

O ye of little faith, why did you doubt ?

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- [0 : 00] Hello and welcome to our service this lovely Lord's Day. As we come before God in worship we pray his blessing upon our time together under the sound of the Gospel.
- We're going to begin by singing to the praise of God from Psalm 119. Psalm 119 and we're singing from verse 97.
- Psalm 119.
- I endeavour to keep all thy commandments. My feet from each ill way I stayed. That I may keep thy word. I from thy judgments have not swerved.
- For thou hast taught me Lord. How sweet unto my taste O Lord. For all thy words of truth. Yea I do find them sweeter far than honey to my mouth.
- [1 : 27] I through thy precepts that are pure do understanding get. I therefore every way that's false. With all my heart do hate.
- We shall sing this section of Psalm 119 from verse 97. O how love I thy law. O how love I thy law. It is my study all the day.
- O how love I thy law. O how love I thy law. It is my study all the day.
- It makes me wiser than thy hope. For it does with me stay.
- And all my teachers. Now I have more understanding.
- [2 : 42] God. It holds my meditation.
- Thy test in morning's hour. In the night's hour.
- In the night's hour. I am the close of thy vision.
- For I am never ready to keep.
- All thy hope on the end. My heed from his ill.
- [3 : 44] Where I stood not. Thy may give thy word.
- Thy mine read. I wroth thankspower. Thy milklt've known our days.
- Thy thanksk■ not■■ my heart. And again whose eyes had beaten along them. Thy bread and thy Signs. Thy bread and my fruitbelt's miss pot gerçek■.
- Thy sisters let us see. Thy love so delightful. Thy may be when you have indeed shared anything. O thy words of truth, yea, I do find them sweet as my, I am lying to my heart.
- I through thy precepts, I argue, understanding, great.
- [5 : 07] I live for every who has bought, with all my heart to gain.
- Let's join together in prayer. O Lord, as we come before you with the words of the psalmist upon our lips, we give thanks that they remind us of who the God of heaven really is, and what is true about you, that you are a holy God, that there is nothing to be found in your heart, in your mind, in your ways that are not consistently right, that they are true, that you are just, you are holy.

And that is not what we are. Sin has murdered lives. Our very existence from the beginning is tainted by the existence of sin.

It permeates the atmosphere that we breathe, breathe, and it confronts us whichever way we look.

However we choose to describe it, there are many in this world who are embroiled in the ways of the world and who have no time for you, the God of heaven and earth.

[7 : 06] And they have a wisdom that is all of their own, and their thinking is devoid of any spiritual inclination.

And yet, despite that, whatever terminology they use, whatever words they may use to describe the world in which they live, and the reason for it being what it is, it does not change the fact that we are in a fallen world, and the reason that your word gives to us for the fall and the aftermath of it, which is contained within the scriptures of the Old Testament, is ever to be found as that which satisfies the mind that is probing and seeking the light of your own spirit.

And it doesn't matter whether our conclusions differ from the world's conclusions. We settle upon the fact of our world being a world that is destitute of the perfections that we would want to find within it.

We pray for your mercy to incline us towards the truth of God, and to help us fix upon the world that makes sense of the senseless, that makes what is apparently contradictory, to be subservient to the God who is the God of providence, who works all things together for good, for such as love you, the God who is able to bring good out of evil, the God who is able to magnify and exalt the name of one who will be possessive of that name from everlasting to everlasting.

This world is full of the shadows of those who have gone before us. As time passes, these shadows become vaguer and dimmer.

[9 : 43] No matter how deeply edged in the history books of this world are the names of our forbearers, they will be displaced at some point, and they will be barely remembered.

But your name is a name that will remain entarnished and unvarnished. It will remain just as clear as you will have it to be, until at the last you will find your people gathered into your presence to rejoice, those who are your enemies, to be gathered to have woes pronounced upon their heads, because this is what your name says to us.

You are the God who is the judge of the quick and the dead. You are the God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You are the God who has created, and the God who has the power to bring to nothing what you have created.

In your presence we gather. Upon your name we seek to meditate. Grant to us the spirit by which we would worship you as the God of heaven and earth.

Grant to us an adoring eye, a heart that radiates in your presence. Lift up the light of your countenance upon us, that we might know the salvation that the gospel suggests to us.

[11 : 17] The gospel declares to us. We pray for your blessing upon each and every soul present. With their varying needs we give thanks that they are here under the sound of the gospel.

We give thanks for young and old alike. We give thanks for those who have beaten a path here all the days of their life, from the time that this place was open to them, to come to gather with the saints to worship God.

And that is how they have lived their life consistently, seeking to be found in the courts of your house, delighting in it, and glad that they were able so to rejoice.

We give thanks for them, for their testimony, for their diligence, for all that suggests to us that they know the God of heaven as their God.

We pray any amongst them who have had such a life, that have yet uncertainty about their relationship with God, that clarity would come, and that they would become fixated with Christ, and that they would know that that is the one who is truly the one who is life to their soul.

[12 : 36] We pray for every other individual who is here. We pray for the young people of the congregation. We pray for every home and household, parents and grandparents.

We pray that you would touch them, that they may bound not just in with their own blood ties. And we give thanks for the privilege that we have of being raised in a community where such things are to be seen as loving parents and loving children, and being tenderly cared for.

When we see in this world communities that are torn asunder by troubles, many of which are of their own making, some because of addiction, some because of the corruption that is in the heart of man, and being raised in communities that breed such contemptuous behavior, and children raised up in such atmospheres of fear and of uncertainty.

We pray, Lord, for mercy for them and for grace to help us to appreciate the good things that you have given to us that we have no right to expect.

We pray your blessing on the world that is preached in our hearing, even today. Remember, Lord, the world in which we live. We pray for the nations that are torn asunder by war.

[14 : 11] We are mindful of the conflict in Eastern Europe, and we pray, Lord, that you would remember any and all such conflicts, some that are not remembered, but are every bit as bitter and as destructive.

We ask for mercy for those who have been driven from their homes, destitute of their property, and with their livelihoods torn asunder.

We pray for the weak and the infirm amongst them. Children barely years old, carried in their mother's arms, driven along on a tide of wickedness, and we pray that you would remember them, even the older generation who have reached a time when we would expect them to sit by their fireside in peace, and yet they know nothing of that.

Lord, we pray that you would break into the darkness that embroils them, and that you would bring peace where man is unable to bring peace.

So enable us to have that spirit of prayer for those who cannot see their prayers being heard or answered. Remember, any amongst ourselves who have cares and concerns may be different to those, but nevertheless, turbulence fills their heart and mind.

[15 : 46] those who are grieving and sorrowful, those who have experienced the pain of loss in recent days, we bring them before you and ask for mercy to be their portion, that you would bind up broken hearts and that you would heal their hurts.

We pray for any that has experienced in recent days sudden death taking from their midst, those who were in the prime of life and in an instant were plucked from the sin of time.

We pray for these homes and families. We ask, Lord, that you would mercy fully undertake for all our needs, and that we would acknowledge you as the giver of every good and perfect gift.

Grant mercy for many sins that abound in our lives. Cleanse each one away. We blot them out through the blood of the everlasting sacrifice. We ask all with forgiveness in Christ.

Amen. We're going to read from the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Matthew chapter 14.

[17 : 04] The Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Matthew chapter 14. And we're going to read from verse 22 to the end of the chapter.

Reading at verse 22. And straight away, Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship and to go before him and to the other side while he sent the multitudes away.

And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray. And when the evening was come, he was there alone.

But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves, for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit. And they cried out for fear. But straight away, Jesus speak unto them, saying, Be of good cheer.

[18 : 19] It is I. Be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid.

And beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately, Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were deceased, and besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment.

[19 : 42] And as many as touched were made perfectly whole. Amen. And may the Lord add his blessing to a reading of his word.

To his name be the praise. Boys and girls, before you go out, can I ask you a question?

You don't need to answer it, but if you want, you can. But you don't need to answer it right away. How old do you have to be before you start following Christ?

How old do you have to be? I wonder if you've got any age in mind. Do you have to be four, or five, or six, or seven, or ten, or maybe older?

Perhaps you've never really thought about age as being something that's important to following Christ.

[20 : 46] But it's amazing how we think of these things. Jesus always wants us to follow him. I think the last time we were together, we spoke about the disciples that Jesus chose to follow him.

And they were all grown men. They were all, I don't know how old they are, but the Bible doesn't tell us how old they were. And we have our own imagination as to what their ages might be.

But when we think about following Jesus, we think it's something that older people do.

And that's not right. It's not right to think like that. And yet that's what we do. Let me give you a couple of examples.

An example from the Bible first of all. Jesus was preaching and teaching in the villages where he was living.

[21 : 59] Many people came to him. A lot of people came looking for him. And amongst the people that came to him were small children, little children.

And what happened when they came? Well, the disciples thought Jesus is too busy for little children. And they told the little children, go away.

Go away. And Jesus said to the disciples, go, serve for the little children to come unto me for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Don't allow these children, don't let these children, don't make these children go away because the kingdom of heaven is made up of little children. Now, he didn't mean by that that older people didn't go to heaven.

What he meant was that people who believed in Jesus believe with the certainty and the faith that little boys and girls have.

[23 : 08] No questions come into their minds like the silly ones we have. Another example I can think of, this is a real story of someone I know and this little girl went away to college and she was just a teenager and when she was away at college she was going to church and when she was going to church something very wonderful happened.

She was converted. She came to know Jesus and she went home and told her parents this was wonderful news and her parents were disappointed.

They were disappointed. They weren't believers. They weren't Christians and they thought this young person what a waste of her life coming to follow Jesus as a young person is a waste of her life.

That's the way some people think. They think completely back to front. How many people here thought when they were young like you are that they would become Christians someday?

Not yet but when they get older. When they get older and maybe there are some of them sitting here today and they thought like that 20, 30, 40, 50 years ago and do you know what?

[25 : 00] They're still no closer to following Jesus. How can that be? Did they get it wrong? Did they make a mistake?

I'm sure they were quite honest when they said I will follow Jesus one day but not yet. I've got so much things I want to do. Well, what I would say to you, if these thoughts come into your head, put them out of your head.

You're never ever too old or too young to follow Jesus. Never, never ever think like that.

The moment that the thought comes into your head, dismiss it and think of following Jesus, not next day but now.

As soon as the thought comes in, if you hear Jesus speak to you in his words, I want to follow him, I want to be with him, I want to be one of his people.

[26 : 08] We're going to sing as you go out to Sunday school now from Psalm 29. Psalm 29. At verse 5, God's voice divides the flames of fire, the desert it doth shake, the Lord doth make the wilderness of Kaddish all to quake, God's voice doth make the hinds to calve, it makes the forest bare, and in his temple everyone his glory doth declare, the Lord sits on the floods, the Lord sits king and ever shall, the Lord will give his people strength, and with peace bless them all.

We can sing these verses, Psalm 29, from verse 5 to the end, the voice of the eternal doth asunder cedar tear.

The voice of the eternal finding Teeler In which we have lost can be O shook with him my
■cigeria

Thou joys divine The flames of fire The desert plains came The Lord of King, the wilderness of God is all to thee.

O joy is the name of God to come, in which the forest may, and in His temple every one, His glory doth ye hear.

[29 : 54] The Lord says on the bloods of heart, since King God never comes, the Lord will give His people strength, and with His blessing all.

We can turn to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 14, and we can read again at verse 29.

Well, we can read at verse 28. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come.

And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

[31 : 31] Particularly these words, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? Many of God's people are exceedingly fond of the apostle Peter.

We're told quite a bit about Peter in the Gospels, and through his own writing in the epistles. But what makes people fond of him is not that he wrote a lot about himself, but what is written about him.

Sometimes by himself, but sometimes by others. And we find somebody who is, in many people's thinking, very like themselves.

Because, if we think about what the Bible says about God's people, God's people are saints.

You know that they're saints. Now, if somebody says that about God's people, and you have a look around you and see the saints, and you say to yourself, Oh dear, if these are the saints.

[32 : 58] Well, my goodness. And the fact of the matter is, they are saints. But they are not very saintly.

Why should that be? Well, I think it has to do with what we imagine the word saint to mean. We think that the word saint means that the person is without sin, without flaw, without characteristic that is in any way blemished or flawed.

The reality is not like that. There's a difference between the saints that are in heaven. Jesus tells us that all his people will one day be with him.

And when they get to be with him, many of the things that they were guilty of in the world will be no more.

All of these things that were sinful characteristics, sinful speech, sinful actions, sinful thoughts, thoughts that they had unbeknown to anybody else, they will never any more trouble them.

[34 : 21] Because there will be saints that are sanctified, saints that are without sin, saints that are glorified, saints that are always in the presence of Jesus, saints who are conscious of the eye of Jesus upon them, and who are engaged, who are spending their time worshipping Jesus.

But that's not what they are now. And I don't doubt for one minute that that's what they want to be. That's what they would like to be.

That they would like to be saintly. That they would like to live up to the name saint. So that's why when we find a person who is a Christian believer, a believer in Christ, a follower of Christ, a disciple of Christ, an apostle of Christ, and we read about him, and we see the kind of things that he said and did, and we find, oh well, maybe I'm more like him than I am like any of these other ones that I don't really know much about.

You know, the apostle John seems more saintly-like than the apostle Peter. He was somebody who was loving, and somebody who was in close proximity to Christ, who sat with his head in his lap, and who seems to be a more benign character.

F.B. Mayer, one of the Bible commentators, is someone who speaks about the life of Peter, and he sees somebody there, he says about him, he is so encompassed with infirmities, so encompassed with infirmities, that he gives us hope that the great potter may be able to make something of our common clay.

[36 : 35] The great potter may be able to make something of our common clay, because the God who makes disciples of the disciples is the one who undertakes to change the life of the believer from what it was to something that it is yet to be.

By God's grace. Now I want us to think about Peter today as someone who is a disciple, and who clearly demonstrates traits and characteristics that speak of his discipleship, speak of his relationship with Christ, speak of somebody who obviously knows Christ, and follows Christ, and wants to be so much part of the core group of people that are with Christ.

He wants to be one of them, he wants to be at the head of them even. But I want us to think, looking at this verse in particular, the words that we're looking at in the verse here, it suggests to us, I believe, or it describes to us what faith is like.

It allows us to explore that. What kind of thing is faith? And I think that's important, because faith really must be at the heart.

of the relationship that exists between a Christian and Christ, or a follower of Christ, and the Christ that they follow.

[38 : 30] There were many hangers on, if you like, that followed Christ for all kinds of different reasons. But those who followed him genuinely, as his disciples, were those who possessed faith.

And I want us to think about what kind of faith do we need in order to follow Christ. The second thing that I think we need to understand is that having established that there is such a thing as faith, that is essential to the relationship that exists between a Christian and the Christ that they follow, we must understand that that faith is not always the same kind of faith.

I think I have to be guarded in the way that I describe that. because I think what we're wanting to understand is that there is such a thing as saving faith, the faith that saves.

But having the faith that saves does not mean that the possessor of that faith that saves saves is always in a situation where that faith that they possess is as strong or as secure as it could be or should be.

And I think that is brought home to us in the way that Christ speaks to Peter here. And I suppose the third thing that we have to understand is that even when faith may be discovered as not being what it ought to be or what it should be or what it could be, the existence of that faith ensures that there will be a certain conclusion.

[40 : 57] That if we focus on faith and believe in faith as being essential to salvation, we must discount the idea that only the strongest faith will secure salvation.

It would be good if we believed it would be good if every person who believes in Christ had the same calibre of faith, the same strength of faith, the same power in exercise as they put their faith into practice.

But that is not the case. But because it is not the case does not mean that the person such as mentioned here or though of little faith is any less saved than the person who has strong faith.

So there are a few things to explore, I think, just by looking at the Apostle Peter. is a very useful person in the Christian church because he shows you the many flaws that Christian character may have which may make us think that such flaws of character may result in us being cut off from Christ.

That Christ may automatically decide to dispense with a person because they have not lived up to the standard that you would expect the believer in Christ to fulfill.

[42 : 56] When we look at the life of Peter there are many instances in his experience where you see him do things or say things and you say well if Christ knows all there is to be known about every one of his people and he knows the kind of behaviour that Peter is demonstrating here he would just dispense with him find another disciple somebody more circumspect in their behaviour well I think the first thing we need to understand here is we're talking about saving faith and I'll tell you just so you won't be in any doubt if you do not possess saving faith then you are not saved and if you're not saved you're lost and if you're lost it's because of one thing one thing it's because you're not a believer in Jesus Christ you may say well this person is lost because they've done this sin this sin or this act or this evil deed and they're guilty of it and they're lost because of that no that's not the reason their lostness is down to one thing and that one thing is the lack of a saving relationship with Christ you do not believe that Jesus

Christ is the saviour of sinners you do not believe that you are in need of that saviour of sinners for whatever reason you've come to that conclusion now what makes this faith that Peter possesses we believe a saving faith well I believe that there came a point in the experience of Peter where he came to know Christ as a saviour we were recently talking about this and it's on my mind much that we need to understand that there are things that God does that he needs to do or he does do in the secret places that man cannot see he works in the soul he works in the deepest recesses of old beings where the natural eye cannot see it the spirit of God works in regeneration in ways that we are not able to comprehend in a natural way now some people have great difficulty with that and then they'll go to their cupboards and get a loaf of bread and they'll eat that loaf without a second question but at some point before that loaf was made into a loaf a seed was sown into the ground was buried out of sight and something happened to change that seed into something that grew from it it was hidden you couldn't see that activity you understand the biology of it you understand the way it works because you're a very learned person but in the same way or in a more mysterious way

God works in a way where his work is carried out where you cannot see it I cannot see it it's done in the depth of our being and Peter at some point experienced that in his life he became someone the Bible describes as born again he became somebody that discovered their need of salvation he became somebody who understood through the teaching of the life that the spirit of God brought to bear upon his situation that the need that he had as a sinner made sinful by the spirit of God was to be met by the person that was presented to the need even the person of the Lord Jesus Christ now for

Peter and for every other person at some point however it comes about however it happens in whatever personal way that the Christian who is sitting beside you here came to know Christ something happens that is personal to them and it can be simply understood as this their soul received Christ their soul received Christ they were presented with Christ in the depth of their being and they trusted that that Christ was what their soul needed not only did they believe that that Christ was what their soul needed they also believed that no other but Christ would meet the need that they had that had been created in them through the spirit of God enlightening their mind in the knowledge of

Christ and who he was and what he was and what they needed him for and through the gospel that became abundantly plain now Peter at some point came to know that Christ we can look at it in this way we can divide it up into its constituent parts something needs to happen this needs to happen the understanding needs to be opened and you're saying to yourself well I understand I'm perfectly sensible I understand what you're saying and you're saying that I'm lacking in understanding well somebody has put it in a way that only a person who understands can put it he said I once was blind but now

[49 : 44] I see the understanding that they had was completely incapable of understanding the truth concerning Christ the reality of who Christ is or was or will be and their need of that Christ and at some point through God's instrumentality or the instrumentality of the spirit they were able to see that Christ as the person that they needed blind but now able to see their mind's eye was opened the seat of the emotions was stirred a love for Christ is stimulated now these things can happen simultaneously these things can happen in stages these things can happen without you actually being able to label it and say this is how this is if you're looking at a cake being made in reverse you've got a cake in front of you in the kitchen there and you're looking at it and you're wondering what are the constituent parts of this cake and you're looking at it from outside and you're seeing what's obvious you're seeing this belongs there and that belongs there and you're there had to be some agency there to raise it you need something to sweeten it you need something to make it taste the way it does so you're able to a degree to examine it and come to some kind of understanding in that way now the

Christian faith may be understood in that way if you analyze it and you take it apart in that way but looking at the apostle Peter we're not told you know in his life or in his experience how this actually came about in fact in fact we can't really tell you much about how Peter came to faith but I'll tell you what the Bible says in John chapter 1 we're told there of how Peter came to know the Lord one of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew Simon Peter's brother he first found his own brother Simon and said to him we have found the Messiah which is translated the Christ now that's the bottom line as far as

Peter's conversion is concerned you might look at him from a distance and try and understand how does this actually work the workings of it may be complicated the workings of it much of it may be hidden from sight but if Peter's going to tell his story of how he came to faith it involves his brother Andrew telling him about this man the Messiah that he had found and once he heard about this man the Messiah that his brother Andrew had found he followed his brother to Jesus he did what he understood he needed to do and it seems in many respects that's how coming to faith can be for some people we make it complicated we make it extremely difficult we may try and say well I need to get to the nitty gritty of what it is to be a Christian but the bottom line for Peter was it took him from where he was wherever that was an ignorant blind indifferent fisherman who had no knowledge of Christ no interest in Christ as far as people could make out and he came to that Christ and the rest is history faith may be arrived at in different ways through different means by different methods sometimes it's through the preaching sometimes it's through the testimony of your friends and family sometimes it's through private devotional reading of

God's word whichever road you run it has to take you to Christ and if it doesn't take you to Christ you're on the wrong road you've got the wrong friends your family are misinforming you you've been misdirected you need to come to this person the Lord Jesus Christ and how do we know Peter came to Christ well he was clearly willing to trust Christ no if his faith was genuine this had to be an essential part of his experience he had to trust Christ how can we say that Peter trusted Christ well we have to do with this passage here straightaway Jesus spoke to them saying be of good cheer it is high be not afraid Peter answered them and said Lord if it be thou bid me come unto thee on the water this is the thing we have first of all a knowledge of him it is

I and then we have the the willingness to respond to who it was bid me come to thee so there's an understanding there of who Jesus is and a willingness on his part to go to him trusting that doing so Jesus will be able to help him it's based on a personal experience and demonstrated by the willingness to obey because of that knowledge but most importantly Jesus himself helps us understand that not only can we read what's happening here but we can understand that

[56 : 55] Jesus himself is interpreting it for us he is saying that what Peter is doing is an act of faith he is describing it for us as faith he is not saying it is no faith or a false faith but a little faith now what we need to appreciate is that genuine saving faith saves not because of its size but because of the one upon whom that faith rests we are preoccupied with my faith or your faith and your capacity to exercise that faith and that's what we think is all important you know we're looking at what we have and we're saying it's necessary it's needful this has to be true that my faith is of a certain sort and it has to be of a certain strength or power and if it isn't then it can't be the real thing but we're looking in the wrong place what we should be looking at is the object of our faith and the object of the faith of

Peter was Jesus Christ he was saying to Peter oh you of little faith and no doubt he is critical of Peter's faith but he is not criticizing the genuineness of the faith or he is not questioning the validity of his faith but he is saying to him that your faith is in some way failing to act in the way that it could or should act in John's gospel we read about a certain people that came to the Lord Jesus and they listened to what Jesus had to say they saw what

Jesus had to do and yet this was the question to Jesus how long do you keep us in doubt if you are Jesus if you are the Messiah if you are Christ tell us plainly now Jesus was very very condemnatory of that request because as far as Jesus was concerned what they needed they already had they had all the information they had all the necessary ingredients for their faith to be put into practice but it wasn't and for that reason it was critical I wonder if he said that to anyone of us today would that be the case if there is a lack in our faith or if we have the information that is necessary or if we have everything that we should know about

Jesus at our disposal and yet we've decided to say I need more you're insisting well more has to be there than you've supplied Jesus in his word tells us all there is to know about him as saviour about us as the need to be saved those who need to be saved and yet we're saying tell me more show me more prove to me that the need there is what you say it is the suggestion is that Jesus has not done for some of you enough to convince you of your need of him and when that is the case you're just making an excuse because the proof has already been supplied now the scenario that is described here is really what is very often the case where the object of the faith of our faith is in clear view we allow other things to distract us from that object here was

Jesus walking on the sea Peter wanted to come to Jesus even though it meant for him to walk on the water it is a miracle it is unlikely it is improbable you say but that is what Peter wanted to do not what Jesus wanted to do but what Peter out of his impulsiveness out of his own nature I suppose he demanded yes you'll show me you'll do this I'll do it if you enable me to do it but the impulse was not accompanied with the strength of faith necessary to keep Peter above the waves and the moment he took his eyes off Jesus the moment he looked at the waves the moment the storm whatever it was took his mind away from Jesus then he began to sink what you need to understand is that the perfection of our faith requires focus and loss of focus results in imperfections faith no matter what true faith trusts in

[63 : 14] Jesus no matter what true faith trusts in Jesus no matter what very often the Christian speaks about faith great faith little faith assurance of faith and it is something we need to understand that there is a sense in which the person with real faith genuine faith faith that is saving can experience changes in the experience of their faith life's trials life's testings they cause fluctuations in the strength of our faith that's the way it is in reality it doesn't doesn't change faith from being what it is but our experience of putting our faith in practice you know some people say and they will only believe in

Jesus Christ if their faith is of a cast iron type that will not bend that will not break it's even stronger maybe a steel that won't break that's the kind of faith you want they don't want one that will be challenged they don't want one to be in any way yielding to the pressures that is put on it but that is not what the Bible promises Professor R.A.

Finneson a teacher in the Free Church College many years ago made this contrast if you like between what is the objective assurance and subjective assurance objective assurance he says has to do with God with his faithfulness with his power and every Christian has this because it is the essence of faith God is never different and the faith of the believer focuses rests upon God Christ Jesus the work of the Holy Spirit and that is not going to waver that's not going to change what your faith is resting on is resting on something that's even more certain than the hills around you these hills may crumble at one point God will not change but the subjective part of it is based on personal experience and circumstances and the certainty we have of having received grace and salvation and sometimes circumstances may cause us to lose sight of what was once a certainty to us there may be

Christians here today and they go back in their minds to what it was like for them when they came to experience faith at the first and they'll speak about the warmth they possess towards the Lord's people they'll speak about the joy that filled their hearts they'll speak about the moments they had where they wouldn't want to live in this world any longer because they wanted to be with the Lord these are genuine experiences that were once part of their life they haven't forgotten them they haven't they wouldn't deny them but that's not what they're like today and sometimes because of the lack of these feelings and experiences that is no longer as vibrant as it was then maybe they're questioning the validity of their faith

God hasn't changed but their experience has what we need to remind ourselves of is that a prolonged experience of wrestling for certainty in the faith of the believer can ultimately lead us into later experiences of the faith when that faith hasn't been proved and tested as it should I don't know if I'm explaining that properly but there are many people I believe who are perhaps in a relationship with Christ that they never fully permitted to be publicly disclosed and not having done that means that the more the longer you go on without that publicity the longer you go on without that declaration of a saving interest in Christ the harder it becomes for you to actually declare your faith because your subjective experiences have changed

[69 : 16] I once heard somebody say that if they had not made a public declaration of their faith in Christ when they did if they had left it undeclared if they had left it unconfessed with the testings and the trials that life brought they would have remained silent and as such they would not have had the confidence or the boldness to actually make their faith in Christ known well maybe the day will come when they are when the genuineness of their faith will be revealed but look what happens here and the time has gone that the faith of Peter is described as a weak faith a doubting takes a hold of him and yet even though that faith is at times tested and tried if it is genuine what

Jesus does in that moment is bring to light what exists bring to an awareness of what is already there and by doing that encouraging it and nurturing it and enabling it to grow save me Peter says or I perish but Jesus is saying to them oh thou of little faith he stretched out his hands and laid hold of Peter often said and don't mind saying it again when we are assailed by doubt as Christians we doubt our doubts we believe we return to what we believe and we put our trust in what we've been made aware of that is worthy of trusting in the devil will do anything to undermine confidence in

Christ but don't whatever reason allow him to distract you from doing what Jesus Christ wishes us to do through the gospel let us believe in him to the saving of our soul let us pray Lord help us to believe in Jesus to the saving of our soul may our faith be encouraged as it lays rest on Christ and receives Christ and does all that Christ would have us do help us to overcome any doubts that we may have about the veracity of our faith continue to watch over us cleansed from sin in Jesus name amen the concluding psalm is psalm 42 psalm 42 at verse 5 oh why art thou cast down my soul why in me so dismayed trust

God for I shall praise him yet his countenance is my need my God my souls cast down in me thee therefore mind I will from Jordan's land to Hermonites and even from Mitzar hill at the noise of thy water spouts deep into deep earth call thy breaking waves will pass over me yea thy billows all loving kindness yet the Lord command will in the day his songs with me by night to God by whom I live I pray we'll sing these verses so why art thou cast down my soul why in me so dismissed O why art thou conjured my soul why in me so this day trust

God for I shall praise him his heaven and his my name my God my soul stand in me these are my life from Jordan on time to death of his His earth earth knows that him from the earth that he and the deep of all thy breaking cleanse my soul for me yet I'm thy fellow

[74 : 59] Lord and thy kindness yet the Lord come and in the day his songs will be by thy heart it fall I hum I heard you father did Now may grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit rest and abide with you all now and always Amen