seven-tiered cake, get a doughnut out of Him.

The devil wants to destroy you, you see. He wants you to ask for something beyond your faith, so he can stop you.

Our faith toward God must be simple. Take it layer upon layer, blessing upon blessing, anointing upon anointing. Tomorrow you believe for something you could not believe for today, and you reach out.

If I had not left my home when I was 17 with only 65 cents, I would not be able to serve God as I am today. If I had not left this country in 1934 with only \$12 to go around the world and preach the Gospel, I would not have a television station today. But if you'd told me in those days to buy a television station, I'd have run so fast I'd have been in Africa before you caught up with me! I wasn't ready for it.

We have to get ready for things. That's what this book is all about—

to teach how to be ready for what God wants to do for us.

I believe you are reading this book because you want to be ready. I believe you want faith to change the world. But you have to set your spirit to it and say, "Lord, I'm going to learn it every day. And I'm going to move with it. And when it doesn't seem to work, I'm not going to accuse God. I'm going to say, "Devil, where are you? You're messing around here somewhere. You get out of this. I rebuke you. Go! "

Don't blame things on God. Blame them on the one who causes them. Resist the devil; he will flee from you, and you will have victory. (James 4:7.)

Subtle. Simple.

Faith is the most subtle power on earth because natural man cannot see it. It slips up on him. What person living in Ur of the Chaldees would have believed that by traveling up the fertile crescent to another land Abraham could become such a hero of faith that four thousand years later the whole world would be talking about him?

Faith is a tremendous force. If it were easy to handle and easy to define, many more people would have it.

Yet we say faith is simple. And it *is* simple. But it is "simple-complex." Men who work in electronics tell me electronics is simple. I appreciate what they say. But when I consider the electronics maze I think, *I'm glad somebody understands it. I don't. I'm just blessed that I can put on a microphone.* We don't want faith to be that way in your life. We want faith to be reduced to simplicity as far as we can.

If I were a person of no experience, I would have to write this book in an academic way from what others have said and done. But this is not an academic presentation. Faith functions in my life.

Wherever I go, people ask, "Will you teach me about your faith?" I am taken by surprise because I don't feel that way about myself. But whether I especially like it or not, this generation has branded me as a person of faith. If that be true, we had better study the subject together. We had better look into it and discover all the things that should be discovered and put them into action to change ourselves first, then our families, our communities, our nation, and then the world. This is God's

What Is Faith?

business, Heaven's business, faith's business.

4

Faith Unlimited

Faith has no limitations. You are the only person who can limit faith in your life.

It is the devil who wants you to say: “My wife is to blame.” “My husband is to blame.” “My parents are to blame.” “My children are to blame.”

No! You are to blame! You are the possessor of your own faith. You are the extender of your faith. You are the projector of your faith.

Faith knows no limitations! It is possible that no human, including Moses and Abraham, has gone to the perimeter of the possibilities of faith in his own life. That means every human who ever lived could have gone further had he wanted to, had he given himself to it, had he permitted his insides to reach out again and again, saying, “I’m reaching for something.”

You usually get what you reach for. Check and see what you have, because that’s what you’ve reached for up to this moment. But from this moment you can reach for something huge. Faith knows no limitations! You are not limited as to what you can receive through the power and force of faith! God has placed no limitations to confine you in any area.

All you can believe for, you can obtain. You can get it if you will say, “Lord, I will not be limited. I will not be limited by my own thinking. I will not be limited by my own feelings. I will release myself under the structure of faith. And I will have it.” Then you will get it.

No Boundaries

Faith knows no boundaries. We often think faith has walls. It does not. The power and blessings of God refuse to be circumvented, held down, or held back by boundaries.

Faith knows no racial boundaries. Chinese, African, European—

God loves everyone equally. The Bible was written through people we call Asians, not by north Europeans. So the Bible is not a European book. Neither is it an Asian book. It is a God book!

Faith knows no economic boundaries. It is just as wonderful for a child to ask God for a dollar and get it as it is for a father to ask God for fifty and get it. Both are an answer and a movement of divine faith.

The poorest can have faith. People often think, *Because I am poor, I can't do this or that.* That's a lie! Some of those who have accomplished the greatest economic feats began with no securities of any kind. They created something as they moved through the principles of faith. Nothing could hold them back.

The wealthiest can have faith. A man with fifty million dollars can put faith to work just as easily as someone can with two dollars. It makes no difference with God.

Wherever you are on the economic ladder, don't compare yourself with others saying, "I'm going to get as much as he has." That's not the system. It is your believing God for what you need in that specific moment. If you compare yourself with others and say, "I'm going to get what he's got," then God may say, "But that's not good for you. That won't bless you. Let Me bless you with what you need." Turn your faith loose in your own life. Then faith works.

Faith knows no social limitations. God can bless socialites and cause them to meet and influence people. God can bless convicts and make them a blessing in jail. It does not matter where you are socially. In your home faith can work. On your job faith can work. In the hospital faith can move. In the prison house faith can move. Faith invades and pervades all societies. Faith is not limited to anyone, anywhere. You can take it wherever you go.

No religion can make a boundary for your faith. Faith jumps religious fences. Some think that unless you belong to a certain group you cannot move in faith. That is not true. A Catholic can have faith. A Presbyterian can have faith. A Pentecostal can have faith. You can belong to any group and have faith. Or, you can belong to those same groups and have nothing. The source of life and faith is not any group; it is God. God recognizes no denominations. God reacts to people. Jesus loves people. He wants to bless people. And He wants to increase your faith.

The powers of faith will never be circumscribed by anything human, anything natural, anything economic, anything sociological, anything religious, anything denominational. Faith knows no boundaries! Now if you won't get that, you won't get faith. If you don't believe that, you won't ever have faith.

Faith refuses to sit underneath while someone sits on top of it. Faith is a runner. It's a leader, always in front. To stay up with it, you have to move with all of your might.

Faith refuses to recognize boundaries. So in faith you love everybody. You accept the power of God wherever it is.

Some say, "Oh, that's not the power of God. It didn't happen in my church." What does someone's church have to do with it? Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

The power of God is God's love, and God's love is everywhere. Open your spiritual being and say, "Lord, I'm going to trust. I'm going to have the right attitude. I'm going to learn."

Remember, faith has no limitations. (That's big!) You set all the boundaries your faith has. Cut them loose! Break them down! Burn them up! Then faith can move in areas you never before realized.

No Compromise

Faith accepts no compromise.

Politics compromise. Many religions compromise. Tens of thousands of pastors preach what they know people like. But faith knows no compromise.

When you get into a feeling of compromise, you are not in faith. You're in doubt and in fear. Faith knows no fear.

Let the waves roar! Christ says, "Peace. Be still."

Let the demoniacs scream! Christ says, "Sit down. Give him a coat. He's naked. It's all taken care of."

Faith refuses to say, "I'll do this if you'll do that." Faith moves without compromise. It knows the truth. It lives in truth. It projects truth.

Faith wants to be right in the middle of the Word of God!

Faith knows no arbitration.

Faith doesn't "deal." You don't say, "Listen, I'll have a little faith if you'll have a little doubt mixed in." God says, "No. Nothing doing. Faith is pure."

Denominations compromise to fit the times in which they live. Faith is the same today as it was in Abraham's day.

In all the operations of faith recorded in the Bible, there are no failures. The three Hebrew children didn't come out of the fiery furnace scorched. Faith works. Faith succeeds. The Bible records no defeats related to faith.

There is no cowardice related to pure faith. The history of the martyrs shows that faith dies joyfully. Faith sings on its way to the burning flames of persecution.

John Bunyon was imprisoned twelve years for preaching on a street corner. Out of his dungeon prison came what may be the most powerful book ever written, except the Bible, *The Pilgrim's Progress to Heaven*.

Faith knows only superb fulfillment.

Faith lives in joy. If you're not happy, you may not be in faith at all. It may be doubt. It may be fear. Faith lives in total joy. Faith sings in your heart, no matter what assaults your soul.

You may say, "My, what a lot of words about faith."

I say, "No tongue has ever been able to give the full and complete definition of faith."

5

Faith Measured

There are degrees of faith. There are measurements of faith.

The Word of God teaches that every man is given **“the measure of faith”** when he is born again. (Rom. 12:3.) After that his **“measure of faith”** is his to do with as he will. Some people, ten years later, still have the same amount, or less. They have done nothing with it. Though this is often the case, it is subnormal behavior according to God's will for the Christian. His plan for our spiritual lives calls for development and growth of the measure of faith.

Faith grows and develops in the same ways our physical bodies grow and develop—by eating good food and exercising properly. The food that faith thrives on is the Word of God (1 Pet. 2:2; Rom. 10:17), and the faith in our hearts is to be exercised through regular use.

Every day that you don't use faith, it shrinks. If you were to leave your legs unused, they would weaken and diminish in size. So it is with faith. Faith is a commodity for use. It is not something to be put into a little golden box with the lid snapped shut while its owner announces, “I've got faith!” Faith is of no value to us unless it is used.

The Bible gives several measurements of faith. Here are some of them:

Weak Faith

And being not weak in faith... (Rom. 4:19).

Sometimes we discriminate because a person doesn't have a lot of faith. We push him down. If he's got any faith at all, thank God for it!

Yet I am sure there are times when God wants to do something of a tremendous nature through men who are not able to do it because of the weakness of their faith.

Don't let your faith be weak. Let your faith do something that will make it strong.

Little Faith

And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him,

And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.

And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful,

O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

Matthew 8:23-26

They had faith; they were out there! Most of the folks weren't even there. We laugh at them and say, "Oh, they didn't have much faith," when we weren't there.

Sometimes we ridicule a man because he doesn't exercise faith; but if we were in his boots, we might be in the same mess! He may be going through something harder than we've been into yet. Don't hasten to down him. If he's got a little faith, say, "Lord, help him to add some more to the faith he has. Help him to do something with it."

Thank God for the "little faith." But don't stay that way. Let your faith grow.

Growing Faith

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly... (2 Thess. 1:3).

Here we find a growing faith. Your faith can increase until the time you go home to be with God. Every day of your life talk to yourself and ask, "Am I growing in faith? Is my faith growing?" If it isn't, work on it.

Faith grows with proper food and exercise.

Strong Faith

He (Abraham) staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

Romans 4:20, 21

Thank God for strong faith! It just stands like a mountain. It stands, and stands, and stands!

Great Faith

The Lord Jesus said that a certain person had great faith. That's certainly better than weak faith or little faith.

And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

Matthew 8:5-10

He could have said it this way, "I have not found such big faith in church. I had to go out to the pagans to find it." This man was a Roman, an officer in the Roman army.

Sometimes you find real raw faith in a place you weren't expecting to find it, in a person you didn't expect to have it. You say, "How did faith get here?" Well, faith cannot be circumscribed or circumvented. God puts faith in any heart that's open to it.

The Lord Jesus Himself marvelled at this man's great faith. You say,

“What was so great about it?” It was great because it believed in a word. The Jews believed in rubbing. They would douse people with oil, give them a good rub, and say, “God help you and bless you.” But here was a man who believed that fifteen or twenty miles away Jesus could say, “Be healed,” and his servant would be healed that moment by a word.

This great faith had to do with the electronic age we live in today, the telecommunication age, the satellite age. Just speak it and it will be performed. Jesus called that great faith—unlimited faith, faith that is not circumvented by circumstances. It's released and it's gone.

Great faith can change the world—the whole wide world!

6

Faith: An Eternal Quest

Faith is a quest—a seeking you never quit. I am sure that Paul on the last day of his life was in a quest for faith. Every Christian's heart desires to possess this tremendous asset to spiritual victory. If he yields to his inner desire, it becomes an eternal quest.

I have sought faith for fifty years. I may be further along with it than I sometimes think I am, and I may not be quite as far along as I sometimes think I am. But I am giving you in a few pages what I have spent thousands of hours learning.

First you must learn the secret of the stockpile—the place to go and get the rudiments and elements of which faith consists. It is the Word of God. So **“then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”** (Rom. 10:17). If you seek faith in any other place, it will not come as pure, undefiled faith.

The Word of God declares, **“Now faith is...”** (Heb. 11:1). Those three words stop you right there. Faith is. It is a reality, a truth, a power. Faith is. It is a reality you can get hold of.

Early in a quest for faith one discovers that above all else we must have faith in order to please God.

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a *rewarder of them that diligently seek him* (Heb. 11:6).

God cannot be pleased without this element of trust we call faith. Therefore we must move into it saying, “God, I am going to please You. I am going to please You by believing and trusting like those great patriots of old.”

To make contact with God, you need faith. If you don't believe God exists, you cannot find Him. So faith is contacting God.

In contacting God you begin to know God. Faith is also knowing

God. We know God through personal experiences, every day, in line with His written Word.

I come to know God by what happens to me. If I were sick all the time, I'd wonder if He were sick. But I'm not sick all the time. I've been well fifty years. I've enjoyed marvelous health in a hundred nations of the world in all kinds of conditions.

Some who have been living this faith life a long time have experience with God that newcomers don't have yet. Sometimes a newcomer grasps for something big and claims it. When he doesn't get it, he has a shocking disappointment. But it doesn't manifest because he hasn't made these first steps of contacting God, of knowing God through experiences, and of coming into the place of spiritual maturity.

Any politician in Washington could have read the Gettysburg Address, but it wouldn't have meant much. It took Abraham Lincoln to do it. Why? Because it was Lincoln. It became immortal because of what was inside him, not because of what he said. Those words were so simple. When I read them once, I said, "Where's the greatness?" God answered me, "The greatness is not in words. The greatness is in the person who said them."

When you go out to do wonders for God, the greatness is not in what you say, but in who is saying it. When you read from the Word of God, the words may be very simple. They may be words you see in your daily newspaper. But they're not the same because of Who said them. When God says them, it makes a difference.

When a mature person who has delved into the awesomeness of faith lives and speaks in line with the Word of God, he walks roads never before trodden by men. He takes paths yet unborn. He feels what others do not understand.

To many, the paths remain untrodden. But we who are in this eternal quest for faith walk them all the time. And we enjoy them! Oh, the air of that world—so fresh! Oh, the flowers which bloom in that world—so fragrant! Oh, the fruit served in that world—so refreshing! Learn to walk in that world of spiritual maturity in God.

Faith is of the spirit of man. Life within the believer's spirit gives birth to faith. The spiritual life within begins when we first contact God.

Then we know God through contacts. We make contact after contact with God. We call those contacts “experiences in God.” All the while the commodity called faith grows within us to a place of spiritual maturity until we come to know more about faith than others know. We can make decisions others don't make. Others say, “Can you imagine a person taking such a chance?” We're not taking a chance. We know Him. They're taking a chance because they don't know Him. When that spiritual maturity within begins to blossom and bear fruit, one of those fruit is faith.

So faith can mature in our spirits naturally, you might say, as a fruit. But there is a faith that is supernaturally put down inside us as a gift. The Bible calls this **“the gift of faith.”** (1 Cor. 12.) When this happens, we move from the natural to the supernatural—a higher elevation of faith. One Christian has faith that moves in a natural way, while another's faith moves so far above that until it is obvious there is a gift of God moving in him.

Living by Faith

The Bible teaches that the just shall *live* by faith. (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:14.) That means every day we should live by faith. Faith has to do with all the vital issues of the Christian experience. If something is an issue in your life, your home, or your work, faith has to do with it.

Some would have houses or jobs or businesses they've never had, but they didn't have enough faith to grab them. Some would have known triumphs they've never known, but they panicked. Fear struck and paralyzed them. Doubt hit. *Kerplunk!* Down they went.

Faith is to be a constant dominating experience in your life—not something that comes once in a while. Yet it is possible to have faith one day and not use it the next. In every aspect of life, faith is an element. If you overrule the element of faith in one area, then try to use it somewhere else, you won't have the measure that's necessary. If you don't let faith move in your home, it won't move in church. Faith is a strength abiding within us at all times. We must hold it fast.

Continually test yourself.

If you have a quarrel with your wife or husband, ask yourself, “What

would faith do about this?” Inside you, faith will say, “Ask forgiveness.”

When you start to make a decision or do something, ask, “Is this faith's road I'm walking?”

“Oh, no,” you might say. “This is the road of unbelief. I'm getting off this road. I don't belong here.”

When you ask, “Is this faith's choice?” you'll sometimes say, “Oh, no. That's a fearful choice. I'm not making that choice. I don't want fear dominating my life.”

That's living by faith. That's the eternal quest for faith. You must do it all the time. Don't quit. Just pursue it.

God's Word declares, **“If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established”** (Is. 7:9). In your business, your home life, all the natural and spiritual decisions you make, if you don't believe, you cannot be established. The strength of establishment, the strength of your footings and foundations, is related to faith.

The establishment of our Christian faith, our Christian security, and our Christian life is based on this element of living faith. Therefore it is imperative to first *comprehend* faith—and then to *apprehend* faith. Understand it, then get it.

If you seek to do this, you will not come away disappointed. No one who ever sought real faith has. Those who seek God, find God.

The World of the Sixth Sense

Faith can become to you a kind of sixth sense. As humans we contact the physical world around us through five physical senses. But the sixth sense—if faith can be called that—is beyond those five senses. It has nothing to do with physically hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, or smelling. Those physical senses make us aware of the material things around us. Faith makes us aware of God. With the sixth sense we have an awareness of Jehovah, the Most High.

Christians therefore have a sense unconverted people do not have. They have five senses that make them aware of the material world. But we have a sixth sense that makes us aware of the spiritual world—a world the natural eye cannot see and the natural hand cannot feel. That bothers

some people. They don't want anything they can't see and feel. But we know that such a world—the world of the sixth sense—does exist because we can be in constant contact with that world.

Anyone who desires can contact God and have relationship with Him and recourse to the resources of that world through the sixth sense. It is available to all who will seek the Lord according to His Word.

Faith Maintenance

It is one thing to obtain faith, another to maintain it. I have witnessed people who had an unusual act of faith take place. But after that they seemed to live very natural lives. They never rose any higher in faith.

Don't have a mountain-top experience. Have a plateau life. Get up there and live. Don't get back down at all. In this book I'm not talking about faith as a peak, but as a rule of life—faith that's going to bless you every day, morning and night; faith to live with, to be refreshed in, to walk in. You won't be disappointed in this kind of faith.

To maintain faith do what the Apostle Peter wrote, **“Add to your faith virtue”** (2 Pet. 1:5).

People don't usually relate faith to virtue. They usually relate faith to magic. But God relates faith and virtue. This is because God is a moral God. He is the Moral Majority.

There are men who think it is clever to speak against morality and to make fun of people who want to live right. Such a man is in trouble, and he'll know it soon enough. Morality is not something to smirk at. Morality is what strong nations are built with. Downgrade morality and you're on your way to hell in this world and the next one, too.

God help us to know that morality is sweet, lovely, gracious, wholesome, happiness. I'm glad I've got a share in it. How about you?

Faith adds virtue. When you've got faith, you immediately move into a virtuous situation, a clean and honest situation. (Faith is never dishonest. Dishonesty belongs to the devil.) You become Godlike.

You cannot have this tremendous faith living like the devil—living in fear, in hatred, in backbiting. You can't say something nasty about me,

then pray for the sick in the next two minutes and get anybody healed.

Manifold things can be added to our spiritual being through faith. Faith is an additive. It keeps adding things to you: good things, precious things, wonderful things, God-like and Christ-like things.

New Person Faith

Faith is not a sword just to grab and cut someone with. Faith is a life. Faith goes from your hair to your toenails. It is a propelling force that moves you through this life to great victories. With faith in your heart you won't wake up in the morning discouraged. You won't wake up angry at half the world. That's not possible. Faith is a propellant. It's a motivator, a mover.

I can't get away from that man of faith, Smith Wigglesworth. I'd heard exciting stories about him all my natural life. Then I met him in Wales in 1936. He addressed a national conference in the afternoon and I preached in the evening. When I had finished, he didn't say, "You gave a good talk." He laid his hand on my shoulder and said, "You need to come and see me." I'd been in the principal's office before, and I thought I could stand it again, so I said, "Yes, sir, I'll be there."

I not only went once, I went dozens of times. But what amazed me was that after two years of going to see him in rain, in sunshine, and in all kinds of situations, he was always the same. When you saw him once, you'd seen him. Period.

I asked him once, "How can you be like you are all the time?"

He said, "I never ask Smith Wigglesworth how he feels."

That was Smith Wigglesworth talking to Smith Wigglesworth. He was a man of faith. He got up with it in the mornings. He went to bed with it in the evenings. He used it all through the day.

In a sincere quest for faith there is a deliberate action in seeking to understand not only what faith is, but how it motivates our lives to make us a new person in Christ Jesus.

7

In Pursuit of Faith

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Romans 10:17

My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.

Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.

For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

Proverbs 4:20-22

The Word of God, the Bible, is the sole source of faith. Books and testimonies about faith inspire us, but they cannot bring this divine thing called faith to our hearts. It comes into our spiritual being from the Word of God.

But even the Word of God does not build faith within us unless it becomes part of our spiritual person. There have been men who quoted the Bible and lived like the devil. It's not how much you know about the Bible, but how much of God's Word becomes a part of you.

You cannot just read the Bible like a novel or a newspaper and expect faith to come. Faith comes by continually putting God's Word inside you until it becomes a part of your inner man. The Word of God inside you causes faith to grow like a goodly seed. The movements of growing faith are positively motivated by reading, receiving, and understanding the Word of God. You read, you receive, you understand; and faith as a divine impulse rises stronger and stronger in your life.

Divine faith is the Word of God abiding in you. John 15:7 says, **“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you....”** It's not just reading a book about faith; it's the Word of God abiding in you that makes faith.

When God's Word abides in you, then... **“ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you”** (John 15:7). Some miss this truth. They think that because they read the Word, they can get whatever they ask for. But it is the abiding Word within that causes faith to bear fruit.

Faith: Eyes and Ears of the New Man

Faith is an eye that can see the invisible. Your natural eye can only see what is visible. Faith is the eye of the spirit man that sees what is not visible to your natural person.

For example, before we owned a television station, my spiritual eye saw that we would have it and that a television ministry would grow from it. I knew it would reach the whole world. God said it would. So my spiritual eye saw it. Today what my spiritual eye saw is manifested to the natural eye.

My spiritual eye within me has seen ten thousand people delivered from Satan's power with one half-minute prayer on television. I have not witnessed that yet, but I know it is coming. I am waiting for that dramatic moment when somewhere—on my program or someone else's—ten thousand people are set free by one single prayer saying, “Be free from the power of the devil!”

Faith is an ear that hears the inaudible. Your natural ear hears what people say to you. Faith is the ear of the spirit that hears what God says.

Saul of Tarsus found the Lord Jesus Christ just outside the city of Damascus when he was startled by a light brighter than the noonday sun. Three Scripture passages give the account. In one it seems as though the people accompanying Paul heard the sound of a voice.

And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man (Acts 9:7).

In another we see they did not understand what was spoken.

And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me (Acts 22:9).

They heard the voice, but they didn't pick up the words. It wasn't for them. They didn't have the inner working of God. Paul did.

Faith is an ear that hears what others do not hear. Sometimes when God is speaking to a man by faith, others are present, but they do not hear what God is saying to that specific person.

Faith hears and conceives what the natural man cannot conceive. Then faith bears that which was conceived and brings it to pass.

Faith brings you to a place where your eyes see the invisible, your ears hear the inaudible, and the work of God is born in the earth. Really it is the new man on the inside who sees, hears, and accomplishes the realities of the power of God.

Faith is a hand that can touch the intangible. Faith possesses that which you do not possess.

The natural man doesn't understand that. But had he been in my office when I signed my name to a piece of paper for one million dollars for WHMB in Indianapolis when I didn't have a hundred dollars in the world, he would have a better idea of what I'm talking about. My natural hand was touching a piece of paper. My spiritual hand was touching a television station.

Between the two was a million dollars I didn't have. But I knew as surely as I knew my name that I would have it, that I would have it at the proper time, that I would not be embarrassed, that I would not have to tell the banks, "I'm sorry. I don't have it."

You say, "What if I did it and it didn't work?"

You have to start at the ground. You can't start at the top. I left home as a teenager to be a preacher with only 65¢ in my pocket. You can start there if you like.

If you start at the right place, it does work. It has to work. You can tell it to work. You're the boss of it. You're the creator of it. You're so sure of it until it has to work. If you got up one morning and it wasn't working, you would rebuke it. You would say to it, "You work."

If you don't have faith, you'll say, "Just as I expected. It's not there."

If you do have faith, you'll say, "Get in here in a hurry. You've got five minutes to get in here. And I don't mean maybe!" You talk like this because you have come to a place of authority in the matter. You know that you know. You're sure that you're sure. Then it works.

Some say, “Brother Sumrall, that's unreasonable.”

Certainly. That's what I'm talking about—that which is not reasonable. The natural man can reason, but he cannot know how this works.

It wasn't reasonable three thousand years ago that God spoke to one little man named Abraham and said, **“Through you all nations of the earth will be blessed.”** In the natural he had two sons. One of them is the Arab people; the other is the Jewish people. One has the oil; the other has the gold. God's blessings are tremendous.

If God speaks something good toward you, say it every hour. I'm sure Abraham did. And his natural offspring know until this moment they are selected by some Power outside themselves to receive Heaven's blessings because one man knew God. (He didn't go around worshipping sticks, stones, and pieces of mud. He worshiped the One Who made the universe. That makes the difference.)

In this book I'm trying to get you—Abraham's spiritual seed—to believe God has selected you for Heaven's blessings, too, and that faith is the eye that sees it, the ear that hears it, and the hand that receives it from the giving hand of God.

Eternal Conquest

Possibly no other message in the Bible is more exciting than that of faith because faith brings into being things that could never be brought into being any other way. Yet faith may be one of the most misunderstood Bible subjects.

For example, you could say the same words someone else said, but it wouldn't have the same meaning. As I often say, you can recite the Gettysburg Address, but that doesn't give you the power, strength, or courage of Abraham Lincoln.

Faith is not words. Words happen to be the vehicle. But faith is a living power, force, energy, and life within you that flows out spontaneously.

You don't get nervous with faith. You don't start saying, "Is it going to work?" If that's the case, you don't have faith. You have it when it flows naturally from your inner being. You know that you're sure, and it flows from you spontaneously.

Faith flows through your eyes. You have the look of faith. Depression and doubt also come out through the eyes. Your eyes can be either negative or positive. Make them positive. Look faith.

Faith flows spontaneously from your mouth. You speak faith. Some think they can say anything they want, and it won't affect them. That is not true. What is in your heart proceeds out through your mouth. If you don't have faith—when you just think you have faith, or you speak somebody else's words of faith—then in your casual moments you will speak what is really in your heart. "Is that me?" you'll say. Yes. The real you. The absolute you. The only way to change that is through the words of God.

Through the Word of God you change what you are on the inside. The Bible will change your way of thinking and acting. No wonder faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. (Rom. 10:17.)

We're studying the eternal quest for faith. Here's a tip for your quest: Read God's Word out loud. Two things will be functioning for you at the same time: seeing and hearing.

I understand that Colonel Sanders of fried chicken fame was an older man before he struck it rich. Really, he didn't strike it rich. He put his faith into action and it worked. I trust many today won't be graybeards before they get faith working for them.

I forever remember something I said when I was twenty. I was starting off to go around the world with only \$12 to my name. Someone said to me, "You won't ever get back. You'll die out there somewhere in a foreign country. You have no money to get back with."

I looked at him and said, "While I'm young, I've got to find out whether God is there or not. I don't want to wait 'til I'm old and still be searching around to see if God is real. I want to find out now. If He's not real, man, I'm going to have a time. But if He is real, I'm going to live for Him. I'm going to serve Him. I'm going to obey Him."

I soon learned in a phenomenal way that God loves, God cares, God provides, and that it is good serving the Lord. In foreign lands where I had no acquaintances God provided in supernatural ways far removed from being possible by incident or accident. Faith is not an incident or an accident. It is the living God flowing through you.

Words for Faith

The Greek word translated *faith* in the New Testament is *pistis*. It is used 248 times and is also translated *assurance*, *fidelity*, *belief*.

Dictionaries work at defining faith, but they are uncertain as to what it is. They usually say it is believing in something. And it is. We believe in God. We believe in the Word of God. Faith is *belief*.

It is also *fidelity*. We know that if we ask anything of Him according to His Word, He will give it. That's the fidelity part. We know we're not working with someone who can't be trusted. Many people can only be trusted at a big dinner. You'd better not trust them when you're meeting a tiger. You'll be on your own and they'll be gone. God won't leave you when you face a tiger. Your relatives may leave you. The businessmen you work with may leave you. But Jesus Christ will never leave you. God

says in His Word,

I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me (Heb. 13:5, 6).

We can rely on His fidelity. Faith is the faithfulness of God.

Faith is *confidence*. When you believe in something, you have confidence in it. You have confidence in the chair you're sitting in. Because you believe it will support you, you can relax and read this book.

In Christ there is confidence. We relax in Him. We're not nervous. We're not saying, "Oh, is it going to happen?" That's not in the language. It's going to happen because it has always happened. In faith there is the element of confidence which brings relaxation in God. It's a matter of just leaning on Him.

Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith. (Heb. 12:2.) He is the beginner and the ender, the giver and the protector of our faith. We're not the only ones interested in our faith. God is also interested in it. He is the Author of it. He is the One Who gave birth to it. The essence of it flows out of Him to us. Faith is not generated by man. Faith is not conceived by a preacher, a denomination, or a philosophy. Jesus Christ is the Author of faith. He is the beginner of it. He is the protector of it. The devil can't steal it. The world can't grab it. It's yours. It's yours because He is the One Who placed it in your heart.

Faith is a *praise* unto God. I am deeply impressed with the area of praise in faith.

A young man came to our church in Manila, Philippines, who had raised twelve people from the dead. "That's not many," he said. "There are people in Indonesia who have raised a hundred people from the dead."

Across the dinner table in our home I asked him, "Sir, how do you raise the dead?"

He said, "We say a very simple prayer: 'Lord, has this person lived out his days that You ordained? (Seventy at least.) Has he lived out his divine purpose?' If the Lord says, 'Yes,' we bury the body. If the Lord says, 'No,' we say, 'We'll stop that right now. Death, hear us. We speak to you in the Name of the glorious Son of God Who rose from the dead.

Death, you leave him now! His life returns. We believe it, in Jesus' name."

That's all they say. Then they hold hands, step back, and begin to sing. They sing until he gets up and joins them.

That's not nervous, is it? Some would want to massage him. Rubbing doesn't do any good. Some would want to yell in his ear, "Do you hear me?" No. He doesn't hear. He's dead.

These people speak the word of faith. Then they praise God.

Many times we pray for people to receive healing. Before you get two feet away from them, they say, "I'm not healed." And they're not. They never will be. When prayer was made, they should have started thanking God. "Oh, but how can I thank God when I've still got so-and-so?" they say. They'll always have it.

Faith is taking that which does not exist in the physical realm and claiming it, saying, "I've got it." If you can't do that, then you don't have faith. Faith *is* that. Faith is possessing what you cannot touch with your hands. It is having what you cannot see with your eyes.

While in Washington state I saw a tremendous deliverance of an Indian girl. She was terribly immoral, a harlot. She drifted in that night full of the devil and tried to tear up the meeting. She cursed me violently. I prayed for her one time, and God knocked her on the floor. Then I sat down on the altar and began to sing choruses, praising God and thanking Him for the victory. She lay there cursing, blaspheming, and saying, "I'm not coming out. I'm not coming out." We kept singing. In a few moments the power of God swept over her and swept that mess out of her. She became clean and pure. The next day she was in our morning service as changed as dark to day. It came about through one prayer and then the singing and praising of God.

Since faith is a praise unto God, that makes faith lighthearted. If you are struggling with faith with a long face and a sad heart, saying, "I'm trying," that's not faith. You're trying something, but it's not faith. Faith never tries. Faith commands. Faith expects. Faith receives. And faith praises.

When Israel praised the Almighty, the walls of Jericho fell down inwardly and were gone.

Faith can put you on a road where you can get things you never before had. I know. I've been on that road since I was seventeen. God has always given me things I never had before.

Faith can cause you to do things you've never done before. Irregular things, things you never dreamed you would do, you start doing.

Faith can say things you never said before. Who would have the audacity to say some things we say? It's unreal. Faith puts words in your spirit that flow out your mouth until you say, "Is that me?" Faith is a strength and power that flows forth in words.

Faith can cause you to know God in a way you've never before known Him. Faith opens the door to realities in God.

Faith is an action. Faith is a work. To many this is a problem. They want God to do great miracles for them while they fold their hands and do nothing. "Do nothing" does nothing. When Jesus told Peter the tax money would be in the fish's mouth, Peter had to catch the fish.

When I want something, I start doing something for it. Then God does the rest. I don't sit with my hands folded and just say, "Oh, God, do a miracle." He won't. God responds to action, to movement.

Even if I wanted a bigger job, I might take a lesser one in order to get in there and get what I want. God may want me to come through the lesser in order to get the better. Do the best you can, and you know God will do the best He can. God's best is more than enough!

Faith is when God and man choose to walk together in life, to think together, and I'd even say, to laugh together. For the faith life is the happiest life. Faith has no relationship with idleness. It has to do with a man who gets out there and goes for God, and God goes for him.

Faith Revealed

The Lord Jesus told Peter, Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven (Matt. 16:17).

There are truths only God can make real. The truths I am giving you I did not read in a book, I did not study from a teacher; they were born within my spirit.

I grew up in a religious atmosphere. Yet during my youth I never remember anybody—minister or otherwise—telling me what faith is. When I began ministering as a young man, I listened to other preachers, but I met no one who could define faith in a simple language that I could understand and follow. They would say that faith is mysterious, that some have it and some don't, and we don't know why. I thought great faith was a rare gift from God for a select few, and I had missed the selection.

But I kept wrestling with the topic of faith. In my first years of ministry, I would preach on it. I would say, “Faith is wonderful, marvelous, glorious, stupendous.” And it is. But faith is not adjectives.

I must have asked God for faith a million times, and I never did get anything. You can ask God the second million times, and you won't get anything either. That's not the way faith comes.

Then one night, years ago now, my life was changed. My wife and I were ministering in Puerile Rico. On Saturday evening I was heavily burdened, so I asked her to take the service while I stayed home to pray. She had been a missionary in Argentina for eight years before we were married, so she was glad to preach.

The home where we were staying had a flat roof and was about a half-block from the seaside. I climbed the ladder to the top of the house and looked out over the beautiful sea and lovely palm trees. Then I began to march back and forth across the top of the house like a lion in a cage praying my favorite prayer: “Lord, give me faith.” But this time, my prayer and my life were about to change. God suddenly spoke.

“I wish you would shut up,” He said.

Stunned, I stopped still to listen.

“Just go down inside the house and read your Bible. I’ve put it all in there. Read Hebrews, chapter 11, and you will understand what faith is.”

“Do you mean it’s that simple?” I said. You see, I was expecting God to knock me down with something.

I rushed downstairs and began to read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. I read it over and over again.

The next two hours were two of the greatest of my life. As I read, illumination burst inside me like fireworks in the sky. I began to see things I’d never seen. I cried. I laughed. I got revelation. I came to know faith from God, from His Word, for that’s how faith comes. (Rom. 10:17.)

Something came that I had never dreamed was true—but it is. I will share that with you in these next several chapters.

Faith's Foundations

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is! It is. It's right now!

For many years in my life, faith was. It was what Moses had, what Abraham had, and what I didn't have.

But faith is not historical. Faith is now! Faith functions. Faith moves mountains now.

Two Qualities of Faith

The qualities of faith are two: substance and evidence. That's exactly what nobody thought faith to be. We thought faith was ethereal and magical—that it had to do with the air and reaching for it. God says it is just the opposite. Faith is solid. It is substance. It is evidence.

Substance can be measured and analyzed. This puts faith into an area of knowledge where we can absolutely know what faith is.

Faith is the evidence of things not seen. Faith has its evidences. It produces. Abraham believed God for a son, and he produced Isaac.

Two Basic Elements of Faith

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Hebrews 11:6

A strong faith structure begins with a firm foundation. To build an Empire State Building faith, you must put your footings deep. The devil will knock you off your faith if you have little sand footings. The two

colossal footings which cannot be moved by earthquakes, the devil, or anything of man are these:

1. Know there is a God.
2. Know He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Unless you know God exists, you have no basis for faith. An infidel can't have faith. A true Marxist communist can't have faith. An agnostic can't have faith. The very basis of faith is a knowledge of God's existence.

You say, "How can I increase my faith?"

Know more about God. The secret of having more faith is to know more about God. Faith has a direct relationship with our knowledge of God.

Some people in high churches know very little about God. How can they have great faith?

Who has great faith? People who have great knowledge of God.

In certain areas of Indonesia they had a phenomenal revival. I talked with Mel Tari once when he was back in the United States and asked him if the revival was still going. He said it was going strong in primitive areas.

When people with a lot of feeders in their society—radio, television, and newspapers—give all their time to these modern communications, they don't have time to commune with God.

In those primitive areas, the people just sat and read the Bible. Then when they didn't have wine for communion, they prayed over the water and God turned it to wine. They raised the dead. A group of them came to a river and said, "Lord, we have no other way to get across. Here we go." And they walked across the river.

You say, "Well, Brother Sumrall, I have never seen that."

No, but you've seen a lot of television! Those people did nothing but worship God.

You say, "Well, I'd get tired of that."

Then you don't get it. Faith is commensurate to knowledge of God.

People eulogize Smith Wigglesworth. They call him a prophet of faith. But what they don't know is he sat almost all day, every day, reading the Bible, praying, and ministering to people. If you had asked him to do

something else, he would have thought you were crazy. His knowledge of God was tremendous.

When I'd visit him, he'd almost wear me out. I'd walk in his house about ten o'clock in the morning. He'd meet me at the front door. He'd grab me around both of my arms and jump up and down, shouting and praising God, with me on the inside of his arms. I was 24 or 25; he was just over 80. An 80-year-old man was jumping up and down with a 25-year-old man in his arms!

When he got through, he'd set me down and say, "Listen to this." Then he'd read a whole chapter from the Bible. I hadn't yet said, "Good morning." I didn't have time. He was doing all the talking. As soon as he finished reading, he'd kneel down and say, "You need a blessing." He'd lay hands on me and pray for me about thirty minutes. As soon as he got through, he'd say, "Oh, yes. Here's another Scripture you need." And he'd read me another chapter. Then he'd say, "Do you have all the gifts of the Spirit? No, you don't. I'll lay hands on you again."

When his daughter called for lunch, I was so dizzy I had to be led to the table.

No wonder things happened in his ministry. He knew God exists. And he knew God would respond to his prayers.

All Christians know that God exists. Yet many don't know Him as a rewarder of those that seek Him. They know God is God, that He's the Creator of the whole world. They know that upon a throne somewhere there is a mighty God, and they think, Oh, I wonder if He likes me? If I ask Him for something, I wonder if He would give it?

A leper once came to Jesus and said,

Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean (Matt. 8:2).

The Lord turned it around and said,

I will; be thou clean (v. 3).

The man had it backwards. He knew Jesus had the power to heal, but he didn't know Jesus had a desire to heal.

Millions of people—religious people—live that way today. They'll say, "Yes, God is Almighty. Will He heal me? I'm not sure."

I would rather say, "Lord, I know You love me. I know You would heal me if You could."

But they don't. They say, "Oh, Lord, we know You have all power. But we don't know that You have all love."

I believe in His love more than I do His power. That's the way to believe in Him. The fact is: God *is* Love and He *has* power. It is not: God is power and He has love.

You cannot get things from God until you know God will give them to you. You cannot just say, "Thy will be done." That's not faith.

Because we know that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, we ask and receive.

We lift up our hand, and He puts down His hand.

We lift up our voice, and we hear His voice coming down.

We reach toward Him; He reaches toward us. This makes us people of faith!

Faith Is a More Excellent Sacrifice

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

Hebrews 11:4

I'd read this verse many times before and it had not affected me at all until that night God called me off the housetop in Puerto Rico, saying, "If you want to know what faith is, go downstairs and read it in the Word of God." As I read Hebrews, chapter eleven, the divine revelation of God came to me and I came to know what faith is. In this verse the Lord showed me that *faith is an excellent sacrifice*. I literally saw that faith is what we do with an offering plate.

I almost didn't believe it. I was shocked. I said, "Lord, that doesn't seem right to me."

The Lord spoke quickly, "You give in relationship to the amount of faith you have. If you don't have faith to give, you cannot give."

God showed me that our spiritual lives are highly related to what we give to Him. Faith and giving go together; you cannot separate them.

When a person doesn't like to give, it is because he doesn't have faith. He's not to be criticized; he's in bad shape. He's barren. Living faith doesn't function in him. Things which he cannot handle will creep up in his life because the rudiments of faith are not there. He'll need healing, for instance, which he won't be able to receive.

God's Word says, **"He that watereth shall be watered also himself"** (Prov. 11:25). When you give out, something comes back. But if you don't water anybody, you won't get any water.

The Bible says Abel had faith. Abel didn't say it; God said it. In most instances, greatness within a person is something he doesn't recognize himself. He thinks he's doing his own thing, normally and naturally.

People say, "My, you have faith." He says, "I'm just living for Jesus."

Nobody thought the little woman in the Bible who dropped in two of the smallest coins in the kingdom had anything but poverty, but Jesus decided she had faith. He said, **"She's dropped in more than all of them"** (Mark 12:43). Why did Jesus speak so highly of her? Because she gave Him the total of what she had. He looked at her back pocket and said, "Honey, you don't have anything left. You've given more than all because you gave all."

When I teach a few lessons about faith like God revealed it to me, people who once said, "I want faith," then say, "I'm not so sure of that anymore. Since I came to know so much about it, maybe I don't want faith after all."

I believe that we should understand all that faith really is. Among the things to discover is that faith is an excellent sacrifice. God said it. Faith is what we do with an offering plate. One aspect of faith is that it gives.

How did Abel's faith come? First, he had to be educated to give. (We still have to be educated to give.) Where did he get his education? He got it from his father, Adam.

Adam gave his two sons the Word of God. He might have said something like: "Boys, when I was naked and had no clothing, God came and took a lamb. He took the skin of that lamb and put clothes on my body. My transgression caused someone to sacrifice. If someone hadn't sacrificed, I would have been naked. This was God's way of covering my sins and giving me spiritual clothing. Now you must be covered in the same way. You must take a sacrifice and offer it to God."

Each son took a different idea about what Adam said. In the six thousand years since, people haven't changed much. There are still those who think as Cain thought, *I won't do as God says. I'll do as I please with my giving to God.*

I wouldn't be a bit surprised if Abel had said, "God wants a lamb. Let me see... Ah! Here's a crippled one. I'll give that one to God. I wondered what I was going to do with it."

It is easy to give God what you want to get rid of anyway.

But God said, "No, Abel, that's not the one I want."

Then Abel may have said, “Here's old Spot. He's not like the rest of my sheep. He goes rambling off by himself like a goat. I'm tired of him. Lord, I'm going to give You Spot.”

God said, “Sorry, I don't want Spot. Keep him yourself. Keep on disciplining him.”

“Lord, what do You want?”

“You know that little lamb whose mother died—the one you brought into your tent and fed personally to keep it alive, the one that became so white and beautiful without a blemish, the one that followed you around and stayed right with you all the time. That's the one I'll take.”

“Oh, no, Lord! You can't have my baby! That's the one I...”

“I know, the one you love. That's the one I'm asking for.”

“Well, Lord, if that's the one, You can have it.”

“That's the one I want. Bring it.”

So the Bible says Abel brought *an excellent sacrifice*. And God called it faith!

You've been wondering what faith is. Faith is giving to God. I didn't say it. The Church didn't say it. God said it.

When a resistance rises up within and says, “No! I don't want to give to God,” that's the opposite of faith. The opposite of faith—doubt, fear, and unbelief—comes from the devil.

Abel offered his sacrifice and God smiled upon it. So Abel began to shout and praise the Lord around his altar. The presence of the Lord was very strong.

Across the way his brother decided to worship. He fixed an altar and put some fire on it. He said, “Lord, are You a vegetarian?”

“No.”

“Well, that's what You're going to get today. I brought You some things out of my garden. Do You like onions?”

“No.”

“Well, You're going to get them anyway.”

Some give what they want God to have, whether or not He likes it.

"God, how about a good cabbage? This is a big one. Do You like cabbage?"

"No."

"You're going to get one today."

Cain brought what he wanted to bring and put it upon the altar. It had no blood. He looked across at his brother and said, "God, do You see my brother? He's a bloody man."

God said, "No, he is a received man. I received him because of the blood. The life of the flesh is in the blood. He has given life to bring life. He will have spiritual life because of what he gave to Me."

Cain said, "Well, I'm not going to give it to You." So he brought the fruit of the ground and heaped it upon the altar, saying, "There You are, God."

God said, "No, I can't bless that. I don't accept it."

It is remarkable that when some people are received of the Lord, but others are not, they get upset about it.

"She's shouting too much." Why don't *you* shout? It's all right.

"I wish they'd keep quiet." *You* can be a little bit noisy if you want.

"I don't like the way they dance." *You* can have a little dance yourself.

When someone is blessed more than they are, they say, "It must not be right. I don't have it."

Cain said, "My brother's religion is bad."

God said, "No, it's good, and I have received it."

Cain got mad! Have you ever seen any mad religious people? Cain's anger grew hot. I don't know whether he intended to kill his brother. He may just have intended to knock him around a little. But he hit him too hard. He hit him a blow on the head, and his brother was dead.

That's strange religion! It's a religion that kills. There is still some of it in the world today. Religion without Jesus Christ behind it can be murder.

Behind every problem in the world today there is a spiritual factor.

The problems in the Middle East are not over land. Israel's enemies have millions of miles of land they don't do anything with. Yet they want to take little Israel and push her into the sea. Israel's land has been turned into a garden. Right across her borders are millions of miles of desert. From a plane you can look down and see where the desert ends and the garden begins.

Cain killed his brother. He showed with his actions that he did not have faith. Abel's actions showed that he did. The faith was a gift to God.

God had to show me that. I'd read this passage many times and had never seen it. When God showed me, it began to sink in. Then I began to see some people right.

I remembered a little lady in South Bend, Indiana, when we were struggling to put up the tabernacle building. She worked at a laundry. One week her salary check was in the offering. When I saw it, I went to her.

I said, "Did you get your change back?"

She said, "What change?"

"Your whole check was in the offering."

"I didn't want any change back."

"Well," I said, "you've got to live."

She said, "I'll live."

Two weeks later her whole check was in there again. I got it out.

I said, "Did you get your change?"

She said, "No. What are you doing with my check?"

"I'm the pastor here. You're a widow. We don't want widows to suffer. God only asks for ten percent, not a hundred. Did you get your change?"

"I didn't want any. The Lord told me to do it. Now please stop meddling with my giving."

And I did, for two weeks. Then that thing was in there again. So I got it out.

"Did you get your change?"

“No. I don't want any change.”

“You're a widow and you've got to live.”

“But we've got to have a church.”

“We're going to get a church. Here's your check.”

“Please leave me alone,” she said. “The Lord is doing something here. I have more than ever. I've paid all my bills. The Lord through other sources has supplied all my needs. And we are building a church.”

Isn't it amazing how ignorant some preachers can be? I didn't know it was a spiritual thing. To me it was the money on which she lived. To her, she was worshiping. By her giving to God, God was giving to her. By giving to God, she had more than when she kept it all. I didn't catch on until God told me about it later.

He reminded me of when we were preaching in Java. One night after the service a lot of people came to the front to be saved. One by one they left until only two men knelt at the altar besides the missionary and myself. Suddenly one of them came through to something bright. His face lit up and joy came into his heart. Even though I couldn't understand the language, I could see when he received Life. The other man received nothing.

That church received offerings in a pan back by the door. I think it was a kind of conscience thing: if you had a conscience, you'd drop something in it. (They must not have had any because there wasn't much in it!)

The man who didn't get saved walked by, looked at the pan, and went out the door and down into the street. We never saw him again. I didn't think anything about it. He just didn't give like the rest of them.

But the man who got “gloriously” saved was happy and rejoicing. He jumped up, hugged the missionary, then hugged me. When he saw that pan, he grabbed his wallet out of his back pocket. Without looking to see what was in it, he opened it and emptied it all into the pan.

I saw one man pass by the offering plate like the priest and the Levite passed by the wounded man on the other side of the road. (Luke 10:30-32.) Then I saw another man put it *all* in! But it didn't mean anything to me—I just laughed about it—until God brought it back to me as He

taught me about faith.

He said, “What it took at the altar is what it took at the offering plate. At the altar the man had no faith to believe Me, and he didn't get saved. When he got to the offering plate, he still had no faith. So he walked out with nothing. The man who got saved had faith to receive Me at the altar. So when he got to the offering plate, he demonstrated what he had at the altar. He gave evidence of it. And I took care of him later. I gave him more than he'd ever had.”

Faith is an excellent sacrifice unto God.

“I've never made one,” you say.

Make it unto the Lord, and He will do something for you.

I personally want to give more—not only a gift of money, but of everything! I want to give Him my experiences of the past. I want to give Him my mind, my time, anything and everything that comes my way. I want to be a giver.

Give something—music, prayer, witnessing, speaking. Whatever it is, give it wholly, completely, absolutely, and unreservedly unto the Lord.

When you do, that is faith! That's not talking about faith. That's not wishing you had faith. That is the commodity. Faith is an excellent sacrifice unto God. And if that is it, and you give excellent sacrifice unto God, then you've got faith! Aren't you glad you've got some!

Faith Is a Walk

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Hebrews 11:5

This is one of the most unique stories of the Bible. Yet I don't wish to deal with it in its uniqueness. I wish to deal with it from the aspect of faith. God said Enoch had faith.

Enoch did not say he had faith. We're not dealing with a man's testimony of himself. God said this man had faith and that his faith caused him to have a private, personal translation—an honor in the Bible that has to do only with three men: Enoch, Elijah, and Jesus.

Enoch had faith. What if we could call him down from Heaven and talk with him?

“Enoch, God says you have faith. Please tell us: What is faith and what within you caused God to say that you have faith?”

As with most great men, a definition of themselves is difficult. They only know themselves in the natural outflowing of their own personalities.

Others can see a man's greatness, understand it, and write about it. But within himself, that man is only flowing naturally. Therefore it's not easy for him to tell you he's got mercy, or goodness, or faith, or love.

Enoch would say, “This is the only thing I can tell you: I had a great-great-great-great-grandfather named Adam. He was about 600 years old when I was born. (Gen. 5.) Since he lived to be about 930, we lived together more than 300 years. I was a favorite of his. You know how grandfathers love to tell you about yesterday. Well, my grandfather often told me about a place called Eden, a garden of God. Nothing was there but what was fruitful and beautiful and delicious.

"Into that garden, he told me, came Jehovah. He came to walk with my great-great-great-grandparents. They communed and had fellowship together. My grandfather would look at me and say, 'Son, how wonderful it was.'

"I would look at my grandfather and say, 'But, Grandfather, why did God stop walking with you?'

"And he would say, 'It's a sad story. We ate of the forbidden fruit, and our spirits died within us. We lost communication with God. God has never walked with me since. I've gone now these 600 years since I left the garden without God's walking with me. It's very sad to once have walked with God and now not to walk with Him.'"

I can see the boy Enoch look up into Adam's face and say, "Grandfather, I didn't sin. You sinned."

"Yes, that's true."

"Then God will walk with me."

"Oh, I'm not sure of that, Enoch. I don't think God's walked with anybody since I saw Him last."

"But *I* didn't sin. *You* did."

"I know that. You can ask God if He'll walk with you. I haven't seen Him anymore."

Enoch knew Adam 300 years. That's a long time to know a man. He heard the story of the Garden of Eden many times. It was the only story worth telling. He knew it frontwards and backwards.

I can see the two of them out looking over a field. The old grandfather, just a little weary, sits down on a log.

Young Enoch says, "Tell me that story again. Tell me about the angel with the sword. Tell me about God Jehovah Who doesn't walk with you anymore."

Enoch would hear the story one more time. And somewhere down inside he'd say, "I want to walk with God."

Desire rose up in his heart. You can have the unusual through deep Holy Spirit desires. It was no accident that God walked with Enoch. Desire brought it about. His desire could have been for the prettiest girl

in the country. It could have been for a new house, or many other things. But the consuming desire that rose up within him was to walk with God.

Now God hadn't walked with anybody for a long time. But that didn't make any difference to Enoch. He didn't have to know what God was doing every day. He believed he could have what God wasn't doing at all. That's what faith is all about: making the impossible possible, making the improbable probable.

So Enoch got alone and prayed, "God, walk with me as You walked with my great-great-great-great-grandfather. Walk with me, too, please. I want You to walk with me. I desire to walk with You. Please, God, walk with me."

Nobody ever sought God without being heard. Nobody ever cried out to God without God's hearing them. Nobody ever said, "God save me," unless God saved them. God, right this moment, wants to do tremendous, amazing, and wonderful things for anyone who will just say, "Walk with me, God." God wants fellowship more than anything else.

I don't know how long Enoch prayed. I don't know how long he called out to God. I don't know how long he said, "Oh, Lord, walk with me." I only know this: the Bible says Enoch walked with God. So I know that one day as he prayed, "Lord, walk with with me," he sensed a Presence.

He said, "I never felt that before. Someone is here."

The Lord said, "Yes, Enoch. It's Me. We're going to walk together."

So Enoch and the Lord walked together. When he came back, he had a story to tell that nobody would believe. He said, "Listen, you don't have to go back to the Garden of Eden. I've been walking with God now."

His neighbors said, "Something's wrong with you. God's not walking with anybody."

If you ever have a fine personal relationship with God, members of your own family won't understand you. Your neighbors and your friends won't understand you. You see, they're not walking with God in the same way you are. How can they understand you? They're out of step with the One you're walking with.

Most people won't understand, but the Bible calls it faith. God's

Word says Enoch had faith because he walked with God.

Measuring Faith

How do you walk with God? By faith.

How much faith do you have? How close do you walk with God?

I told you we would measure your faith. We weighed it in the previous chapter. We weighed faith with how much you give to God. If you're not giving liberally, there's a lack of faith in your life. If you're not walking with God, there's a lack of faith in your heart.

I told you we would build your faith. You can do something about it. Walk closer to God. That's not asking for faith. That's not saying, "Oh, God, give me faith." That **is** faith. That is the outflowing of an artesian well of life that flows up out of you because you walk with God.

But it won't be there if you walk with the world saying, "Boy, I'm going to see every new movie. I'm going to live in the best house on the street. I'm going to push everybody down and get the best job at work." You won't have time to walk with God. You'll be so selfish you'll just walk with yourself. I don't imagine your wife or husband could even stand you. The people you work with will hate you. You may attend church on Sunday morning, but you won't be walking with God. And you won't have faith. Faith is walking with God.

If you get up in the mornings, angry and screaming at everybody, you are not demonstrating that you have a bad temper so much as you are demonstrating that you don't have faith. When you walk with God, you demonstrate His nature.

I asked Smith Wigglesworth, "Wigglesworth, I've seen you dozens of times. You always look the same. Why?"

He said, "Sumrall, I never ask Smith Wigglesworth how he feels. I tell him."

This was Smith Wigglesworth talking to Smith Wigglesworth. It was a spirit talking to a soul. His spirit within him was talking to his mind, his emotions, and his will power—telling his mind what to think, his emotions how to feel, and his will what to decide. His spirit was the king of his life, motivated by faith, for if a man ever walked with God, Smith

Wigglesworth was that man.

Though I was in his presence many times, I never heard him speak one word against a person. I never heard him say, "That fellow doesn't preach well." If you criticized another brother in his home, he would say, "Please get out of my house." He wouldn't let you stay.

You see, if you are a talebearer, you're not walking with God. To say, "Have you heard the latest on Brother So-and-so," is not faith. That will drain God's strength and power out of your being, and you'll be as empty as a gourd.

Faith is a walk with God.

There is a great evangelist in this country. If I named him, you would know him. It was my privilege to be the one who picked him up and drove him to church during a crusade.

He told me, "Now, Lester, I appreciate and love you. In the mornings we can have fellowship. We can play golf or whatever you like. But after three o'clock in the afternoon, I don't speak to another human, not even my wife, until I have finished my sermon. I close the curtain to humanity and walk with Jesus. When you pick me up and take me to the pulpit, I stand and speak as a man who just heard from God."

After they'd heard him, the people would say, "Oh, he's an orator."

No! He's a man who walks with God. He prays, and things happen.

People said, "Look! Look! He's a man of faith." They thought it was magical. You know, a big man saying something would happen and it happened.

It wasn't that at all. He'd just had five solitary hours in the divine presence of Jehovah. God said that **is** faith.

I asked Smith Wigglesworth, "How do you get up in the morning?"

He said, "I put my feet on the floor, and I dance all over my room with my hands upraised."

An international evangelist. A man who ministered to tens of thousands. Wherever he went, you couldn't find an auditorium big enough for the people. The famous Smith Wigglesworth danced before the Lord for ten minutes the first thing every morning. Then he read the Word of God. Then he knelt and prayed. Then he counseled those in

need and answered his mail. These were his duties every day walking with God.

The first time I went to see him, I had just gotten off the train. I was all dressed up. I had my briefcase in one hand, an umbrella over my other wrist, and the London *Daily Express* under my arm. I rang the doorbell.

Smith answered it. He looked at me and said, "What's that under your arm?"

"The newspaper."

He said, "Leave it outside."

I said, "Pardon?"

"Leave it outside. I do not permit that trash in my house. Hitler and Mussolini will soon be in hell. Why should I permit those lies in my house? Leave it outside."

So I laid my newspaper down in the bushes until I got out of his house. I'd met a man who walked with God.

Few people have spent so much of their time talking and walking with God as this man. No wonder he was different. No wonder whole nations were shaken. They tell me in Sweden that nobody had ever shaken that nation like Wigglesworth did. They tell me in Switzerland that nobody ever had the crowds Smith Wigglesworth had. India, Africa—it was the same wherever he went.

He taught many things. One of them was that you don't have to get sick to die. And he died that way. He died in church, in a little vestry right off the pulpit. Some churches in England have the auditorium on the second floor. At age 87 he had walked up the twenty or so steps to the vestry. When inside, he suddenly fell to the floor. There was no pain, no sickness, no agony. Nothing. He just slipped away to Heaven. No doubt he wanted to die in the pulpit anyway, close to the thing he loved.

Men saw the fruits of his labors. But to know why they were there, one must see the sap inside the tree of life that flowed forth and produced that fruit. That is faith. It flows from a life that walks with God.

If you want living faith, then walk with God. If you are going to be worldly, you will miss it. Do what you please. I'm only telling you what

living faith is. If you want faith, you can walk with God and have it. If you don't walk with God, you won't have faith.

Multitudes of religious people don't walk with God. They walk with sinners. They're in love with the world, and they walk after material things. Their whole life flow has to do with that which is natural.

If you wish, you can isolate yourself from this world and say, "Dear old world, you've gone one way, but I'm going another." When you do, the world will call you funny names. But remember, the worst place to keep your happiness is in somebody else's head.

My happiness is not in anybody's head. What others think of me has nothing to do with my happiness. My happiness is a well of life inside that flows up out of me. When I'm with someone, I'm happy. When I'm by myself, I'm happy. My happiness has no relationship to people. My happiness has to do with God. In my communion with God I have happiness.

In any aspect of walking with the world, you cannot have God's power. You can have man's power. You can have man's pleasure. You can have all the things that belong to man. But you cannot have what is God's. Faith is God's power.

Faith is not an accident. You are not just born with it. It is a gift of God. And it comes into your life by set laws. Among these laws are:

1. Sacrifice produces faith.
2. Walking with God produces faith.

Let this become a moment of divine consecration in your life to walk with God. God calls that faith. You don't have to seek for it. You don't have to beg for it. You simply have it created within you through walking with God. What God has just rubs off on you, and you have it!

Faith Is a Labor

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Hebrews 11:7

If we could contact Noah, we would ask him about his faith. He would say something like this: “I knew wickedness was great in the land. Sin abounded. But I kept myself pure before God. One day as I was praying, God spoke to me and said, ‘Noah, I have to confide in you.’

“I said, ‘Lord, what is it?’”

“He said, ‘I must destroy the earth. I have decided to bring waters upon the earth. I have decided to let it rain.’”

At that, Noah would have said, “Oh, God, what is rain?”

Until that moment things had been watered from a mist that came up from the earth. They did not know storm clouds. They did not know swirling rains that fall with rapidity and strength.

So God said, “Noah, water will come down from heaven. Also, I will open the fountains of the deep. I will cover every high mountain with water.”

Noah had to accept or not accept something that had never before happened.

God said, “Noah, I will send the water. You must build a boat. Take with you on the boat seven pairs of each of the clean animals and one pair of the unclean to preserve them. Bring your household into the ark. I have accepted your family—your wife, your sons, and your sons’ wives. All other flesh upon the earth will be destroyed. I will preserve you, and you will be like unto Adam. From you will come all peoples that ever will walk upon the face of the earth.”

What a tremendous thing. It was bigger than Noah could imagine.

He could have said, "Now, Lord, I'm a farmer. I know how to plow. I don't even know what an ark is. I've never seen the big waters You are talking about. All I know is that if I plow and plant, we have plenty to eat. We're getting along fine."

God said, "Now listen, Noah. Right down through the middle of this field, I want you to lay out a diagram I will give you to build the boat."

Noah may have said, "Lord, I'm not a carpenter. I'm not a designer—especially of boats. Nevertheless, Lord, I will do as You ask."

Faith is a quality of the unknown. If you cannot move with God in the area of the unknown, you cannot demonstrate living, vital, pertinent faith before God. Noah demonstrated such faith to every succeeding generation.

He probably talked it over with his family. And they joined with him to build the ark God designed.

Until 1850 no boat sailed the seas as large as Noah's ark. Today men who know say that the dimensions of the ark given in the Bible are the best dimensions for floating dead weight.

God told Noah how to build it, and Noah said, "I'm willing to work for You."

That touches me deeply. Millions of people work for themselves alone. But I can tell you from the depths of my heart that since I was a boy, I've never worked for myself. I've only worked for God.

At 17 I became a minister and began to conduct meetings. To see souls saved I worked hard. I wouldn't take a day off. I'd finish on Sunday in one city and begin on Monday in another.

At 20 I became a missionary. I set off to go around the world with only twelve dollars. No denominations or churches supported me. God said, "Go," and I went.

You say, "How could you do that?"

Faith is the only answer we have for these things. Only faith can get it done. Faith is a labor, and I went off around the world laboring.

Sometimes I would ride on the backs of animals from daylight to

dark. Then I'd eat some food and talk to the people in the towns we came to every night. My bones ached while I preached to them, "I've come to tell you the story." They would say, "We've never heard a story like this. But we're glad to hear it." Muscles ached. I was so tired. Yet I continued.

I've continued through the years until this very moment. How? You can only do it through one strength—faith. Faith is labor. Faith is working for God.

Some years ago when I gave up my church in South Bend, Indiana, to go to the mission field, I called five or six outstanding ministers and said, "Would you like to have a great church?"

They said, "We'll come look at it."

When they came, they saw the church. They saw the radio program. They saw the print shop and the program of printing literature. They saw the bookstore. They saw the day school. They saw the nursery. They saw the school for the blind.

Then they said, "We don't want the job."

The first thing two or three of them wanted to know was if there was time to play golf every morning and if they could have at least two days off a week.

"A day off?" I said. "I don't know what you mean by a day off. I labor every day of my life for Jesus." And I'm not a fool. I do it because the dividends are there. One day I'll cash those dividends when I see Jesus. And He will say, "You worked for Me."

Faith has to do with labor. I didn't say it—God said it. God told Noah to build an ark, and He called the instrument that produced it faith.

Noah had no ability to do it, but he did it anyway. The powers of faith came into being, and he carried out the directions of the Holy Spirit as they were spoken to him. He obeyed and did the job.

You don't need a great amount of strength or ability to work for God. I read of a little lady who was an invalid. She wanted to work for Jesus, so she ordered tracts. She stamped on the back of them a few words telling where they could contact her if they needed more help. Then she sat by her window and waited for someone to walk by. She'd

pray over a tract and drop it out the window. Letters began to come back. Souls began to get saved. Soon she was getting more souls saved than most preachers in the town. She was an invalid, but she didn't quit working.

Faith is an act. Faith is a work. Most people think faith is something like witchcraft: "You die." "You live." "You come down." "You go up." No! Faith is reality. Faith is living. Faith is a gift to God's work. Faith is a walk with God. Faith is a labor. Bunions on your toes. Knees hard from kneeling and praying.

Martin Luther said, "It is a busy, active, living reality that does not ask, 'What shall I do?' But before the time that you ask, you're already up and doing it. This is faith."

Faith has to do with looking for a work to do and getting it done.

David's job was to kill a giant. David was a youth. The giant was a monster. David knew he couldn't combat him physically. He had to find another way. He had to have faith for it.

Faith is an act. Faith is a work. God would cause the giant to fall. But David had to work with what he had.

God never asks for what you don't have. Some say, "Oh, God, if I had a million dollars, I'd give it to You." Don't tell God lies. Give Him what you've got, and He believes it. Don't cry, "Oh, God, if..." Forget the word "if." There are no ifs, ands, or buts about it. We can do it, or we can't do it. We will do it, or we won't do it. Live in a world of dynamic reality. Start where you are with what you have.

David said, "I don't have a sword. I was offered one, but it didn't fit. But I do have a sling. Slings are not for warfare, but that's all I've got so I'll use it."

He took a smooth stone out of a brook, wound the sling, and threw it with all his might. Now that stone had to get past a lot of things. It first had to get past a man with a shield dancing up and down and sideways to keep anything from coming at Goliath. It had to get past Goliath's armor. God used His radar to direct the stone to an open place between the giant's eyes. Goliath was stunned. He fell to the ground. David ran and grabbed Goliath's sword and cut off his head. David manifested laboring faith.

That's the same kind of faith Noah had. And what a job he had to do. He had to lay down the timbers. They didn't have iron nails at the time, so he had to make some kind of nails or wooden plugs. We don't know how, but he began to put that thing together. He sweated. It was hard. He had callouses.

Not many people want to work for God. There are many who dream of it, but they're actually too lazy to do it. People talk about doing personal evangelism—going person to person and talking about Jesus—but it's only a dream. They are too lazy to do it. They say, “Maybe I don't have faith.” Faith is an act. Faith has to do with labor. If they had faith, it would demonstrate itself in labor.

I have lived in a hundred nations. I have preached in a thousand cities. But I have not found many people who really want to work for God. If they work, it's always for temporal purposes—to make money, etc. It is not to do something for God. It is not a labor of love—a labor because of intense love for God. Yet God calls that faith.

Are you still with me? Don't lay down this book now. Don't be like some who have heard me teach on faith. They begin to pray, “Lord, I was only joking. I don't really want faith.” When they come to the very essence of it and find faith is a sacrifice, they back off and say, “I don't want to make a sacrifice.” When they find faith is walking with God and has nothing to do with living a voluptuous life of the world, they say, “I want my freedoms.” They don't want to live close to God in prayer, in communion, in reading the Word, in blessing other people. They say, “We want faith, but we don't want to live close to God.” They **cannot** have faith. Then when it comes to the sweat, they say, “Wait a minute, I don't think I want that kind of thing.”

Are you willing to subject yourself to labor for Jesus?

Then rise up and say,

I am ready now to be sacrificial toward God. I am ready to walk with God. I am ready to work with God. Oh, God, put a desire for working within me that I will be like Noah, that I will build the Kingdom of God on the face of this earth. I dedicate my own brawn and strength to God.

That is faith!

Faith Is a Pilgrimage

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Hebrews 11:8-11

We have come now to one I really love: Faith is a pilgrimage.

If we could call Abraham down from Heaven (he won't come), we would say, "Abraham, we're excited about faith. God spoke highly of your faith. Tell us what faith is."

Abraham probably could not tell us the secret of his greatness because with him faith was a life, not a definition. He would only say something like this: "I was living in a big beautiful home in a culturally advanced city. I held a place of prominence in the area. I had flocks and much pasture land around the city. The great Euphrates flowed down in front of us, and we had lots of water. We seemingly had all we needed. But God spoke to me and said, 'Separate yourself from this people. Separate yourself from this sinful worshiping of idols and the devil.'

"Then He said, 'Separate yourself from this beautiful home. I want you to live in a tent the rest of your life. Never again will you live in a house.' (Isn't that beautiful! Live in a tent the rest of your life!)

"But God also said, 'I am going to make you a great person. I am going to give you a country. I want you to go to that country now.'"

I can hear Abraham say, "Well, Lord, very interesting. Do You have a map?"

The Lord said, “No, I don't give maps. Every day I will guide you for that day. I will bring you into that country where you shall live. And, Abraham, I will whisper this to you: *I have a city not made with human hands. One day you can live in that city.*”

So Abraham left looking for a city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God. Abraham knew about the New Jerusalem! Isn't that amazing!

Abraham left a city looking for a city.

“Oh,” you say, “the city he left was only a primitive town.”

Wrong. It was a very great city. The Museum of Natural History in London has on display relics of the early Chaldees. There I have seen the beautiful gold filigree work of their artisans. I have seen sections of their intricate below-street-level sewage system.

“Sewage system? In that day?” Yes!

They had cobblestone streets. It was not a second-rate town. It was not a village. It was a city of comfort, beauty, and riches.

God said, “Abraham, give it up. Give up your friends. Give up the philosophers you talk with. Give up the whole thing, Abraham, and follow Me.”

Abraham did it! Faith is a pilgrimage.

You can't tell how strong someone is by his surroundings. He might die for his job. He wouldn't give it up for anything. They pay him to work on the Lord's day and he obeys. He may be bound to his home. He'd die for that house he built. He loves it above everything. Such a one is not a pilgrim. He is very well settled.

God may never want you to give up everything. But He wants you *willing* to do it. He wants you to say from your heart, “Lord, I am willing to do it.”

There are people who say, “Brother Sumrall, I'm supposed to preach. God told me to.”

I say, “Why don't you preach?”

“Well, I haven't gotten into it.”

Then usually I know, and I say, “God doesn't want you to preach.

God wants you *willing* to preach. After you say, 'Lord, I'm willing,' He wants you to go ahead and do your work. But you must be willing.

You must not be a rebel. You must not say, 'Nothing doing.'"

God wanted Abraham to go into action. His faith was demonstrated by a pilgrimage. He gave up his friends. He gave up his land and his home. He gave up everything. He walked out of Ur of the Chaldees looking for a city that had foundations whose builder and maker was God. And God called it faith.

Several years ago I sat at a table in a big restaurant with a minister and his wife. I'm a missionary. I've always been a missionary. I've lived in over a hundred nations. I've preached around this world many times. My heart is missions. Missions flows through me all the time. So I was talking to them about missions.

The man looked at me and said, "Brother Sumrall, God has called me to India. God told me that if I will go to a certain city in India (and he named it), He will give me a great move of the Spirit of God and hundreds, even thousands, will be saved. Oh, I want to go so badly I don't know what to do."

I didn't know it, but he was telling me this because of his wife. I soon learned it, however, because she suddenly burst out crying. Then she began to talk. Her face got red in anger.

"If you want to go to India, go by yourself!"

I looked at him. I looked at her.

I've got the nicest wife in the world. She'd go to the moon with me if I'd provide two tickets. Anywhere I've asked her to go, she was always ready. The Philippines. Hong Kong. We lived in Israel during a war. I had to say, "Honey, the American government will give us free tickets out of here to go home. Do you want them?" She said, "No, I'll stay with you. We'll go through the war together." She wasn't afraid. When we went to the Philippines, the war in Korea was red hot and burning. I said, "Honey, it's a flaming war. Do you want to go?" She said, "Let's go." I have a wonderful wife. She's part of me. She flows with me. All I have to say is, "Let's do it," and she says, "Let's do it now."

I thank God for a wife like her. Perhaps that's why I was so shocked at this woman's outburst. She cried, "I will not go to India. I will not live

with those dirty, filthy people. I will not be without my refrigerator. I will not be without my conveniences here in my home. I will not. I will die before I will go.”

Her husband began to comfort her, “Now, darling.”

I have watched that minister from that day to this. And I have not seen many smiles on his face. He has suffered defeats in many areas of life. He wasn't a pilgrim.

I want to tell you something. If Sarah had wanted to stay in Ur of the Chaldees, she never would have seen Abraham's face again. Abraham was leaving. If she had not wanted to go, she could have stayed there and died there. Abraham might have left her his house, too. He was a rich man. But Abraham was going to obey God.

Faith is a personal affair. You have it. Your spouse has it. Your children have it. If you are head of the house, your faith should flow out to the whole family. But faith is an individual thing. I can't have faith for you. You can't have faith for me. We must each have our own living, glorious, marvelous, wonderful faith. Abraham didn't have all the faith in his house. Sarah left all, too.

Faith is an act. Abraham loaded his camels and donkeys with goods. His wagons came out of there and started north up the river. He rode out of the city and said, “Goodbye.” He cut communication with that land. He became a pilgrim.

A Pilgrim Spirit

You can have a pilgrim spirit without physically leaving everything. Abraham had a pilgrim spirit. He didn't love the things of the world. He loved God. We must all have that pilgrim spirit. “Lord, I'll go where You want me to go. I'll do what You want me to do.” That is the spirit of a pilgrim that flows through us and says, “Lord, I've cut all the ropes. What do You want?”

God spoke to me at three o'clock one afternoon and said, “Go live in Manila, Philippines, for Me.”

I said, “Lord, I've been to Manila. Ninety percent of it is in ruins. I've seen rats as big as cats there. Lord, do You want me and my family to go live in that place?”

God said, "I certainly do. And I'll do more for you there than ever before."

I prayed a little longer in my room. God spoke to me three times and said the same thing. I walked downstairs where my wife was cooking dinner.

I said, "Honey, we're going to Manila."

She had never before heard a word about it. She looked into my eyes and dropped her cooking spoon. Tears came to her eyes. She said, "When are we going?"

I said, "Tonight."

"Oh," she said, "we can't go tonight."

I said, "Yes."

That night I called in the deacons of the church and resigned. I said, "I'm going." And I put into action the whole force.

I left my home. I left my church. You may think it's hard to leave a home. You ought to have to leave a church of a thousand people—many of whom you brought to Jesus, all of whom are yours. Just to walk off and leave them. You don't know pain. You don't know sorrow. But when God says do it, you do it. Within a few days, I'd placed them with a pastor and I'd taken off for Manila to work for God.

There's where He did the miracle for me. In two years we had seven to eight thousand coming to church on Sunday. In two years the whole nation had heard I was there. The power of God had come and done great wonders in the nation. In one revival meeting one hundred and fifty thousand came to Jesus.

Why would He do all those things? I was His pilgrim. I didn't love my home in South Bend. I didn't love my church building in South Bend. I said, "Lord, it's Yours."

That is faith. I didn't realize it was faith when I did it. God told me that later. I just thought it was obeying God. But that is faith. Faith is a pilgrimage.

Are you ready to cut anything God will have you cut? To become a pilgrim? To walk with God and say, "Lord, I'm not married to the things of this world"?

If God were to ask me to leave our television stations, our radio station, our great church, our international headquarters, and all the ministry we have, I wouldn't lose one night's rest. I'd say, "Praise God! Now we've got something big to do. Let's get going now, Lord." My faith in God is such that anything He removes I accept as His will. He'd just get that out of the way to provide something bigger.

Yet some are so afraid of their jobs. They're so afraid of their houses. They're so afraid of the mundane things around them until they're married to them. And they don't have faith.

Faith is a pilgrimage. Are you willing to go with God? Abraham did.

Can you see his grim face that morning when with a big stick in his hand he went plowing out of the city?

Can you hear the inhabitants laughing, "Oh, there goes a fool! We won't ever hear from you anymore!"

As it turned out, no one hears of them anymore. Nothing but a sand dune is there now. But Abraham! The whole world has heard of Abraham!

Imagine a man with such capacity that at the Voice of God he cut everything loose. To him, he was walking into oblivion. There were no guarantees. Nothing was out there but God. So He walked and talked with God in faith.

Sometimes through disaster or persecution people lose houses and businesses. What would *you* do? Commit suicide? Or would you be joyful and rejoice in the Lord? In some countries people lose their jobs because they don't go along with the government's atheistic stand. What would *you* do?

Faith is a pilgrimage with God—just breaking loose from everything and saying, "Lord, have Your way. I'm walking with You."

What a glorious life it is! What a thrilling, magnificent situation you can have within your heart! Faith is the most wonderful thing. Faith could change this world if we had men and women who would pay the price for having it.

Too many say, "We don't want any. Number one: we don't want to give to God. Number two: we don't want to walk with God. Number

Faith Is a Pilgrimage

three: we don't want to work for God. And for God's sake, we don't want to be a pilgrim! We want to get anchored down. We want security.”

The world is being destroyed by what people call security.

My strength is in God. My security is in God. I depend on no one but Jesus Christ. I am tied to nothing but Jesus Christ.

Faith is a pilgrimage.

Faith Is a Woman's Courage

Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable.

Hebrews 11:11, 12

There are, and there have been, many great women of faith. Some of these women have touched my own life. My mother blessed my life. She taught me about God. She lived a life that made me want to discover God.

Women of faith have performed monumental works of blessing and glory, especially on the mission fields of the world. There was a time when there were at least three women missionaries on the field to one male missionary. At home, women of faith have risen up like towers of strength to bless the Church. They are real. They challenge the devil.

The Bible says that faith gave Sarah strength to conceive a son named Isaac. Her husband, Abraham, was one hundred years old when Isaac was born. (Gen. 21:5.) Sarah was ninety. Ishmael, the half-Egyptian boy brought into the scene by Hagar the maidservant, was fourteen. With these numbers in mind, we see how persistent Sarah's faith was.

Some pray for something three minutes and when they don't get it, they say, "Shucks!" That's all they get, too.

Sarah didn't operate in hope. Hope has no foundations that will persist. Hope can be blinded. Hope can be hurt. Hope can be placed into an embarrassing position where it says, "Well, I was only hoping for it anyway."

But faith is a strength, a tower, a fort. Faith is an impregnable mountain that will not move. Faith persists; it has staying power.

It may be that with the other people we have talked about their aspect of faith was easier. Enoch walked with God. That wasn't bad. Abel gave an excellent sacrifice. That wasn't too hard. You give what you see and feel. Sarah accepted faith as living fact. That's what made her famous. The Bible says that through this thing called faith she accepted a promise as a fact.

The key word to Sarah's faith is "because." The Bible says,

... because she judged him (God) faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable.

Hebrews 11:11, 12

If we could speak to her and ask, "Sarah, God said you had faith. What is faith?" she would reply, "Since God said it, that is the final word on the subject."

Sarah judged God to be faithful as He had promised.

We consult our neighbors. We consult our relatives. "What do you think?" we ask them. If they're not spiritual, they think a lot of foolish things. Sometimes those who are spiritual don't have a relationship of faith as you have, so they think you are foolish.

The Bible does not say Abraham had the faith for this boy. It says Sarah did. She would tell us the secret of her faith when she said, **"Because I judged Him faithful Who had promised."**

When God makes a promise to you, me, or anybody, He will fulfill that promise. When God says He will do something, He doesn't want us to cringe and say, "Well, maybe." There are no maybe's with God.

Why Sarah Had to Believe

After the Fall in the Garden of Eden, God gave the first remarkable promise of man's redemption:

And I will put enmity between thee (Lucifer) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Genesis 3:15

The seed of woman would break Satan's lordship.

From that moment Satan sought to stop it from happening. He didn't know how long it would take. Every time he saw something developing, he attempted to stop it. That's why Cain killed Abel. It wasn't that they were so angry with each other. It was that the devil moved in and said, "If I can have one of them kill the other, the one left is a murderer. They won't bruise my head."

Years later God said to Abraham, **"I will make of thee a great nation... and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed"** (Gen. 12:2, 3). Through Abraham God would bring a Redeemer for the whole world.

The devil thought, *I've got to stop that*. And I believe he closed the womb of this woman. This was a diabolical thing. Sarah wasn't just fighting nature—she was fighting all the forces of Hell.

You may be doing the same thing and are unaware of it. That's where we fail. We think we're fighting natural things. If you want something from God and you're not getting it, start resisting the devil. Don't start fighting your family.

For seventy years Sarah waited. She was married seventy years with no child. After five years people began to talk: "What's the matter, Sarah? Everybody is having babies but you. You must be a really sinful person."

If something goes wrong, that's the first thing the devil throws at you, "You're not living right." He's a liar. He knows you're living right.

Women holding their own babies may have said to Sarah, "God doesn't care much for you." Yes, God cared a lot for her.

Just because the devil is persecuting you does not mean God doesn't love you.

I think I know what Sarah did during the time she waited. If she hadn't done it, she never would have had the child. I think every morning when she got up she took her pillow, put it in her arms, hugged it tightly, and said, "Good morning, darling. How are you, my son?" Then she danced all over her tent singing a lullaby to her baby.

Her maids, Hagar especially, laughed, "Ha! Ha! Ha! Our mistress is getting ready. She's getting gray hair and wrinkles. But she's getting no

babies. After all, there are laws of nature.”

Who said God has to work with the laws of nature? He made them. He could reverse them right now if He wanted to and everything would work opposite to what it's been working. Wouldn't that mess up things for a while? God is no servant to the laws of nature. And neither are we.

Every morning as Sarah danced around the tent, she said: “I'm going to have him. It doesn't matter if I'm 40 and the way of women is ceasing... It doesn't matter if I'm fifty and it's been gone for ten years... It doesn't matter if I'm sixty... seventy... eighty ... I'll have him at ninety!”

Faith holds on, and Sarah was holding. She held tightly to the last moment when it all began to happen.

I can tell you what the others said after they saw her stomach growing. They said, “She's too old to have a baby. She'll die in childbirth.”

Don't listen to the devil. He'll try to keep you in more trouble than you can imagine. With him, *nothing* works. With us, *everything* works. Glory be to God, we make it work!

Quitters don't make anything work. People who become discouraged show they have lost their source of faith. If you let your source of faith dry up, there's no blessing. Our source of faith is to involve ourselves as Sarah did in the promises of God. I can get completely hilarious just by reading the promises of God. “Whewie! Just look at all I've got here!”

Sarah's source of strength was demonstrated in her confession, “I believe Him to be faithful Who has promised. I accept what He said.” She walked on the promises of God.

Most people walk on their feelings. “Oh, yes, Brother Sumrall said I was healed, but...” They're not healed now. That little three-letter word took care of everything. They're full of unbelief and doubt. “But I don't feel healed.” They're in the soul. They've missed the place of faith—the spirit—and they're in their soulical parts.

Sarah could have died without a child. God could have found another woman. He could have found another man. No human is indispensable to God. But when you've got faith and the devil is attacking you, hang in there. God will be with you. Just hang in there! When it looks the worst, that's when it's getting better. When it seems as though it

won't work, that's when it's already working. That's what faith is all about.

Natural-minded people never have understood people of faith. When Sarah acted every day as though she had a son and talked about it, saying, "I will have a son," not one woman in the whole area believed it. They all said, "All history is against you. All experience is against you. All knowledge is against you." That's where faith begins—at the end of that business.

Sarah had to have said, "I am resting on the promise of God." Catch the word *resting*. Some are *irritated* on the promises of God, but faith rests. The Bible says, **"For we which have believed do enter into rest..."** (Heb. 4:3). One in faith says, "I am resting on the promises of God. I've learned to sleep during the storm. Let the waves rage. Let the winds blow. There is sleep."

Until you can learn to rest in the promises of God, they are not valid to you. If your insides burn and roll in turmoil, these promises will not be for you. You have to know that God keeps His promises, and you have to rest in them. That's what Sarah did. She was not tormented. She rejoiced in the promises of God. That's the way you get them.

Sarah was no nervous wreck. She didn't come out in the morning with her hair going four dozen ways, saying, "Oh, my God! My God!" When she came out, she looked like a princess—that was her name. At 75 she was so pretty, they thought she was a girl.

This woman knew God would move the constellations before He would fail her. She knew God would make it come to pass. She stands as a Gibraltar of fidelity and faith.

We look not only to her, but to her daughters after her: Jochebed, the mother of Moses; Miriam, the amazing sister of Moses; Esther, the queen of an empire; and Mary, the mother of Jesus. If you knew Mary a little better, Mary might say, "If God can do it for my great-grandmother, Sarah, He can do it for me. If she was a hundred years old and conceived, then I can conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost."

That faith did not remain just in Sarah's bosom; it flowed down through centuries. We trust that today it is in all our hearts and that we will see a woman to change the world by believing the promises of God.

Sarah's faith was believing and accepting the promises of God. The

promises of God are sure. Let's believe them. Let's accept them. Let's live by them. They are not just for the ladies. They're for everybody. And as we do what Sarah did, the same God Who answered her prayers will answer ours.

Faith Is a Choice

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

Hebrews 11:23-29

Moses' parents *decided* to go against the king's command. They were not afraid. God called their *decision* faith.

Such people are mission builders. They are city builders. They are not afraid of a shadow. Thank God for courage. Thank God for people who know what they believe and believe it with all their hearts. It's no shame to go to jail for the right thing. Some of the greatest men in history lived in jail. It's a shame to do wrong. It's no shame to do right, no matter how you are persecuted.

Moses *chose* to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. And God called Moses' *choice* faith.

Faith is a *decision*.

Faith is a *choice*.

Moses' parents made a decision. The wicked king of Egypt said, "Every Israelite boy baby must die." Jochebed, the mother of Moses, said, "That's all *you* know. I've got other designs for my son."

Jochebed said, "I'll give my baby to the queen, and let her rear him for me." She must have prayed, "God, I'm going to put him in a basket in the river right where the princess comes to bathe. Lord, I want him to be reared in the palace, not killed in the gutter."

What a woman! We need mothers like that today. That's faith. That's decision. That's choice.

That's making history. That's not living by the whims of society. That's making society. The man she produced changed the world.

She had faith in her heart. She took her little baby, wrapped him up, put him in a basket in the Nile River, and shoved him over to where the princess bathed. She put her daughter, Miriam, to watch over the infant with these orders, "When the princess finds him, only say, 'Who do you want to take care of him?' Then come get me, honey."

Talk about faith! Faith is a decision.

What kind of decisions are you making? Decisions of doubt? Decisions of confusion? Are you crying, "Oh, what's going to happen to me tomorrow?" If you are, you don't have faith.

I'm not afraid of tomorrow. I'm not afraid of communism. I'm not afraid of revolution. I'm not afraid of anything. I'm making the decisions for tomorrow myself. You've got to do the same thing. That's faith—living, dynamic faith; faith that changes the world!

Moses' family lived faith. They had the real thing. You know the story. The princess found the babe. Little Miriam came running up and said, "Don't you want a nurse to take care of this little one? I can find one for you."

The princess said, "Well, yes. He's so pretty."

Miriam brought her mother and said, "This lady will take care of him real cheap."

Imagine getting paid to take care of your own child. That's decision for you.

But the big decisions came from Moses. He lived forty years in the palace. He knew all the wisdom of Egypt at its highest peak of empire. When Egypt was at its richest, highest, and greatest, Moses rose up in the palace. He played around the throne. He kissed the princess. The Pharaoh embraced him and loved him.

It must have angered the devil to see how Jochebed had said, "It's got to be," and how she pushed it by her faith. Things happened then because of faith, and they happen now by faith.

Moses stayed in the palace until he was forty, then that spirit of his mother got into him and said, "All right, you've had enough of intellectualism. You've had enough of riches. It's time now to get into My business. Let's get going and deliver the people out of this bondage."

At forty years of age, when it was time for him to sit on the throne, Moses stood before the whole kingdom and said, "I am not a Pharaoh. I am not the son of the Pharaoh's daughter. I am a Hebrew. I will suffer with my people. I refuse to sit upon that golden throne with a golden scepter and rule this rich and flourishing empire. I will live with the slaves."

Would you have done that? Think twice. Don't lie to yourself. Would you give up your job for Jesus' sake? Would you give up your house for Jesus' sake? Would you give up your relatives for Jesus' sake?

This man had something. He was to sit on the throne and be Pharaoh III, or something like that. But that's all he would ever have been. He could have enjoyed his riches and died. But he didn't. He became immortalized.

The Bible says he did it through this instrument of faith we've been talking about. It wasn't anything else. God said faith did it, so that means faith is a decision. It's a choice you make.

Moses said, "I refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. I choose to accept my people in their bondage and slavery." He chose to take off his royal garments and to put on the slave's garment.

He mistakenly thought he could help his people in his own strength, however. He thought he could use the wisdom and strength of Egypt. He

thought perhaps he could lure out half the army on his side.

God said, "That's not the way." God had to send him to the desert for forty years to get Moses out of Egypt. God can get you out of Egypt (a type of sin) quicker than he can get Egypt out of you. You can get saved quickly. But God has a hard time getting some of the rotten stuff out of you that somebody else put in. It took God a few minutes to an hour to get Moses out of the country, but it took Him forty years to get Egypt out of Moses.

When God got it all out, He sent Moses back as a mighty man. But this time with no swords, just a staff in his hand. This time Moses had God's power, not man's power. This time he was making decisions of faith to save God's people and to affect the world.

I have a little saying: "You make a decision; the decision makes you."

Some make negative decisions, and they are negative people. Make positive decisions and be a positive person.

You can see it in natural life. Henry Ford had a conviction that automobiles could be mass produced. Nobody else had that conviction. They said that a man had to make every piece of an automobile and put them together by hand. They said only the wealthy could ever afford one. But Ford said, "None of this! Put it on the line. Let every man screw a screw and make it cheap." Before he died, even the janitor cleaning the floor had an automobile, and Ford left over a billion dollars behind. It was because of a decision he made.

Frank Winfield Woolworth was a small town merchant. But he had a conviction within him: stock a whole store with five-and-ten-cent goods; then through the selling of masses of it, you'd get rich. It worked. He had to forget the kind of store he had and say, "I'm going to build stores like this throughout the world." When he died, Mr. Woolworth left over sixty million dollars for his family. He made a decision, then the decision made him.

Oh, if we could get Christians to make decisions of faith! The Bible declares that the just shall live by faith. Our existence is to be by faith.

I don't know how spiritual Ford and Woolworth were, but they each made a decision. They made a choice. They made a good one, and it worked.

If you can come to that, you will never again be the same. Most of us have great opportunities in our lives. If we say no to them, we lose them. If we accept them and the challenge that goes with them, we can change the world.

Look what Moses did. He led more than two million out of Egypt to Mount Sinai and God. He received the Law upon which every nation that has good law today bases its law. Nothing man ever has conceived in the history of the world can beat the Ten Commandments. The Mosaic Law incorporates a judicial system and a family system.

Moses' mother made a decision. Moses made a decision of faith. Faith is a decision. Are you ready to make some? Are you ready to make a choice and stick by it? A positive choice? A God choice? Then that is faith!

Faith on a String

By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

Hebrews 11:31

Now this is a most audacious scripture. Imagine naming a harlot right after Moses in this passage! Imagine putting a harlot with Abraham and Sarah, then classifying her as having the same faith, the same force, and the same power! A harlot somehow slipped into this great gallery of heroes. Her picture is up there on the wall alongside Enoch and all the marvelous people of Hebrews, chapter eleven.

How did she make it? God said it was by faith.

I'm glad to get to this chapter because now you will believe that you can have it. It doesn't matter how far down you've gone. God can bring you up into the celebrity group and make you one of the great faith heroes of our time. If a harlot can make it, *you* can. It doesn't matter if you've been in jail, on drugs, sold your body for sin, or whatever. If you will come to God and believe Him, your name can be enrolled in the gallery of faith heroes with the beautiful memorial under your picture: Here is a person of faith.

“By faith the harlot Rahab....” The Bible is a candid book. It calls a spade a spade. It calls a harlot a harlot. Jesus said He cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalene. Until the day she died, she was Mary Magdalene out of whom were cast seven devils. The Bible is a book of truth. How glad we are for the truth!

“By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not....” It wasn't that Rahab was any better than anybody else in Jericho. No doubt there were people in that city a thousand degrees better than she was. But she became the person she became because she believed. Her whole city mocked God and worshiped images. She wouldn't do it. She believed. She was different from everybody else in town. Because of

it, her house stood when every other house fell.

Would your home stand when every other house in town went to pieces? What kind of home are you building? Rahab built hers on faith. The Bible says she did it by faith—not with brains, not with money. She believed something.

I call this chapter “Faith on a String” because of the string Rahab put outside the window to identify her house. It was a red string. Some have said it typifies the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

By her faith she perished not with them that believed not. You don't have to die with this generation. You don't have to go to Hell with this generation. You don't have to suffer the diseases of this generation because the Bible says, **“... by whose stripes ye were healed”** (1 Pet. 2:24).

Oh, you'll have to have faith. You'll have to resist. You'll have to fight. But you will win. Faith is a wonderful thing.

Rahab perished not with them that believed not. They just would not believe. If they had believed, they'd have opened their doors and let in the people of Israel, saying: “Come in. We welcome you. We give up our gods. We serve no other God but Jehovah. We become your servants.” Immediately the whole city would have changed. There would have been no falling of the walls of Jericho. But they would not do it. They trusted in themselves. They trusted in idols. They blasphemed Jehovah. When Israel walked around the walls six days, the people laughed at them and said they were crazy. But they soon found out they were not crazy. On the seventh day the walls fell!

Only one person had sense to see it—Rahab.

Justified by Works

Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. James 2:25 says,

Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

Rahab was justified by her actions of faith. What were they? Let's

look back at some excerpts from the Old Testament account:

And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there.

And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country.

And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were:

But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.

And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof;

And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:

And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business, and it shall be, when the Lord hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.

Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall.

And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the

pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.

And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear.

Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee.

Joshua 2:1, 3-4, 6, 8-18

Rahab's faith had corresponding actions. She looked for the two spies and said, "Come into my house. You won't be safe anywhere else." When they came looking for them, she hid them in the flax on top of her house.

She must have been industrious. Flax is what they made cloth and many other things from in those days.

She must have been clever to have had a house on the wall. She had the fresh air. She could look out over the plains. It was a place of prestige.

She must have been strong. She let them down over the wall.

She knew how to do things—she wasn't stupid. She told the men how to save themselves and then to save her and her house. The men of Israel followed her advice.

She was a woman of faith. She knew God would give them the city. She made up her own mind. She decided to believe in the God of Israel when no one else in her culture did.

So it was by these works of hers that she was saved. Faith is an act. Faith is works. Faith is not dead; it is a living, working thing. You have to know that, or you can never have faith.

Her entire family was sheltered under the shadow of her faith. If you can have faith, it will be a shelter to your whole house.

Faith is a power. Faith is an anointing. Faith is a light. Faith is a strength. Faith is not an idea. Faith is not an abstraction. Faith is real. You can have more faith by faith acts—by faith doing.

Joshua and the children of Israel burned the city with fire after the

walls fell, but not before they had brought out Rahab's entire house.

What a tremendous thing it was that she went in and became a part of the people of God, a part of the house of God. In fact, she became part of the very lineage of the Messiah. She is listed in Matthew, chapter one, in the lineage of David. When she got into Israel, she married right. She didn't marry some stupid little idiot. She got into a good family. She was a good woman. She lived right.

When you come to Jesus, He forgives the past. Your neighbors may scar you forever, but God won't. When you come and show yourself to have faith in God, He forgives and eliminates the past. He casts it into the sea of His forgetfulness and never remembers your past again. He puts up a little sign: DEVIL, NO FISHING HERE. You're free forever. You don't have to bear the scarlet of the past. You can bear the righteousness of God—the white righteousness of His robes about you, cleanliness, holiness, and purity that come by living faith in the living God.

Out of the fallen city of Jericho, one family rose up strong. They didn't come out as slaves. They didn't come out downtrodden. When they walked out of there, they said, “We helped deliver this city into your hands. Now we come to you to believe in your God and to serve Him and be a part of you.”

Rahab got with the right kind of people. She came right into the family of the Messiah. And the Bible says it all happened by faith.

Where did she get her faith?

According to her words, she said, “We heard how you have been delivered from Egypt.” That happened forty years before, but she heard the story and believed it.

She was strong-minded. She knew what she wanted, and she went after it with all her might. She made up her mind. She said: “I believe these stories. I like this God that is with the people of Israel. I don't know Him, but I'm going to know Him someday. I have heard of all the things God did since you came out of Egypt until this day, and I believe God will deliver this land unto you.”

That is faith. She heard and she believed.

Do you believe what you hear? Or do you say, “I don't believe that.”

When I tell about Clarita Villanueva, the girl who was delivered from the devil's power in the Philippines, some say, "I don't know about that story."

I'm a funny fellow. I don't ask people to believe anything. They can believe if they want to—but I have to tell it because it is true. And I don't say, "Now, do you believe?" I leave it with them.

Rahab believed. Then she put her belief into action. She began to do something. When these men came, she accepted strangers. She said, "I accept you. I believe in you." She said, "I'll put my life on the line. If they find me, they'll kill me. I'll be dead and you will, too. But they won't find us. I'm too clever for them. I'll secure you. I'll hide you under the flax on top of my roof."

You say, "But she lied."

Yes. She was not a godly woman at that time. She was to move into that once she was delivered. Once she moved into the people of God, she would be taught the Ten Commandments. She would be taught things that are right, and she would do them from that time. Right then, however, she only knew what she wanted to be. She knew the church she wanted to join. She knew the group she wanted to be with, and she found a way to get in there. So she preserved these men. She let them go over the wall. She let them go free. She said, "I let you go free for one thing—save me that we can be a part of you."

She became a greater part than she'd ever dreamed. Maybe she thought she'd never be more than a servant, but God's too good for that. God saw the faith and courage that was in her. God said, "I'll do great things for you. You're the kind of person who pleases Me, a person who believes in Me. I count that for faith." So He included her in the beautiful story He wrote on faith in Hebrews, chapter eleven.

We might downgrade her. We might spit upon her, but not God. God can do things men cannot do.

I preached in Alaska just before World War II. I met the mayor of the city and his wife. Someone told me their story. (There are always gossipers around.)

The mayor was a bachelor. He made a lot of money with gold, then got into politics and became mayor. There were few women there then.

The men went down into the red light district. The mayor did, too. He found a girl there that he really liked.

He said, "Honey, do you want to be a harlot?"

She said, "No, but I have to make a living."

"Would you like to get out of here?"

"Yes."

"If I were to make you my wife, would you be a good woman?"

"Yes."

He took a girl out of the red light district and made her "Mrs. Mayor." When I met her, she was the most gracious person. Behind her back, others said, "Oh, she came out of the red light district," but to her face in government functions, she was Mrs. Mayor. She was first lady, and they had to admit it and accept it. She rose up out of her condition.

Anyone can. Faith can bring you out when nothing else can. By faith Rahab the harlot married into the lineage of David and Solomon and the Messiah Jesus.

Won't you rise up and believe God?

Faith is one of the vital issues of life. If you have it, you go places, you get things, you do things that never could have been without the great flowing power of faith.

Faith is of God. You get it from God, and it flows through you. It can bring you from the lowest to the highest. It can do things for you you could never do in your own brawn or brain. You do them through the strength of the greatest force in the world—faith.

Jesus said,

All things are possible to him that believeth.

Mark 9:23

The Faith Galaxy of Blood, Sweat, and Tears

And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Hebrews 11:32-34

Faith takes on new dimensions in these verses. Yet they are part of the whole. You wouldn't understand faith if you didn't see these facets of it.

Take, for instance, this statement: **“out of weakness were made strong”** (v. 34). Men who had no courage, no strength, no ability—in their weaknesses faith caused them to be the opposite. No longer weak and defeated, they moved into a positive position through the power and strength of faith.

They were cowards, but God said, “No, you can do something else. You can fight, and you can win.”

Then they waxed valiant (that's brave) in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

God said they did what they did by the power of faith. If God said it, we must accept it. It might cause us to see the whole world and all of history in a different way. We might have to come to realize that men such as General Montgomery and General Eisenhower actually won a war through faith.

Gideon

God said Gideon had faith. Judges 6:11 introduces this man:

And there came an angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.

Gideon was hiding from his enemies. He wasn't courageous. But he became a warrior and the sixth judge of Israel. The Bible says he did it by faith.

Gideon's faith is seen when God finally convinced him to go out to war. But he was difficult to convince. First he had to have a fleece of wool all wet and the ground around it dry. (Judges 6:37.) Then he had to have the ground wet and the fleece dry. You might say he threatened God twice to see for sure if God wanted him to do it.

When he finally went out, thirty-two thousand men gathered to help. God looked them over and said, **"Gideon, this is too many."** Now the enemy forces numbered one hundred thousand or more. But God said thirty-two thousand were too many—Israel might think they had won in their own strength. (Judges 7:2.) He told Gideon to send everybody home who was fearful and didn't want to fight. The ranks quickly reduced to ten thousand.

But God said, "You've still got too many."

Gideon said, "Lord, can't You count? I've only got ten thousand left."

"Too many!"

Then He tried them for Gideon. He said, "Send them to get a drink of water. Those who lap water with their tongues as a dog with their armor still in their hands, keep. Those who lay down their armor and get down on their knees to drink, send home."

Out of ten thousand, three hundred were left.

That's where some would lose heart. But that's where the power of faith came in. The strength of faith is not out there when you are winning the battle. The strength of faith is in the matter of decisions. Gideon's faith showed when he said, "I won't quit. Even though I had thirty-two thousand reduced to ten, I won't quit." When that was reduced to three

hundred, he said, "I still won't quit."

Gideon took his three hundred—the strangest bunch of fighters you've ever seen. They all went home and got a pot out of their wives' kitchens. The pots were made of baked mud. Gideon told them to put a candle in each pot. Then he said, "When I blow the trumpet, hit the pot, and let your little light shine."

Now that didn't *seem* the way to win the battle. But it worked! When you think everything related to victory in your life has to be "two plus two equals four," you're wrong! God can make two plus two equal two hundred if He wants to. He can take that which is not and make it be. He can take that which does not exist and make it exist. God has power—sovereign power—to change things. No man can stop Him. This is when you know what faith really is. This is when you know whether or not a person has it. Those who do obey God.

Gideon's army broke their pots. The enemy saw the lights and began to fight each other. Gideon's men gave chase and received their enemy's wealth. There was a tremendous victory for God, and God called it faith.

Faith is courage. When you are reduced, you don't quit. Then when you are reduced again, you don't quit. When God says, "Go against a major enemy," you go. And you win. The victory is the fruit of faith.

Sometimes we only see the fruit of faith. We can't see what made it go. We say of men, "He's great. He has faith." But we have no idea what he went through behind the scenes. We only behold the fruit of his faith. The fruit of faith tastes sweet. The bitterness was back there at decision-making time. If faith was not back there, there would never be any fruit to see.

We're so often blind to what *really* is faith and *really* makes faith work. All we see are the beautiful apples already grown, picked, polished, and on the shelf. Some would even rather have them cut up for them. They like it very comfortable.

But faith has to do with things that are sometimes terrible. God said Gideon won these battles by faith. God reduced him to such a small number. Man didn't do it—God did, because God wanted the glory for it. That's what faith is all about anyway: God getting the glory for something that should happen, and then it does happen.

Barak

God said Barak had faith. His faith is a little difficult to discover. Judges 4:6, 7 tells us about him:

And she (Deborah) sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?

And I will draw unto thee... Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.

Here a woman told a man what the Lord already had said. She put it in the form of a question: "Has not the Lord told you to do it?"

Deborah was a prophetess who judged the land of Israel. God's people were challenged to go to war.

Their enemy had oppressed them twenty years with multitudes of people and nine hundred chariots of iron.

Deborah said, "Barak, has not God told you to go?"

Barak said, "I won't go unless you go."

Now I might accept as a form of weakness a man's saying he wouldn't go unless the lady went. What if men said, "Yes, I'll go fight for my country, but my wife has to come along, too"? There would be some unusual battlefields with thousands of men hanging on to their wives.

The remarkable thing is the Bible says Barak had faith. Where does his faith come in? It was inspired by a woman. She called him to what God had said—the Word of God—and he latched onto it.

They did go. Deborah went with him. The enemy's armies were defeated. Barak was not even permitted to destroy Sisera himself. Another woman was permitted to destroy him. Jael put a nail through his head. (Judges 4:21.)

Barak's faith was that if someone had heard from God, he would accept it. He had a meek spirit. He would be subject to someone else. And his faith was that when the Lord said, "Go," he went.

As I said, faith has so many avenues, so many dispositions, so many movements until it becomes a remarkable thing. It may be that each one of the four billion people on earth could have a different aspect of faith. That would mean faith is so inexhaustible all the preachers in the world would never get through telling about it.

Faith is so unique. It may be that your faith is separate from any other person who has lived, and my faith may be something God will never again duplicate. So let us allow faith to grow in our hearts, to increase until it becomes the motivating force that makes all our decisions. The Bible says it is what pleases God. (Heb. 11:6.) We should develop our individual faith to bring the utmost pleasure to God.

Samson

In Samson's life we see some unusual movements of faith.

First, his mother, through communing with God, made him a Nazarite unto God from the day he was born. The three marks of Nazarites were:

1. they did not touch the dead,
2. they did not touch wine,
3. and they did not cut their hair.

Samson was to keep the vows of a Nazarite.

After he was grown, however, Samson lived a carnal life. He committed adultery with a harlot. He disclosed the secret of his strength to the pagan Delilah. When his eyes were put out, he was in the wrong place with the wrong people.

But in-between all that, he did superhuman, supernatural feats. One time he tore a lion apart with his bare hands. Another time he carried away the gates of a city. Eight horses with a chariot could run through those gates. They were big and heavy. They were put into place by many animals pulling to get them into their sockets. No person who ever lived could pick up one of them, much less both of them. Yet Samson lifted them off their hinges and walked, not downhill, but uphill with them.

Samson did things that were phenomenal to the human race, things which have not been repeated.

We would say, “Oh, that's faith.” No! That is the fruit of faith. Behind the fruit was a consecration to God. A man said, “I am consecrated to God. I am a Nazarite. I will not touch the dead. I will not drink wine. I will not cut my hair.” Through this consecration Samson had strength no other human has paralleled.

God said Samson did what he did by faith. He trusted in God. He relied upon God.

Jephthae

Jephthae's story is very interesting. Judges 11:1 reveals how he was messed up before he got here:

Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and he was the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah.

Jephthae's father was Gilead, for whom the entire area was named. But his mother was a harlot. His own family cast him out because of it. They said, “We don't want him here. He's a son born out of wedlock.” So he went into another country to live.

But then the home folks got into war. They didn't have a brave man among them to lead them in battle, so they had to send for the one they had thrown out. He was a refugee. He lived with people of disrepute. But he came back with the disreputable ones and won a battle. He became a judge in Israel.

There is a remarkable attitude of faith in this man. He was willing to come back and help those who had cast him out and told him they never wanted to see him again.

Jephthae also trusted in God. He said, “Lord, even though I am nothing, I believe You can bring this victory.” Jephthae brought a great victory for an entire nation. God said, “That is faith.”

Samuel

It is easy to see why Hebrews 11:32 says Samuel had faith. He lived one of the most beautiful lives of anybody in the Bible. He was very spiritual. He was a priest, a prophet, and a government leader over the nation. He was outstanding in all aspects of leadership. He revealed

tremendous faith throughout his life.

David

David, a man after God's own heart, is known as a man of faith, a king who trusted God.

Faith for Life Today and Resurrection Tomorrow

Hebrews 11:35 reveals two facets of faith at seemingly opposite sides of the spectrum:

Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.

It is easy to see the faith of the widow during the ministry of Elijah, and of the Shunammite woman during the ministry of Elisha. (1 Kings 17; 2 Kings 4.) Hebrews says it was by their faith that they received their dead raised to life.

I know of two living examples of the rest of verse 35—one in Russia and one in Romania. Both are pastors under a government which says there is no God. Both have been imprisoned for their faith. Both have families who suffer with their fathers. The Russian's teenaged daughters live in constant danger. The Romanian's baby drinks sour milk when they can find it at all.

In both cases because of their widespread influence for Christ, the communist governments involved would like the pastors to leave the country. Deliverance has been offered. Each of the men—they don't know each other—has not accepted deliverance.

The Russian expressed it like this after having turned down deliverance for the third time: "God told me I could go if I want to. But His first will for my life right now is to stay here and head up this work." The Romanian expressed the same thing in different words. Both live lives of miracles and faith just to stay alive. But eternity will reveal a further more excellent fruit of their faith—a better resurrection!

Faith is trust. When you want to find faith, find trust. Trust is believing; and believing does the superhuman, the supernatural, that

which the natural cannot do. The function of faith is to cause us to be what we normally would not be—and to cause us to perform what we normally could not perform.

God wants us to become people of faith so that when it comes to the great emergencies of life, we won't depend upon our brains. We won't depend upon the human. Our dependence will be upon the Lord.

God calls that faith, and He is pleased with faith. Let your trust be great. If you will, God will reward you for it. Those who have faith will be close to Him in Heaven. It will be a great reception for Him to say, **“Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”**

Faith Has a Cloud of Witnesses

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith....

Hebrews 12:1, 2

It must make the devil angry that faith has a cloud of witnesses. He doesn't like faith. He tries to tell you it doesn't exist. He tries to say you don't have it when he knows you do. He doesn't want faith to have witnesses. But faith does possess **"a great cloud of witnesses."** That means there are a lot of them!

This chapter is different from the others. It is what I call an expository teaching of Hebrews 11:39 through 12:7.

And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of

the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

Hebrews 11:39-12:7

“And these all, having obtained a good report...” (v. 39). “These all” includes everyone named or unnamed who is mentioned in Hebrews, chapter eleven. They all obtained a good report.

This report was not with man. Man might have looked upon these heroes of faith in a different way. Martin Luther and John Wesley were not popular with their neighbors. Even Jesus was not popular with His neighbors. His own townspeople tried to kill Him. And it wasn't for anything bad. It was because He read the Book of Isaiah and said, **“This has now come to pass”** (Luke 4).

In spite of many of their contemporaries who did not like these people of faith, the Bible says they obtained a good report. That report was not in their respective city halls. It was in the books of Heaven. Between the two, I'd rather have a good report card up there. I'd rather hear God say, “Well done,” than the world. The world's “well done” won't get you to Heaven.

“... through faith....” To obtain something means to get it. You don't naturally have it—you go and get it. They obtained their good report with God. Now how did they get this report? They got the good report *through faith*. Through believing. Through trusting. Through relying. Through sticking in there. It was not obtained by physical strength. It was not obtained by a keen mind. The good report was obtained through faith.

“... received not the promise....” What was the promise? The Messiah! Every one of them, beginning with Abel, looked for the Messiah. Abel heard his parents tell how God promised the Seed of a woman who would bruise the serpent's head. He thought possibly he was the one to do it. But he suddenly found out with a crack in the brain that he was not.

None of these lived to receive that Supreme Promise in their earth walk. Could you retain your faith without getting to the end result? You

know what you want. You know what you're looking for. You know what you're believing for. But you never get to the end result. These never got to the ultimate result.

“God having provided some better thing for us....” What do we have? We have Jesus. The Messiah has already come. We have the glorious Son of God in our hearts. He's changed our lives. He took away lying, stealing, and adultery. He gave us life—and that more abundantly. We have a better thing than they in the indwelling Holy Spirit and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Some of them knew what Joel prophesied, **“In the last days I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh”** (Joel 2). And they were hanging onto it. We don't hang—we have the promise.

“... that they without us should not be made perfect.” Abel needs us! Noah needs us! Abraham needs us! God showed Abraham on Mount Moriah. He said, “Take your son home. I'm going to give My Son.” But you and I have the reality of it. So they are not perfect without us. We have to say, “You looked forward to it; we have it. We walk in the fulfillment of your expectation in the earth.” The magnificent things taking place today which we enjoy, these people looked forward to with great anticipation. You and I walked right into it and received it.

But even now, until the last little end piece in this jigsaw puzzle is in place, it is not completed. The Body will not be perfect until everybody—from the Genesis saints to the saints who come in through the Great Tribulation—is compacted together. The whole Body is not there yet. So it can't be perfect until we're all together. But your faith added to Noah's faith, added to Abraham's faith, added to Moses' faith, and so on, makes faith perfect. It will make you want to have faith when you see that yours is necessary for the fulfilling of all the divine purposes of God.

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses....” It is easier to believe today than ever before. We have the cloud of witnesses. We have so much evidence stacked up before us. We have the history of faith and the glorious things God has done through people who trusted Him. Not just one, or two, but a cloud of witnesses attest to it.

We're not struggling with something that hasn't been tried, something nobody knows anything about. We've got a great cloud of witnesses compassed about us. That means they are in a circle, all the way

around us. If we look behind, they are there. If we look ahead, they are there. If we look to the east or the west, they are there. Anywhere we look, there are witnesses—people who trusted God and got results.

“... let us lay aside every weight....” This divides the men from the boys. Remember that word *wherefore*, because that's your treasure word. **“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight....”** He's still talking about faith.

Who is it that doesn't demonstrate faith? Those who are weighted down.

Weighted down with what? With unbelief. With fear. With circumstances. With Aunt Mary's testimony that it doesn't work: “Uncle Jack prayed and still died.” With the love of this world. With the cares of this life. With sorrows. With griefs.

But God says, **“Lay aside every weight.”** If you are carrying any weights, you have them because you want them. “Oh,” you say, “that isn't true.” Identical things can happen to two different people, and one goes up while the other goes down. It is not what happens to you; it is how you react to what happens. Our insides make us what we are. One said, “I couldn't go through it.” But somebody else went sailing through.

“... and the sin....” Some weights may not necessarily be sin, so God goes a little deeper. Faith will not wade around in sin.

“... which doth so easily beset us....” To live a life of God's strength and power, you will have to lay aside the weights and sin that so easily get you off the track. They easily throw you to one side until you're not in the main line anymore. You cannot be with God's greatest if you hang on to sin. You can only be with God's greatest when you live a clean, holy, pure, undefiled life.

God said this, but preachers who preach it become identified. “He's a hard preacher,” people say. But preachers are not supposed to tell you how sweet you are. They are supposed to tell you what God means for you to do.

“... and let us run with patience the race that is set before us....” Run! That doesn't mean slow down. If you don't keep moving, the devil will grow his devil weeds all around you. *Run*. That means move!

Faith is movement. Faith is an act. Faith is not an idea, a dream, or a mental assertion. Faith is going somewhere, reaching for something, doing something.

Put a circle around the word *patience* in your Bible. There are so many quitters. Thousands say, "I've got faith." Then a few days later, they say, "Well, I guess I didn't have it." No, they had something else. It wasn't faith.

Life is called a race. Until you get to the finish line, life is a race set before you. Only by faith can you run it well.

"Looking unto Jesus...." If you don't look unto Jesus, your faith will fall flat. If you look at people, whether Lester Sumrall or anybody else, you will get hurt and lose out. You will get discouraged and say, "They didn't do right. They didn't do this. They didn't do that." Keep looking straight into the eyes of Jesus. Why? It tells you:

"... the author and finisher of our faith...." Jesus is the beginner and the finisher of your faith. That means no party is related to your faith but you and Jesus. He started it and He will finish it. He conceived it and He will culminate it. Everything your faith will ever have is in Jesus—nowhere else. If you put your faith in a man or in any situation on earth, you will be let down. Jesus is the author and the completer of your faith.

"... who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross...." This is almost unbelievable. It means He looked straight across those three days—He looked through the cross and the grave to the joy that was set before Him. He could say, "Go ahead, hit My back. It will be healed on the third day and will never hurt again. Nail Me to the cross. I don't mind this. I've got that coming."

If you can't see life that way, your faith will wobble and weaken. Even while someone is hurting you here and now, faith says, "That doesn't mean a thing to me. Man, I've got it made, right over there." The whole Bible supports that.

What if Joseph had given up halfway and quit? His own family and the nation of Egypt would have starved to death. But he didn't let down. He didn't quit no matter how dark it got. They could put him in a hole. They could put him in jail. They could lie on him. He had a dream! He lived by a dream. He said, "I dreamed that I was to be great, and I've got

to be great. I've got to get out of this jail. I've got to be great." The day came when he walked out and he didn't stop halfway. He went straight to the throne and took a seat as prime minister of the nation.

I think there are many whom God was going to elevate to tremendous situations in this life, but they just failed to run their race. They failed to look to Jesus, the Author and the Finisher of their faith, and they didn't see the joy of what was on the other side in relationship to what was happening then.

"... despising the shame...." The shame meant nothing to Jesus. People spit on Him and mocked Him, but He just said, "Let Me love you. Let Me bless you."

Don't let people shame you. Don't let people look down on you. Just say, "Darling, you need a sweet prayer. I'll just give you one right now." Just be so big until you have to look down on them to see them. Just be so great until whatever they do is like a little kitten messing around.

The shame meant nothing to Him. Romans spitting—what did it mean? That little pipsqueak governor with the backbone of a jellyfish—what did that mean to Jesus? They'd be in Hell in a few days, and Christ would be King of kings and Lord of lords forever and ever!

Faith moves straight through such obstacles. Faith goes right by the derision of others.

"... and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself..." Now God says to consider Jesus Who endured the contradiction of sinners. You've heard the contradiction of sinners. This is how it sounds: "Oh, it doesn't do any good to go to church. It doesn't do any good to read the Bible." What do they know about it? Nothing!

"... lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." When you see people getting weary and faint, you know what they're doing. They're listening to the contradiction of sinners. They are associating with the wrong people. They are not listening to faith. They are not reading the Word. They are not allowing the great cloud of witnesses God has prepared to surround them. And they are losing out. God gives them a rebuke in the next verse.

"Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." He

says, "You haven't laid down your life yet. You haven't been nailed to a cross. Don't be pitying yourself." Some people run away and cry when someone just looks at them the wrong way. That doesn't hurt you. Smile back.

"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children...." We are the children of God. We are different from this world.

"My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him...." If a problem comes, whip it down. God doesn't want any of us fainting.

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth...." God tries us out. He proves us. If you think it was easy for Noah to have faith, you should have been there. He didn't win a single convert in a hundred and twenty years. That's a long time to preach and not get anybody. Thank God, he saved his own household, but he didn't win anybody else. That's pretty dark. But Noah stayed true. He believed, and he endured.

**If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons;
for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?**

Perhaps this is the best chapter of all. It gives you the dark side and the light side. It gives you the bright side and the side you won't enjoy so much.

But you are not short on witnesses to the wonders of walking in faith. God is saying to you, "Look at these people and see what they have done." You can say, "God can do it all over again." Everything He has done, He can do now. Only your unbelief will keep Him from doing it for you. Only your unbelief will keep Him from changing your world.

Trust God. Let Him guide you in the ways of faith until you see Jesus face to face.

Lester Sumrall entered full-time service for God after experiencing what he recalls as the most dramatic and significant thing that ever happened to him.

At the age of 17 as he lay on a deathbed, suffering from tuberculosis, he received a vision: Suspended in midair to the right of his bed was a casket; on his left was a large open Bible. He heard these words: "Lester, which of these will you choose tonight?" He made his decision: He would preach the Gospel as long as he lived. When he awoke the next morning, he was completely healed.



In nearly 50 years of worldwide missionary evangelism, Dr. Sumrall has ministered in more than 100 countries, including Soviet Siberia, Russia, Tibet, and China.

Today, his evangelistic association, headquartered in South Bend, Indiana, is actively spreading God's Word. Dr. Sumrall's goal is to win 1,000,000 souls for the Kingdom of God. His ministry includes the World Harvest Bible College, radio and television stations, a teaching tape ministry, and numerous publications.

In addition to this, Dr. Sumrall is still deeply involved with ministry overseas.

For a complete list of tapes and books
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