

# Strong In Faith

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[ 0 : 00 ] The title of my message is Strong in Faith. Strong in Faith.! So, I don't know where everybody's Christchurch morale is at this point.! Some might be full of faith. Maybe some are medium faith.

! Maybe some are, you know, hanging by a thread there. But, you know, it's typical of any church. Morale can go up and down, but especially when you're starting something new, a little more than a year into it.

But, and I think it's just good to remember that every great thing starts with a small group of pioneers with faith. Right? Every great thing. Someone had to pioneer it. Someone had to start. Some small group of people had to get vision for something that didn't exist and pull it into existence through faith. That's every great thing. And the church is no different.

Okay? You could really say that the nature of apostolic work is to bring something out of nothing. Right? And that's what this team of people is doing.

[ 1 : 00 ] We decided a while ago, hey, we see something that doesn't exist, and we want it to exist because we believe God wants it to exist.

And so we're going to put in the work. We're going to show up and trust that God's going to make it happen because we can't make it happen. But it takes a group of people to do that. And that gets lonely.

It's not always sunshine and rainbows. Right? Which means it requires faith. It requires faith. And I read this quote to you guys before, but such a good quote.

C.S. Lewis says, Faith is the art of holding on to things your reason has once accepted in spite of your changing moods. Okay? Now, you might have had some things you accepted a year ago. Yep. We're doing this. This is why we're doing this. This is what its end is unto. And then what happens? Your mood changes.

[ 2 : 06 ] Maybe you have a bad day. Maybe you feel a little lonely. Maybe you feel discouraged. Right? Your morale changes. Your moods change.

Well, faith is the art of holding on to things your reason has once accepted in spite of your changing moods. Let me ask you a question, church. Do you have faith for what God wants to do in this church?

Do you have faith? Do you see it? Not with your natural eyes. Your spiritual eyes. Do you see what God wants to do with this church?

Do you believe it? Are you putting all your chips in, so to speak? To use a poker reference, right? 2 Corinthians 4, 16-18 says, We do not lose heart.

Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction, you got to love the wording of that, right?

[ 3 : 15 ] It's like every time you go through something, what is it? It's a light momentary affliction. But it doesn't feel like a light momentary affliction. But it is a light momentary affliction, right?

This light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison. As we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen.

The things that are seen are transient or temporary, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Okay? What are you looking towards? Listen, there's going to be some days where you can't look at it.

Anything you see, you have to look at the unseen. Now, there are certainly days you can look at what's seen, and you can be encouraged by that. But if you think you're going to rely on that, you're going to be in big trouble.

That's not how the Christian life was ever supposed to work. Sometimes Christians want a Christianity that doesn't require faith. That's an oxymoron. There's no such thing.

[ 4 : 18 ] There is no such thing as a version of Christianity that doesn't require faith. Of course it's going to require faith. Then why do we as Christians get so bummed out when God brings us to a place where the only way forward is to have faith?

That's exactly the way he designed it. That's exactly how it's supposed to be. We must fix our eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen.

For what is seen is temporary. What is unseen is eternal. 2 Corinthians 5.7 says, What are you walking by?

What are you walking by when it comes to the day-to-day of your life and the day-to-day of this church? Is it faith or sight? You tell me. Faith or sight? If it's sight, you need to repent.

This is not the way a Christian functions. This is not how a church gets planted. This is not how the powers and principalities of the air are overcome. It is not through what you see.

[ 5 : 21 ] It's through what you don't see. This isn't just some every once in a while kind of thing that you need. This is the everyday breath of life that you breathe in.

This is Christianity 101. It is faith. Do you have it? Are you walking in it? Are you encouraging your brothers and sisters in it? 2 Timothy 4.16-17.

Paul was feeling alone. It says, No one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. He said, May I not be charged against them.

But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me. Now, can you believe that the same Lord that stood by Paul will stand by you when you feel alone?

When you feel alone, where do you go? Do you go to numit? Do you go to entertainment? Do you go to the endless scroll on your phone? Where do you go? Or do you go to the one who strengthens you?

[ 6 : 21 ] It all depends how much faith you have. If you have faith, you go to the unseen Lord. You go to our unseen, caring God who loves us, is present with us.

Even when you don't feel his presence, even when you don't see the evidence of his presence, you trust that it is true. This is faith. Sure of what you hope for. Certain of what you do not see.

Right? Which brings us to the main text that I want to preach on today. Hebrews chapter 11. The whole chapter. Right? So if you got your Bible, look at Hebrews chapter 11.

We're going to read through the whole thing and comment on it. And then we'll close with a few other verses to wrap it up. So Hebrews chapter 11. This is what some would call the hall of faith or the faith chapter in the Bible.

Right? Hebrews chapter 11. It starts with a definition of faith. Verse 1 says, Faith is the assurance of things hoped for.

[ 7 : 21 ] Some versions say the substance. I like that. I like that wording. The substance of things hoped for. The conviction of things not seen. Sure of what you hope for.

NIV says certain of what you do not see. I know it's real popular. It's real in vogue right now. To doubt everything. And not professing Christians to celebrate uncertainty.

What in the world is that? There's nothing Christian about that. Now Christians doubt most certainly. But they are defined by faith. And they're defined by faith means they're defined by certainty in the things that they hope for.

That's what separates them. If you don't have certainty in the things you hope for. What a lame Christian is that? Who wants to be like you? Who wants to find hope in you? You're not certain of what you hope for.

Well, you're no different than the world. They're not certain of what they hope for either. Hey, I know. Let's win the world by displaying the same uncertainty they have. That will never work.

[ 8 : 22 ] Okay? Sure of what you hope for. Certain of what you do not see. The assurance of things hoped for. The conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old receive their commendation.

What is commendable before the Lord? For faith. Certainty in things hoped for. So, what are you hoping for? What is it that God put in your heart and our heart together as a church to see happen? What are you certain about? Are you living like you're certain? Are you just meandering through this church plant just hoping that things will happen without certainty? Come on, people.

We need faith. We need faith. We need to be certain of what we're hoping for. What has God promised? What has he said? What is he into? What does he do? What is his character?

These are things we can count on. These are things we can be certain of. We're not just hoping that God is behind the church. We know God is for his church.

[ 9 : 25 ] That God is the one who builds his church. He said it. What did Matthew say, right? I will... Jesus in Matthew. I will build my church.

And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And yet, what do we end up thinking? Man, I don't know if we're going to be able to do this. It seems as if the gates of hell might prevail against it. No. The Bible says, I will build my church. Jesus says he's building it. So you don't even have to build it, per se. In one sense, we co-labor with him.

But in the big picture, God's the one doing it. And so we just need to do the work of God. And Jesus said the work of God is to believe. Believe.

The work of God is to believe. That means, so you want to ask the question, what's our job? What's your work is the same thing as saying, what's your job? Our job is to believe. How's your believing?

[ 10 : 22 ] How's your believing? Are you believing in the unseen things that don't exist yet? That you can't see with your natural eyes? That's your job. Now, his job is to build what you can't see right now.

But you believe. That's what he does. And that's how churches get started. That's how great things that don't exist come into existence. Through a group of people who believe God.

Who have faith. This is how the people of old receive their commendation. By faith, we understand that the universe was created by the word of God. So that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

I just love that, the wording of that. That what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

The world doesn't get that. They think, no, you make things out of other things.

No. God speaks things and they exist. So the God who speaks things and they exist. See, that's the thing. A worldly person thinks you have to take other stuff to make stuff.

[ 11 : 27 ] In God's economy, you just need the word of God to speak and something exists. Yes. And so when you build the church, you cannot build according to the world's means. Thinking the only way we can build is if we have things that we can see so we can build it.

That's not how you build in God's economy. God takes things that are unseen and he speaks them into existence. And now they exist. This is how the world was created. This is how mountains and sunsets and waterfalls.

And gravel was created. Everything. It's like gravel. Yeah, it's practical, right? All this stuff.

God speaks these things into existence and they're there. Is the same God speaking his church into existence? Does he not declare in his word that he will build?

He's just looking for a people who will believe it. Are we that people? Are we that people? Let's be that people. You better pick this up or it's going to be a long time here.

[ 12 : 29 ] Verse 4. By faith, Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous. God commending him by accepting his gifts.

And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. Okay? An act of faith. He's saying, hey, I believe that by giving of this gift, this will be pleasing to God.

I believe by giving a different gift than my brother. You know, I would assume they knew what each other was giving. Maybe I'm wrong by that. But I would assume that they saw that.

So it took an act of faith for him to say, no, I'm actually going to give more than my brother. I'm going to give what is pleasing to God. I believe this is pleasing to God, even if it's not what my brother's giving.

And he did it and it pleased God. By faith, Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death.

And he was not found because God had taken him. Now before he was taken, he was commended as having pleased God.

[ 13 : 34 ] What did it say of Enoch? Enoch walked with God and was no more. Well, what did he walk by? He walked by faith, not by sight. Right? Verse 6, without faith, this is, Adam just remarked on this.

Without faith, it's impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. Every time you doubt, you must think of this verse.

Without faith, it is impossible to please him. Okay? Did you hear that? It's impossible. So don't ever try to please God with a lack of faith.

It's not possible. Did you got that? But we try to do it all the time. Why? It's not possible. You can't please God without faith. You got to have faith.

This is ground zero for life in God. We got to have faith. We got to trust him. We got to believe him. We got to believe that he's a rewarder of those that diligently seek him.

[ 14 : 43 ] This pleases God. God. And he will reward those who seek him. There's few things that are more satisfying than knowing that you're pleasing to God.

Well, how do you know you're pleasing to God? You believe him. You have faith. By faith, Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear, constructed an ark for the saving of his household.

By this, he condemned the world and became an heir of righteousness that comes by faith. Talk about building something that makes no sense. It had never rained before. There's this big boat, not on the sea.

It's on land. What is going on? Why would you do that? Can you imagine the ridicule he must have had? And he built it. This is faith.

This is faith. It's insane. It's no different for us. Now, we're not building an ark, but we're always called to build things that don't make sense to the world.

[ 15 : 40 ] We're always called to build things that are in accordance with his word, that are based on things we can't see, but we're certain of what we do not see. Noah did that. And when he did this, he condemned the world.

What is it that condemned the world? His faith. His faith. And he became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. Verse 8, By faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance.

And he went out not knowing where he was going. By faith, he went to live in the land of promise as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.

For he was looking forward to the city that has foundation, whose designer and builder is God.

Okay? Some of you guys left the church that was a comfortable church, enjoyable church.

You left more time with relationships that were easy and fun. And you went to a small church, believing that something that doesn't exist would come into existence.

[ 16 : 43 ] There's probably some times you're thinking, why did I do that? Right? Well, I'm sure Abraham thought the same thing. By faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance.

And he went, not knowing where he was going. Sometimes you might think, where are we going? You better have faith. If you can't see where you're going, you better have faith that God's leading. Right? And he went to live in the land of promise. Because he was looking forward to the city that has foundation, whose designer and builder is God. By faith, Sarah herself received power to conceive.

Even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful, who had promised. Such a great phrase. Since she considered him faithful, who had promised.

Do you consider him faithful, who had promised that he will build his church? Do you consider him faithful? What about on the lonely days? What about on the days when it's not happening the way you want it to happen?

[ 17 : 41 ] Or in the time frame that you want it to happen? Do you consider him faithful, who had promised to build his church? He is. He is. Therefore, from one man and him as good as dead were born descendants, as many as the stars of heaven, and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

Isn't it just like God to build his people, his nation, through a person who was as good as dead, it says. Good as dead people don't have kids. Right?

That's the way God does it. He takes things that make no sense to the eyes. He takes things that make no sense in the natural, to the world. And he says, what does that got to do with anything? Why would we do that standard when we determine what can be done or what cannot be done?

This is the one who spoke the world into existence. Of course he can have an old woman conceive, and a man as good as dead be the one who does that with her.

And then he had this whole nation that becomes his people. It says, these all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

[ 18 : 56 ] Sometimes you feel, when you're trying to do something new, when you're trying to do something that's hard, when you're trying to do something that requires faith, you feel like, you feel out of place.

Feel like, man, sometimes it just feels like I don't belong. Yeah. Because this is ultimately not our end. We weren't made for the brokenness of this world. We were made for a city. We were made for a country. Far off. Maybe not so far off. Okay? Whose author and builder is God. Where all the wrong things are made right.

And so, yeah, you feel like a stranger sometimes. You feel like an exile on the earth. As if you don't belong. For people who speak thus, make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.

If they had been thinking of the land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country. That is a heavenly one.

[ 19 : 56 ] Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. Now, some of us make the mistake of thinking too much of the land from which we have gone out.

Some of us think back too much of the church we were sent out of to plant the church. We think about it. We think of what it would be like to go back. Or we think about what we left and what we don't have sometimes.

And that's not helping. It's not helping. It makes sense. It happens. But what we need to go to is thinking of something that doesn't exist.

Thinking of something that doesn't exist. I think back to, thinking back of Bellicose, the church that sent us out. Thinking back to those early years. Those first two years.

It wasn't looking good. It was looking like that church wasn't going to exist. It's looking like it wasn't going to make it. I thought it was actually leaning, trending towards that happening. Okay?

[ 20 : 54 ] So you're taking these first two years of a church and you're thinking, we're trying to build something that doesn't exist and that's trending the opposite way. Okay? How do you build something that not only doesn't exist but is trending the opposite way?

What's on the other end of that? Think of all the relationships that are even here that were birthed out of that. Think of this church being birthed out of that. Think of all the things that happened because a group of people, a small group of people, just like you, got together and believed for something that didn't exist.

They believed for something that didn't exist for years. And when it was hard and when it was tough, they kept going. They kept believing. They didn't shrink back. They kept going and believed. And God was faithful. God saved people. They believed for salvation. And when they didn't see it, it was discouraging. But it happened. We have to do the same. As has every other church that's ever been started throughout all history has always had to do.

We always have to believe for things that are not seen. And we can't go back. We can't look back like Lot's wife. We have to look forward. Straighten towards what is ahead. Forgetting what is behind. Believing that there is something ahead that God has ordained, that God has spoken, that God wants to happen.

[ 22 : 10 ] And being certain that it's coming. That it's coming. And at the end of the day, even if we don't make it to that, even if we would die before then, we know there's something else coming.

And that is that a city whose builder is God. And we're not ultimately living for this world. By faith, Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. And he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, through Isaac shall your offspring be named. In other words, he sacrificed the promise. He sacrificed the means. Talk about dying to your dreams. This isn't just dying to your dreams.

This is dying to God's promise. You're thinking, wait a second. You want me to kill the thing that you said was the way to get the promise? How is this supposed to work?

Talk about a test of faith. It's one thing for God to test you in faith when you don't see what he said is going to happen. But how about when God tells you to essentially abort the thing that was the thing that he said was the way it was going to happen?

[ 23 : 18 ] That's faith. No wonder it was commendable. How did he do that? How would he even get his mind around that? Well, he said he considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

Do you see how a person of faith thinks? He didn't say, well, wait a second. God must be changing his plan. Because the same guy, the same God who told me, this is what I'm going to do, now just said that the way he was going to do it, I'm supposed to stop that.

Instead of doubting what God had originally said and trusting that God can't lie and that he can't deny himself, he surrendered and said, even though it doesn't make sense to me and I can't see how it's going to happen, although he had a thought of how it could happen, he said, well, God, he could theoretically just raise him from the dead.

So I'm going to be obedient, even though this doesn't make sense to the promise he made. He's literally asking me to kill the one that the promise was supposed to come through. But I'll do it because I trust God.

And this is the kind of surrender we need, just like Abraham with Isaac, right? It had to be an insane thing to go through.

[ 24 : 39 ] By faith, Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. By faith, Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff.

By faith, Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones. I love these stories. This is stuff, this is guys doing things that it makes no sense.

These things weren't even close to existing. Joseph speaking of an exodus, there was nothing even remotely looking like that was a possibility. And yet, he speaks it because he believes it.

He believes that God has said it, and if God has said it, God will do it. Do you believe the same? That if God has said it, then God will do it. It's that simple.

This is God's math equation. If he said it, he will do it. Period. Period. We try to make it more complicated sometimes. It's simple math.

[ 25 : 41 ] God said it, he'll do it. One plus one equals two. Okay? By faith, Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

By faith, Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

Faith will always require a certain level of sacrifice. Faith will always require the immediate gratification being forfeited for a long-term reward. And make no mistake, the devil will put that immediate gratification right in front of your face.

And he'll say, did God really say? Remember what he said in the garden to Adam and Eve? You think he said, it worked pretty well, didn't it?

You think he stopped after that? He's like, hey, this works pretty good. He's been doing it ever since. You can hear it sometimes in unbelievers. They'll literally say almost the exact same phrase sometimes.

[ 26 : 56 ] Did God really say? You're like, I think I know where this is coming from. This sounds eerily familiar. It's the devil. That's what he says, and he whispers it to us.

He says, did God really say he was going to build his church? Did God really say that he wants all men to be saved and come knowledge of the truth? Did God really say that the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of those who believe?

Did God really say that? Did God really say that faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of Christ? Did God really say that the only way they can be saved is if they hear?

Someone's got to give them a hearing and someone's got to be sent. Did God really say that? Yes, he said it. So we have to go. But it involves a certain level of sacrifice.

Moses had to sacrifice the immediate pleasures, knowing that there was something better more long term. Are you willing to do that? Are you willing to do that? Faith requires it. By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.

[ 28 : 02 ] How do you endure? You see him who is invisible. Doesn't that sound confusing? It does. He endured by seeing him who is invisible. Wait a second. That doesn't even make sense.

How do you see him as invisible? Faith. Faith. He endured because he had faith. He was certain of what he did not see.

He was certain of it. Right? And by faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood so that the destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. I love D.A. Carson when he teaches on that part of the Passover.

When he talks about the one guy who was really confident that this blood was going to cause him to be safe. And the other guy who was, he believed it.

But man, he wasn't as confident as the other guy. And it's not like, oh, only the people who really, really believed it didn't lose their firstborn. It was all the ones who believed it and did it.

[ 29 : 02 ] Because it wasn't about the quality of their faith. It was just the existence of their faith. Even if it was a mustard seed. That's such a good word. Right? If they put, some people painting that blood on there and they're like, I know.

We're all going to be good. Some people are painting that blood on there and they're just like, oh boy, this is scary. But I'm doing it. I'm doing it. I'm trusting. Well, they all got the same reward. They all got protection. They all had their firstborn saved. It wasn't the size of their faith. It was just the fact that they had it.

Never underestimate. Never look with condescension on a mustard seed of faith. Most of the time, that's all we got.

Right? Most of the time, that's all we got. Except for those few people who have that gift of faith. Most of us have that little mustard seed and we're just trusting God. And you know what?

[ 30 : 05 ] That's all he requires. Smallest of the seeds. By faith, the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land. But the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.

By faith, the walls of Jericho fell down and they had been encircled for seven days. By faith, Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

That was faith. That God would have mercy on a prostitute? Yeah. She had faith. And what more shall I say?

For time would fail me to have Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises.

It's a good one. Obtained promises. Through what? Through faith. What promises are you going to obtain through faith? Wrong question. What promises are we going to obtain through faith?

[ 31 : 12 ] Faith obtains promises. They stopped the mouth of lions. They quenched the power of fire. They escaped the edge of the sword. Were made strong out of weakness. Became mighty in war.

Put foreign armies to flight. How did they do all that stuff? Faith. Faith. Do you have it? Are you walking in it? Are you encouraging others in it?

Are you creating an atmosphere in Christ's church of faith? Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release so they might rise again to a better life. These guys have faith. Others suffered mocking and flogging and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned. They were sawn in two. They were killed with a sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated, of whom the world was not worthy, wandering about in deserts and mountains and in dens and caves of the earth.

And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us, they should not be made perfect.

[ 32 : 23 ] There's always something greater. The reason we can have faith in these little things on earth is because we can have faith in a bigger restoration of the kingdom on this earth when the king returns.

And if he's going to do that, how much is it to believe that he'll build a church? You know what I'm saying? Like he's going to make everything right. He's going to flip the whole world upside down and make all the wrong things right.

And we have a hard time believing he could just save a few people and make a little church in Kansas or Raytown, Missouri. You know, is that that big of a deal? Really? Pretty small in comparison.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, which I just read a whole chapter on these witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, or another version says the author and the finisher, starter and the ender.

He starts it, hands it. Isn't it awesome that he's both the author and the finisher? Aren't you glad he's not just the author? He's also the finisher. Aren't you glad you're not the author and he's the finisher, but that he's the author and the finisher?

[ 33 : 47 ] I'm pretty glad about that. That's a pretty good deal. Wait a second. You start it and you finish it? Yes. I like that. This is a good thing.

But it strictes your faith, doesn't it? I mean, if I was the author and he was the finisher, I'd wonder if it would ever get started. If he was the author and I was the finisher, I'd wonder if it would ever get done.

But if he's the author and the finisher, I got faith. I got faith. You're going about your day. You're trying to figure things out. You're thinking, how are we going to get this started?

What needs to get started? He's the author. Like, I don't even know where to get faith. He's the author. How are we going to finish? How are we going to press through? How are we going to make it to the end?

He's the finisher. He's the finisher. This is good news. He's the author and the finisher of our faith. He's the founder and the perfecter of our faith.

[ 34 : 45 ] What a chapter.

I encourage you to read that on your own, meditate on it, and think about it in light of our church and what we're trying to do. And think about it. I want us to think about, in light of all that, how can we strengthen one another in the faith?

In the faith. How can we look for opportunities to strengthen one another? Now, here's the thing.

One of the ways that's going to help us to strengthen one another in faith is that when you're weak in faith that you tell someone.

You don't hide it. You don't act. You don't put on your religious cosmetics and try to look away.

That's not how you really look. You just say, you know what?

I'm having a hard time believing. I'm having a rough go right now. I'm not really liking this right now.

I'm having a hard time believing God's going to save anybody. I'm feeling lonely.

[ 35 : 45 ] I'm having a hard time feeling like I'm going to really connect with these people. We're really going to be good friends. I'm having a hard time believing we can be family together. I'm having a hard time believing. Go down the list. Tell people.

Tell them what it is. And then if you hear that, what's your job? Well, part of it might be, you know what? I feel the same way. Sometimes you might have to just say, don't feel like if they're weak and you're weak that you've got to be strong.

If they're weak and you're weak, both be weak and trust that you're not the author and you're not the finisher. God is. And go to him together. Right? Go to him together. But in the chance that they're weak and you're strong, strengthen your brothers.

Strengthen them. Luke 22, 32. Jesus said to Peter, I've prayed for you that your faith may not fail.

And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers. Strengthen your brothers.

If you've gone to a place where you were weak and you grew with strength and faith, go encourage somebody else. Tell them how you were weak and God made you strong. Tell them how you were struggling and God helped you.

[ 36 : 49 ] And if you can't do that, then point to the word of God and say, we're both struggling. Let every man be a liar, but God be true. Right? He's faithful. And yeah, we're both struggling. But man, he's going to strengthen us.

Acts 14, 21 to 22. The apostles returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations, we must enter the kingdom of God.

We need to encourage people to continue. We need to encourage each other to continue. Some of us may be getting a little weary sometimes. We say, hey, don't give up. Every good thing starts with a small band of pioneers who believe God.

Who believe God. You got to keep going. You got to keep believing. I know it's hard. I know it's tough. I know sometimes it's tough and you don't see what you're praying for. We got to keep going.

So, Acts 16, 5 says, so the churches were strengthened in the faith and they increased the numbers daily. What happened before they increased the numbers daily?

[ 37 : 55 ] They were strengthened in the faith. They said, well, we want to increase the numbers.

We want people to get saved. That's good. What comes first, though? We need to be strengthened

in the faith.

We need to believe God. We need to believe God. Trust Him. Trust that He's building a church. You know, there's a certain level of rest, even in church planting and facing invisibility.

To just say, I don't have to make it happen. But I got a God who wants to. And He wants to do it with me. So, I'm going to do it.

You know, I was talking to someone the other day who was getting stressed because I was pressing mission. Saying, we got to get on mission. We got to get on mission in our missional communities. And this guy was feeling stressed out.

And I was just like, hey, chill out, man. God's doing this. God's building it. He's doing it in His time, His way. Yeah, we just co-labor with Him. It's like, well, how are we going to figure out how to get on mission?

[ 38 : 58 ] God? He'll show us. You don't think He wants people to get saved more than you do? You don't think He wants us to be on mission more than you could even try to muster up? Just relax.

Enjoy the ride. God's doing stuff. Yeah, He's not going to almost ever do it as fast as you want Him to do it. That's one thing. Maybe that's just me. He never does things as fast as I want Him to do it. God and I have been on a different time clock my whole life. God, could you just speed it up a little bit? He's patient.

Romans 1, 11 and 12. Paul says, I long to see you that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you. Okay?

You might think, is he talking about like a literal spiritual gift or is this a different kind of spiritual gift? People can argue about that. I think maybe he's not talking about an actual like spiritual gift like 1 Corinthians 12 through 14 spiritual gift because he says, that is that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.

[ 40 : 01 ] That's a gift you can give to each other. To be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. That should be what we do when we get together. You might say, well, I'm having a hard time doing this or this or that.

Well, let's focus on this. Let's try to be mutually encouraged by one another's faith. In order to be mutually encouraged by one another's faith, we both, one another, have to each have faith, right? Conclude with two verses. Romans 4, 19 to 21. Speaking of Abraham, he, speaking of Abraham, did not weaken in faith. When he considered his own body, which was as good as dead, since he was about 100 years old, or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.

He didn't weaken in faith. He looked with his eyes and saw old guy, barren woman, promise that we're going to have a baby. This doesn't add up.

And most of us would look at those things, old guy, barren woman, promise to have kid. And we'd be like, there's probably another way.

[ 41 : 10 ] This is, I don't have a lot of faith for this. It says he did not weaken in faith. He did not weaken in faith. In fact, it says in verse 20, no unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God.

How do you get strong in your faith? Give God glory. Worship him. Worship the Lord. You're having a hard time. You're thinking, I'm feeling low. I'm feeling I can't believe.

You need to get your eyes off yourself and onto him and give him glory. Worship him. It's the antidote to unbelief, which happens from looking at us rather than looking at him or looking at our circumstances rather than looking at him.

Instead of looking at the barrenness of his wife and the age of himself, he looked at the God and his promise and he obtained it through faith. Obtained it through faith. We must do the same thing.

No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. How convinced are you?

[ 42 : 20 ] Are you fully convinced that God is able to do what he promised? Of course he is. Of course he is. Last verse, Hebrews 6, 10 to 12. God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints as he still do.

Think of this as you think of it. I want you to think of this as even our church. Let me read it again. God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints as he still do.

And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

We will inherit the promises of God as Christ's church. We will. Through faith and patience. Through faith and patience.

It's not just faith. It's patience and swell. That's enduring faith. You can't just have faith on the good days. You've got to have faith for the long haul. You've got to endure to the end. It's faith and patience.

[ 43 : 34 ] We have movements. We have churches. They're called Word of Faith. Where's the Word of Patience movement? Where's that movement? He said faith and patience.

He didn't just say faith. We've got to be patient. Some of you are thinking, man, why isn't God saving people? Why isn't this happening? Why isn't this happening? I've got two words for you. Faith and patience.

This is how we obtain the promises. We will obtain the promises. Do you hear me? We will. We've got to keep believing. We can't shrink back. We can't be sluggish.

We can't waver in unbelief. We need to press on and encourage our brothers and sisters. And we're going to see God do mighty things. We're going to see God save people. This is what he does.

And what else are you going to live for? You want to go check out and do something else? Really?

This is what we're created for. This is what we're created for. Let's do it.

[ 44 : 32 ] Amen? Amen.