

“How to Become a Diamond of Faith”

*Written August of 2006
First Sermon ever written!*

Scripture Reading: Philippians 1:6

What is Faith? The Dictionary defines the word Faith as the following:

- **Faith** = Ones Religious beliefs
- **Faith** = Trust and loyalty in someone
- **Faith** = Devotion and Confidence
- **Faith** = To believe in something not tangible, belief in the unseen

My question to you this morning is: What does your own Faith; and Faith mean to you. This word has two (2) main interpretations in our lives which mean the same thing. What does your Faith (*Your religion*) and Faith (*Your belief in God*) mean to you?? Within this time allotted, through the Holy Spirit, we will search the Scriptures for this answer. Some people say that our Faith will carry us through in the end times, but what does that truly mean?

Faith first starts with loving God. Too often we focus on religion and Church Doctrines, instead of first focusing on a Relationship with our Heavenly Father (*God*). Being a Follower of Christ comes out of loving God, and wanting to serve and obey Him more and more each day. Above all God just wants us to believe in Him, and accept the Gift of Salvation He gave to us, His Son Jesus Christ. Brothers and Sisters: Salvation, Eternal Life, Paradise, has been given to us under the Blood of Jesus; we just have to accept it.

Let us turn in our Bibles to **Hebrews 11:1 and 6**.

Verse 1: “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

Verse 6: “But without Faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

I love this 11th Chapter of Hebrews, if you haven’t read it all, please do so, the testimony within it is inspiring. I want to focus on the middle part of **Verse 6:**

“For whomever comes to God must believe that He is”

By understanding this little phrase, we can define the purpose for the miracles Jesus did during His Ministry. The common denominator in every miracle was based on **having Faith and believing** in the Power of God. All of what is recorded of Jesus’ life in the New Testament, even unto His death, was to prove the Essence of Faith. Let us look at a few examples, all familiar to us, but let’s quickly review them, keeping in mind the **Essence of Faith that Jesus was trying to teach us through His ministry, and through the study of these miracles see how to connect to God’s best for us.**

Let’s look at the story of: **“The Cripple at pool of Bethesda”** The story is found in: **John 5:5-9**. At the end of **Verse 6** is an interesting question to this man. **Verse 6: “Jesus said to him, do you want to be healed, made well again”** Can you imagine if you were this man, that for 38-years you were just laying there sick and cripple to hear this question; what would’ve gone through your mind or thought about that question? What if this man hadn’t believed in his heart that through Faith it could be possible? What if he doubted what Jesus told him in **Verse 8**.

Verse 8: “Jesus said to him, Rise take up your bed and walk”

He would've probably died next to that pool, seeing others being healed, but never being able to experience the Power of our Lord. But this man believed in his heart, beyond any rational thinking, he did not doubt the Holy Spirit speaking within him that this was possible and he got up, took up his bed and walked away. What would you have done in that moment? Think about that my Brothers and Sisters. Would have said in that moment “man you're crazy”, there is **NO** way that I can walk and be healed, it's “**impossible for that to happen**”. Let's look at: **Luke 1:37 “For with God, nothing is impossible.”**

Amen!!

What a promise God gives us here in this short text. Sometimes we limit **God's Power** in our lives by not making the right decisions, by doubting the Holy Spirit speaking to us, by not doing what He commands us to do. In essence we keep ourselves from experiencing God's best. We keep ourselves from fully experiencing God's Love for us, His children. Please take note, I want you to notice how every miracle that Jesus performed has this same connection or steps to God's Best for us. **1st Believing, 2nd Stay in Faith, 3rd Experience God's Power and Grace.**

Let's turn to: **Matthew 8:5-13**, the story of: “**The Centurion**” We all know the story but let's capture the essence of the story, with these (3) texts:

Verse 8: “The Centurion answered and said, “Lord I am not worthy that You should come under my roof, But only speak a word and my Servant will be healed.

*Here in **Verse 8** we see that the Centurion **1st Believes in Jesus.**

Verse 10: “When Jesus heard this, He marveled, and said to those who followed, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great Faith, not even in Israel!”

*Now we come to the **2nd Staying in Faith, “that it will happen”**.

Verse 13: “Then Jesus said to the Centurion, “Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.” And his servant was healed that same hour.”

*And now the **3rd he Experienced God's Power and Grace.**

What is even more amazing is that here we see a man, that essentially has **no religious background**, but yet he believed in his heart, that by Jesus merely speaking it, it would happen. He believed in the Power of God through Jesus; and his servant was healed in that moment, because he first believed and through Faith, was able to Experience the Grace of God.

Brothers and Sisters whether you are Christian or Not Christian, God just wants you to Believe in Him, to give Him the opportunity to pour His Grace into your life. God doesn't listen to a Christian's Prayer more than a Non-Christians Prayer, we are all created by Him and through the Blood of Jesus Christ that was shed for all of us we become Sons and Daughters again; because of that Sacrifice, if we Believe, have Faith, we can Experience God's Love through His Grace.

Amen!!!

Let's turn to the book of **Mark** this time; his account of the next two miracles is more detailed. Let's look at **Mark 5:21- 43** The story of: ***"The Lady who Touched Jesus Robe" and "The Resurrection of Jairus's daughter."***

Again, we all know both of these stories; we will touch on the key verses in the interest of time. Let's first look at the Lady with the Blood Disease.

Verse 27: *"When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment."*

*Here she **1st Believes** in her heart what will happen by touching His garment.

Verse 28: *"For she said, if only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."*

***2nd** She has **Faith** that she will be made well.

Verse 29: *"Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction."*

*Now we come to the **3rd** part, she **Experienced God's Power** to heal.

It's interesting that in **Verse 30** of this account, Jesus said: ***"that Power had gone out of Him"***, if we **Believe** and have **Faith**, we to have that same **Spiritual Connection to God's Power and Grace**. **Verse 34** sums up this whole encounter, and Jesus said: ***"Daughter your Faith has made you well. Go in peace and be healed of your affliction."***

Because of this Lady's Faith, she was healed. Brothers and Sisters please continue to notice this process of the **(3)** parts that **Connect to the Miracle**.

Let's look within these texts, at the story: of "Jairus and his daughter".

Verse 22: *"And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, fell at His feet."*

Verse 23: *"and begged Him (Jesus) earnestly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live."*

*Here Jairus **1st Believes** that Jesus' touch can heal his daughter.

On the way to Jairus's house, Jesus encounters the Lady with the Blood Disease which we just finished talking about, and while he is still speaking to her, He overhears someone telling Jairus ***"Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher (Jesus) any further?"*** Let's see how Jesus responded to that news.

Verse 36: *"As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe."*

*Here **Jesus is re-enforcing the 1st part to Believe**; and **by Jairus still bringing Jesus to his home, though his daughter was dead, shows the 2nd Part Staying in Faith**. Let's read:

Verse 41: *"Then he took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which translated means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise"* **Verse 42: *"Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement."***

This encounter shows us that God's timing is always perfect. He allowed the delay and also the death of Jairus's daughter in order to teach us this.

Sometimes God tests our Faith to see if we truly Believe, in order to prepare us to Experience God's Glory and Power. "For whomever comes to God must believe that He is" Hebrews 11:6 again.

The Bible has several examples throughout the Old Testament, as well, which record men and women of God, and their tests of Faith. For example: When **God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. Patriarchs and Prophets** by "Ellen White" states: **"That this was the greatest test of Faith any Parent had ever gone through."** Can you imagine as a Parent, having to carry out that command from God.

But it was Abraham's Faith that carried him through that test, and trial. It was his belief that God had the Power and Wisdom to make things right, that he raised his hand with the knife, and an Angel held his hand back. Isaac was saved and God provided an alternate sacrifice. There are many more examples, but our focus will be on The New Testament and Jesus's Ministry.

Isn't it interesting that though Jesus spent such a relatively short time with us, here on Earth; that what is recorded of Him in the Bible from birth to crucifixion, was to give us the perfect example, and proof of what Faith can do. **God Places such importance on Faith** that, not only did He send His only Begotten Son to die for us, out of His love for us; He **also gives us the entire Ministry of Jesus, as the Evidence of Faith; The (3) parts before a Miracle or Experiencing God's Glory and Grace, is Our Road Map to guide us into Eternity.**

Jesus's Ministry shows us what believing in Almighty God can accomplish. **"For if you have the Faith of a Mustard Seed",** God says **"you can move mountains."** **AMEN!!**

Now you may be sitting here today saying: well preacher those are all examples of Faith that happened thousands of years ago, maybe those things can only happen in Biblical times, but not in the times we live in now. Well in that case I'll give you an example within the last (20) Years. I'll give you just a summary of what the story is about, in the interest of time. The title of this story is: **"To Hell and back"** The essence of this story is based on: **Proverbs 22:6**

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

“To Hell and Back”

The story begins in **1985**, an **8-year-old** boy starts smoking for the first time; every Parent’s worst nightmare, to find out their adolescent Son is smoking. In the hopes of creating a better environment for their children, these two Parents moved to a different State.

Time went by, troubles became worse and this Boy, now **12**, was dealing drugs, and was always in trouble in School; The Parents of this boy definitely did not believe in sparing the rod, as physical abuse was the norm in his house. He would fall asleep every night listening to Heavy Metal Rock music, which eventually resulted in him becoming demon possessed one Saturday afternoon in the church gym.

Shortly after, it came time for this young Man to go to High School however, because of the recent problems of drugs and smoking, the Parents sacrificed financially and sent him to a Christian High School. They prayed that something would change; that somehow God would bring him back to his to the right path. At **15 years old** he got baptized.

It was **December 1993** a year later this now, **16-year-old**, young man stood before a Congregation to Preach for the first time, his Parents praised God for this miracle. Little did they know that the following year, he would fall into Alcoholism as a High School Junior and **lose his Faith in God along the way and become Atheist**.

The year is **1995**, this young man wasn’t able to graduate with his High School class, because of the alcohol abuse he failed a class. In September of that same year, he got into a fist fight with his Father, and **leaves home at age 17**. The dysfunctional environment had reached its boiling point; and he got a tattoo and his tongue pierced.

Those first (2) years living in the real world were the hardest this young man would ever experience, working (3) jobs (7) days a week just to survive. Harder still was having to see his Parents after 19-years of marriage get divorced.

This young man decided to go to a Vocational School to try and do something with his life. He moved to a different City, further away physically and emotionally from his family. The career he chose was very high stress, where smoking, alcoholism, and drugs were common things to do in this environment. He started using illegal drugs and abusing prescription drugs as well, just to name a few; and when one of his closest Cousins was killed by her husband on his **21st birthday**, in front of her five-year-old daughter. The flood gates to Hell literally opened.

He came to the conclusion that there could be no God, if God had allowed all this to happen, and everything he had lived in his childhood, including physical and emotional abuse, there couldn’t be a loving God, and so this young man started accepting Atheism and would make fun of, and taunt Christians because of their fairytale faith. He would tell them *“Why believe in fairy tales, there is NO God!”*

There wasn't a single day that the hole of that hurt and pain didn't consume him, along with his inner pain he carried since childhood. Though everyone thought he was fine on the outside, he was slowly dying on the inside, mainly his soul was lost. The only challenge this young man faced every day now, was how to damage his body with Alcohol and Drugs. He taunted God to let him die, by trying to overdose several times and by committing suicide. Days later he would awaken still alive; He cursed God for letting him live, he couldn't understand why God let him live.

This whole time the Parents of this young man, though divorced they still continued to pray, never really knowing why their son was so distant and cold to them. In **August of 1999**, God sent this young man an Angel into his life, on **September 11th, 1999**, they went on their first date, she made him want to be a better man, so he tried to quit smoking, drinking and doing drugs on a regular basis. She saved his life in essence and gave him a reason to live again.

Fast forward (6) years.... This man was an accomplished and successful businessman, at the top of his career. He's married, bought a house...But **in 2005** though he had accomplished every Goal, every Title he set for himself, and was currently working as a General Manager, it wasn't enough. **His material possessions didn't give him the fulfillment he thought they would.**

In **May of 2005**, they decided to start trying to have a baby, a family of their own was what they desired most. The Holy Spirit had used a Preacher named Joel Osteen on TV to lead them back to Christ. They went to see him preach in Fort Lauderdale, FL and God touched both their hearts to seek Him again. They began and started to regularly visit a small church that they felt comfortable in.

On **June 18, 2005**, this young man was talking on the phone with his mother telling her, of their decision to serve the Lord again, and how they were going to recommit their lives to God. But the young man also shared with his mom a premonition: that the Devil was going to do something to harm him. (3) Days later he walks into work, and out of the blue he is laid-off, basically fired for no reason at all.

One month later, July of 2005, he finds out his Wife is pregnant, and he has no job, no income to support his family...but God has supplied every need they've had this past year*!!! **(July 2005 to August 2006)*

I would like to thank my mother who is here today, and my Father for their Prayers of Faith. My Wife for shining the light of God in the middle of my Darkness. Brothers and Sisters, I stand before you as a testament of what prayer and Faith can accomplish, for I was that young man in the story, and this is my life in a nutshell. And today is my first day preaching again, after my Born Again conversion last year.

One year ago (*August 15, 2005*) I was Born Again, Baptized by the Holy Spirit, through a divine connection (*Rev. D. Garcia*). I spent (*11*) years lost in the world, and by the Grace of God I am here today; the Spirit of God has called me here today to deliver this Sermon to you. Brothers and Sisters **Luke 1:37** says: ***"Nothing is impossible for God"*** I stand before you today as living proof of this.

Glory be to God!!

Part Two

If you're **returning back to Church**, or if you're praying for God to use you, promote you, or to increase you...**You are going to be tested in order to refine your character and strengthen your Faith in God.** Maybe you ask God: **"Why are so many bad things happening to me, when all I want to do is serve You"** Disappointments will come in this lifetime, let us be conscience **"Not to put a question mark, where God has already put a Period."**

Faith and being a Christian goes far beyond coming to church every Saturday or Sunday, being vegetarian and having the Jesus bumper sticker...Brothers and Sisters be worried if you're not being tested. The Devil wants to attack the Followers of God; he wants to keep you from your Divine Purpose. It's easy to have Faith if **Trials, Tests, and Tribulations** are not affecting you. But how will we grow in the Spirit of Faith that God wants of you? Let's turn in our Bibles to: **James 1:12**

"Blessed are those who endure when they are tested, when they pass the test, they will receive the Crown of Life that God has promised to those who love Him"

We all know the story of Peter when the Disciples were caught in a storm and Jesus walked on the water towards them. Our focus of course will be on Peter and his test of Faith, and the example this scenario gives us today. Turn to **Matthew 14:22-36.** **"Play video clip of this story on the projector."**

Will you be like Peter when he walked on the water towards Jesus, with his eyes on Him, in Faith, Believing, and Trusting in the Power of God? Look at: **Verse 30.** ***"But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying "Lord save me"***

What happened as soon as a wave hit his side, His next step felt uneasy, he doubted, he was unsure of his own ability to stand...Take note **"of his own ability"** is a key phrase. We all know the story he took his eyes off of Jesus and started to sink, then he yells out to Jesus saying, **"Lord Save me"** Sound familiar? In **Verse 31** What does Jesus tell him ***"O you of little Faith, why did you Doubt?"*** In other words, **why didn't you believe in my Power?** Let's explore this illustration further.

Friends the World does the same thing to us; it hits us from every angle: Bills are due, my Spouse is mad at me, I hate my job, I'm too tired to get up early on Sunday or Saturday I'll make it for the Sermon (*We've all been guilty of these things one time or another*) the World sometimes shakes us, makes our steps feel uneasy, and when Tests, Trials and Tribulations hit us, **Our** Human nature makes us think we can handle things on our own, and **Brothers and Sisters we take our eyes off of God**, and we sink, we fail our test of Faith.

Too often we **wait until we are sinking** to ask God for help. **"Jesus Save Me"** Even though God is always there to answer our prayers and to give us His hand, he wants us to call on Him whether things are good or bad. **The Good news is that God wants us to pass these Tests. He gives us a promise in:**

I Corinthians 10:13 My version says: ***“God keeps His promise, and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm; at the time you are put to the test, He will give you the strength to endure it, and so provide you with a way out”***

Brothers and Sisters what a promise of hope this is, if we remain firm, at the time of test, God will give you strength and a way out or solution, **there is Power in the Word of God. AMEN!!**

Friends do you want to hear what in my opinion brings sadness to God’s Heart? He gives us such Hope in Scripture, just in this one text alone that we just read, He loves us so much He sent His only Son to die for us; Gave us the opportunity to have Eternal Life, He knows how many hairs you have on the top of your head, He gave us Life...**Yet we show Him that we don’t Love, Trust and Believe in Him through our lack of Faith. Why is that?**

Every day we put our Faith into so many worldly things, a light switch for instance. Analyze this for a second. Why do you Believe this light will turn on? If I flip this switch, why do you already have the Faith it will turn on? How do you already know that you can Experience the Lights being on from this entire process. **If this sounds like the (3) parts to Experiencing God’s Power, we talked about earlier. It’s because it’s the same theory or basis, we just don’t realize that God has already programmed us to have Faith,** we just need Prayer and the Word of God, The Bible, to Direct and unlock that potential. Let’s analyze even this Building, is the structural stability holding it up? Or God? Interesting question to ponder Huh...

How easily we throw Faith around when it comes to the things of this World. We put more Faith in the person taking our order in Taco Bell, that it will be correct when we get it, than in Our Creator God. How can we as Humans have more Faith in a perfect stranger and not in God? How can we have more Faith in a Brand new car, with side air bags, front air bags, and whatever else, and not in God to protect us? In essence, we waste our Faith on Worldly things **(on the right here),** instead we should use our Faith **(to get up there),** to Our Lord God.

Amen!!

Friends, the World because of Satan, has twisted up our priorities. Let’s turn to: **II Corinthians 4:18** ***“Do not look at the things which are seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”***

*In other words, focus on the Kingdom, **NOT** on the things of this World which are temporary.

How can we be worthy of being called Children of God, when we hurt our Father in Heaven by not having Faith in Him. In **John 20:29** Jesus said: ***“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have Believed.”***

God is all around us, in the breath you just took, the warmth of the Sun, in Creation and above all in His infinite love for us. The things of this World will pass; will fade away in the shadow of Eternal Life.

I came across this quote during a rough part in my life, I would like to share it with you:

“Sometimes what appears to be an obstacle, can in fact be an opportunity if we have the Faith to carry through”

How many of us have ever prayed: **“Lord please remove me, from these obstacles that are in my path, please take away these Tests, Trials and Temptations”** Sound familiar to anyone...

Brothers and Sisters, if we take away the very thing that refines our Faith, the thing that draws us nearer to God; how can we increase and grow in the Spirit of Faith. We should pray to God the Almighty a prayer similar to this: **“Lord help me to pass these obstacles, tests, trials and triumph over them in the name of Jesus.”** God allows you to go through these things so that you continue on **His path, His plan, NOT your plans.** Too often we give up, before the journey even begins. **Sometimes we say:**

“Oh, it’s just too hard to be Christian” “I had less problems, before I started coming back to Church” “No-one said hello to me today, I’m never coming back” “Look at that person, they’re not dressed correctly, I don’t want to be a part of that Church” “It’s too strict here with all these rules” “this church is too boring”.

Friends, this is the Devil whispering in your ear, only through the Holy Spirit can we know that. Be part of the solution, NOT part of the problem. By having Faith and carrying through these obstacles, we have the opportunity to partake in God’s plan for us, through constant development, refining, and Spiritual Growth.

Brothers and Sisters, Church is a Hospital where we come with our flaws and imperfections, to be made whole, individually by receiving Spiritual Nourishment.

If you were to look at a Diamond in its raw state, it wouldn’t be much to look at. When Diamonds are mined, they look very rough on the outside, they are covered in rock and carbon sediments. But as they are chipped away on the outside, cut into, refined and finally polished; what is left on the inside (*besides the strongest stone on the Planet*) is a beautiful, shiny, brilliant Diamond. **In its raw state a Diamond is fragile** and does not withstand pressure or blows from the outside, it is essentially weak without it being refined and polished. In its pure state on the inside, it’s the strongest stone on the planet. Let’s turn in our Bibles to our final text found in: **Romans 12:2 “Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God”**

Friends as true Believers we are Diamonds in the rough, the Tests, Trials, Temptations and our outward flaws are there for a reason. Before you were ever conceived, God already had laid out His Purpose and Plan for creating you and your life. The fact you are sitting here listening to this Sermon is not by chance, the fact that I am in front of you, is not by chance. God orchestrated the circumstances in your life to bring you here today, for a reason, for His Purpose. It is all God’s Plan! The events that take place in our lives, whether good or bad happen to fulfill a purpose.

That purpose is to grow in the Spirit of Faith, grow closer to God through prayer, Trust God in every aspect of our lives; Grow to love and serve Him out of Love and Obedience!! God has given all of us a ministry, we just need to submit to the Holy Spirit completely to know what your Purpose is.

Closing of Sermon:

Maybe you are sitting here today and you've been: laid-off work, having money problems, suffering from a sickness or disease, maybe you've gone, or are going through a divorce, maybe you've suffered abuse in the past, dealt with or are dealing with alcoholism, drug addictions...Brothers and Sisters the Spirit of God brought me here today to tell you: to speak Triumph and Victory in the name of Jesus, over these things. Only through the Power and Glory of God can the chains of this World be broken.

God has allowed these tests in your life so that you may be chipped away, refined and polished in God's Glory, to reveal the beautiful strength you have on the inside, so that you may shine in brilliance, for His Glory, and be a **"Diamond of Faith"** Brothers and Sisters remember the (3) steps that connect us to God's Best for us 1st "Believe", 2nd "Stay in Faith", 3rd "Experience the Power of God".

In I Timothy 6:12 God tells us to: ***"Fight the good Fight of Faith"*** I am challenging you today to ***"Walk by Faith not by Sight"***. **Jesus will not ask you to do something He hasn't already empowered you to do.**

Brothers and Sisters ***"Faith without action, is dead"***. God is inviting you today, right now, at this moment, to **live for His Glory** by fulfilling the PURPOSE, He made you for. **What will you do with that invitation??**

Think about that as we sing our closing song: ***"Renuevame Señor"*** (***Renew me o Lord***) Meditate on the words and let them speak to your heart!!!!

Altar Call

If there is a Brother or Sister here today that feels a burning or a yearning on the inside, it's the Holy Spirit talking to you, listen to Him. Quiet your mind and open your heart to the Spirit of God. I would like for you to come forward at this time for a Special Prayer. Don't look around to see if anyone else is coming up here, if the Holy Spirit is moving your heart, I urge you to get up, and come forward in the name of Jehovah God, get-up and come forward. By coming forward you are simply saying to God:

"Lord here I am imperfect, with flaws, but humbly before you I recommit my life to You, so that You may mold and refine my spirit of Faith. Guide me according to Your Will, to fulfill Your Purpose for my life."

AMEN!