

Tough Faith for Tough Times Series: Strengthening Your Faith

Pastor Rick Shelton

May 30, 2010

- Faith is supremely important in your life. It isn't about what denomination or religion you are; but about your trust in, and your relationship with God.

Luke 18:8 (NKJV) *"I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"*

- This is the story of the widow woman who was asking a ruler for something without giving up.
- This is parallel to God saying that He wants a people that won't just ask but that "will not quit".
- Look at the statement "will He really find faith?" Now ask yourself, when Jesus comes will he find faith working in your house or will He find fear, discouragement, confusion, and so forth.
- When He looks into your mind, your thoughts, and your life, does He find faith or something else?

Romans 1:16-17 (NKJV) *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."*

- Look at how the righteousness of God is revealed. It is speaking about all that God is doing in our lives to make things right.
- What is living? It includes eating, breathing, relating to people, playing, everything you do in life. So, everything you do in life should be done by faith.
- Romans 14 tells us we should even "eat" in faith. That is how important it is. It is not just tradition.
- It begins in faith and leads to faith. Why is faith so important?

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV) *"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."*

- Without faith it is impossible to please God.
- The kind of faith you need is the faith that believes God "is" and that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
- As discussed last week, the highest form of faith is trust. Faith that accomplishes things is the kind of faith that is built on the soil of trust.
- Trust is faith in a person (not in things happening); their character and nature. Before you can believe in someone's promises, you first have to believe in them.
- But before you can believe in God, you must believe that God "is". That is why you hear in the Bible, God refers to himself as "I Am".
- "I Am" is God's name. It means God always was - what He always was, He is - what He is, He always will be.
- When God says, "I Am" is here, He is saying all that God is (His character, nature, attributes, and heavenly resources) is at your footstep when "I Am" is with you.
- This is not just about the promises of God – but about the promiser.
- This is not casual stuff but about getting serious about getting on the inside of God. Finding out who He is and what he has for you.

Colossians 2:5 (Amplified) *"For though I am away from you in body, yet I am with you in spirit, delighted at the sight of your [standing shoulder to shoulder in such] orderly array and the firmness and the solid front and steadfastness of your faith in Christ [that leaning of the entire human personality on Him in absolute trust and confidence in His power, wisdom, and goodness]."*

- This is Paul commending the people of the Church of Colossians for a firm and solid faith. This is a faith that doesn't just work when everything is OK but also when things are not OK.
- Trust is what makes your faith firm and solid.
- It is about leaning your entire human personality on God – His power, wisdom, and goodness.
 - Trust in His Power is when you no longer wrestle with whether or not God is able to do what He said He would do. Most of us have not had a true encounter with the Power of God.
 - During one of his services, Pastor Rick met a man that was trying to prove to his wife that the "power of God" was all a lie. But when Pastor Rick prayed for him "oh God touch him", he slowly went down and fell out. He said it was like Pastor Rick was hitting him on top of the head over and over and over again. This man was stubborn and cardinal until that night. After feeling the Power of God – and knowing how real it was, he stayed up all night long calling people and asking for forgiveness on how he had treated them.
 - Trust in His Wisdom is when you trust that God knows what is better for you than you know for yourself. This works for a lot of us when things are going OK in our lives, but when all "hell" breaks out, we tend to get angry at God and lose our faith.
 - Pastor Rick thought just recently that he heard something from God – with an actual date. But that date has since past. What do you do when you think you hear from God but it doesn't happen? For Pastor Rick, nothing changes. Because his "trust" is in God, not around a silly date. It is not around what he gets, but around the eternal Wisdom of God.
 - There was a man that thought he heard from God to start a church. But it never got off the ground. He said, he thought he heard from God and since it didn't happen, how can he know that he ever hears from God. But whenever man is involved there is always a place for mistakes. You must get up, brush yourself off, and continue to believe God speaks to you and brings you big things.
 - Look at the book of Job. Here is a man that lost everything. Yet he was able to cry out "though God slay me, I will trust Him". This was not a theological statement but a cry out of a man's heart about his trust in God. If you've been there, you know this type of crying out.
 - We need to trust that God knows more than we do.
 - Picture a beautiful quilt. It is a beautiful tapestry but looks like a bunch of knots and strings on the underside. Even though the underside is all you can see, trust that God sees the beauty of your life on a grand scale. He can see what you can't see.
 - Trust in His Goodness is when you trust that His plan for your life is better than your plan for your life. You can miss His plan because you think you know better about what will make you happy.
 - Pastor Rick almost missed the plan for his life to start a church because he thought it would make him miserable. He didn't want to be a pastor.
 - Any time God is asking you to do something that you don't want to do, go ahead and do it. Because at the end of the day, He's got goodness planned for you.
- All of faith is built on trust. Trust in His power, wisdom, and goodness.
- Trust God in all three of these things, then whenever things change, you will immediately know it was for a good reason because God knows more than you do.
- If this is the kind of trust you want, say this prayer; *"God I trust you with everything in my life; my body, my mind, and my spirit. My family, I trust you with them. My finances, I trust you with them. I trust you with my health. I trust you with my job. I trust you with my relationships. I trust you with my future. I trust you with all of my life. Lord, help me to trust you more and forgive me for not trusting you enough. Lord, even when things don't work out like I want them to, I trust you. I will not quit on my faith. When things don't make sense I will trust you. My life is in your hands. I belong to you. – Amen.*