

Matthew 6 // Have Faith

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[0:00] We're going to do something a little bit different today because we're walking into an Easter season. I love teaching through Easter. I really do. It's one of my favorite times of year. I remember I was interning at a church many years ago and the pastor had in his heart to go out and give water and hot chocolate and things like this out to this long, long lineup for something that was happening.

And he had this sign that said, Easter is more important than Christmas. And he was just one of those guys that wanted to poke the bear a little bit to try and initiate some conversation. And it was really cool. And in one of those other, you know, nights we had, we used to go out on in a, what we called it, the chili bus.

It was just a converted camper where we cooked up a mess of chili and we would give it out to people on the street and we offered to pray for them. And this one guy kept on coming out named Bob Giroux. And I actually named my very first sermon I ever did called The Gospel According to Bob Giroux.

And the reason why was because Bob was heavily marginalized. He was loved in our church. The church, I wasn't a pastor or anything like that, but he was loved in our church. But Bob had a lot of, a lot of mental issues. He was heavily medicated for a lot of things.

And a lot of people, because of that, by the way, thank you for what you said about being peculiar and quirky. I love that. Because, yes, we all are. Bob was quirky and weird, okay?

[1:25] But I just couldn't help but like the guy. Because he had enough faith to go out to this chili bus all the time. And he would pray for people. And he would lead people to Jesus.

And I sometimes would walk in him thinking, you know, for my education, my training or whatever, this guy is rocking this. I need to learn from this guy. And it was such a valuable lesson that what you can do with a little faith can truly move mountains.

And despite him being, you know, from a world point of view, weird and marginalized, what a beautiful spirit this guy had. Truly beautiful spirit using a little faith to do much.

So I wanted to talk today about faith. Because we can have a little faith, and it can be enough to move mountains. It's dependent upon our perspective. And we can have a little faith, and it's actually a lack of faith.

And there's a big difference between the two. And I thought, walking into Easter, we're going to touch in Matthew chapter 6, but I'm also going to bounce around to some other stories where Jesus said, Oh, you of little faith, in Matthew as well.

[2:33] And encourage, just simply by saying this, if you get nothing out of today, try and listen to this. God really loves you. God really, really loves you.

You are precious to him. Okay, you can tune up. That's fine. Matthew 17, verse 20 says, He said to them, because you have a little faith, for truly I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, move from here to there, and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.

Imagine having a big faith of what you can do, even though you may have a little. You only have a little in your hands. You only have a little in your bank account. You only have a little training. You only have a little this.

And yet, on faith, you can step out and do wondrous, amazing things for God, because he's with you, and he's moving you forward. And you can lean on his goodness, and you can lean on his training for you, his discipleship.

And it only takes a little faith. But that's not what we're going to talk about today. A little faith can forget that God cares for us. A little faith can forget that God really loves you.

[3:53] A little faith can also forget the power of God, that he is capable and able to do anything. He is creator. He is our master.

He can do anything. And we forget that sometimes, because we have a little faith, or our faith is somehow clouded. A little faith also forgets what Jesus has done in our past.

I don't know about you, but this is something that plagues me sometimes. I was just sharing earlier how, you know, I'm going through some things of worry right now. And they're, you know, kind of just hovering right about here, you know, if I think in my mind, in the sense that I can get to them pretty quickly.

And then I look over this past year, of all the things the Lord has done, saved from the fire, snatched from difficulty, provided for, et cetera, et cetera. And I look at that and I'm thinking, what is my problem?

Why can't I remember all of that and put it in context of what I'm worrying right now, which is really little? It doesn't make the circumstances go away. They're real.

[4:57] It's just that Jesus is bigger than those circumstances. And sometimes, if you're like me, forget that. So a little faith causes us to forget what Jesus has done in our past.

And a little faith also puts our eyes on circumstances as opposed to Jesus. So let's go through four examples of having a little faith and how we can move beyond it.

First example is forgetting that God cares for us. Matthew chapter six, verses 26 to 30. Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns and your heavenly father feeds them.

Are you not of more value than they? And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.

They neither toil nor spin. Yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

[6:05] Jesus is talking about materialism here. And we might think, well, as Christians, oh, we don't have to worry about that. But we do. Because there's two sides of materialism.

If, you know, if I, you know, give me the grace of dumbing it down to that. One, we either want more, and we're obsessed with getting it, or we don't have what we perceive is enough, and we're obsessed with what we lack.

Both standpoints are materialism, in a way. And God is telling us so very clearly here, like, I got you. I got you.

I'm taking care of you. And it may not be in a way that you want right now. But I bet you anything. We can look across the aisle. We can look to the people next to us.

And there is an incredible story about God's provision when you needed it. Sometimes in the 11th hour, but he came through for you. And that's what we have to cling to, is these stories remind us that God provides, and he cares for us.

[7:10] We live in a very materialistic age. It's very easy to point around at the look and say, oh yeah, they're materialistic people. But like I said, if we're lacking and we're jealous, that's materialism, just in a different form.

Verse 26, Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? God provides for the birds.

We should expect God to take care of us. Now, I'm not much of a bird watcher. But I will say this. In all my years, I've never seen a bird look worried.

They don't seem very stressed out. In fact, they sing a lot. And frankly, it annoys me sometimes.

Okay? Tweeting a little bird. It's like, okay, it's beautiful. Stop. Right? Or the doves. You know?

Like, oh, anyways. Okay, sorry. All I have to say is that I've never seen a bird stressed out. God takes care of them so very well. Well, are you not more valuable than they?

[8:14] Are you not more valuable? God loves you above all his other created things. Individually, God loves you.

And maybe I should have done this. I'm thinking about it right now. But it's like, I should have written a card for every single person that came here today that just says God loves you. Because it is that personal.

It is that intentional. It is that meaningful. God loves you. He will provide for you. It may not be in the way you think. Sometimes it might surprise you. But it will always be better.

Always. You're made in the image of God. God loves you. Wish I could see every single face in this. But just so you know, I actually have to wear glasses. And I don't because I'm nearsighted. So in order to see this, you know, and I don't have bifocals. So like, in order to see this, I have to go without my glasses.

[9:13] But if you're at the back kind of thing, you're a blur. So God loves you. You blurry blobs back there. You are made in the image of God, not how I see you without my glasses.

There you go. Verse 27. And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to the span of his life? You can't make yourself taller by worrying.

You can't make yourself thinner by worrying. You can't add a day to your life by worrying. In fact, worry takes away from you. Worry, the original language, boils down to also the word anxiety. And I was sharing earlier too that when you break that word, it quite literally means being pulled apart in two different directions. Our physical bodies can take that only so much.

I mean, it was a method of torture back in the day, okay? Your body could take so much being pulled in two different directions before it just simply snaps. Your heart and your mind are exactly the same.

[10:16] They can only take so much being pulled in two different directions before something snaps. And it can be rough and it can be difficult. Knowing that God provides for you, we should not be in a place of worry.

And yet, if we're honest with ourselves, worry is just around the corner all the time. It's like this weird shadow, you know, just like, can you just get away from me for a little while? Can I just live in peace for a little while?

What has worrying done for us, really? Verse 30, but if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

The people who have little faith don't think much about how God cares for them. If we woke up every morning and we just looked in the mirror and said, God loves you.

Right? That's not the power of positive thinking. That's truth. God loves you. You can let worry take a back seat because of it.

[11:23] I think that might apply to some of us here today. You have a little faith. Your struggles are great. You know you should have more. You feel guilty about it and it's this weird cycle that just keeps happening in our heart.

But one of the reasons why we have a little faith is because we don't think God cares about us that much. That maybe he doesn't see what we're going through. But he does. He absolutely does. And he identifies with us. Some think that God cares about the birds and flowers more than us. That is a lie. It is a lie. He cares about you as an individual more than anything else in creation. Period. You are that important to him. So imagine the cross, which we're about to talk through and celebrate over this next couple of weeks.

Imagine Jesus dying on the cross. Coming back to life. Paying the price eternally for our sins so that we can be free and set free. Belong in him and find family and meaning in him.

[12:31] Imagine all of that for a moment. And then just saying, yeah, but do you really love me today? Right? We get stuck in our own minds sometimes of thinking of this.

We can't be caught by the lie. The second example of little faith is forgetting the power of God which leads in from our last really. Matthew chapter 8 verses 23 to 27 And when he got into the boat his disciples followed him.

And behold there arose a great storm on the sea so that the boat was being swamped by the waves. But he was asleep and they went and woke him saying, save us Lord we're perishing. And he said to them why are you afraid oh you of little faith? Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea and there was a great calm and the men marveled saying what sort of man is this that even the winds and sea obey him?

The disciples followed Jesus out into the sea and depending on your translation it will also say prior to this Jesus is saying we're going to the other side.

[13:35] We're going to the other side. Which means the disciples even in the midst of the storm should have said okay hold on this guy has healed people he has delivered people from demons

cured various diseases we've seen incredible things he said we're going to the other side that means we're going to the other side but that's not what happened these seasoned fishermen these guys who grew up on the sea who knew it and knew its weirdness and how quickly it could stir up they had fear and they did not have faith.

I wonder sometimes about this whole lesson so much because really Jesus sleeping in the boat doesn't mean he's sleeping on the job it means that's how much peace Jesus is at that's how little worry he had over the situation God is not worried about what you're going through he's worried about you he's praying for you Jesus is our intercessor now he's praying for you but not your circumstances because he's bigger than them the fact that Jesus has peace with what we're going through right now means we too can say okay I'm pretty freaked out you know the winds and waves are real but you said we're going to go to the other side and I know you're at peace Lord so give me some of your peace today and it can change the dynamic I love that Jesus rebuked their lack of faith before he dealt with the storm that's proof he wasn't worried about the storm at all he said oh you guys and you can look at that and say well maybe that's a little unfair this would be a little freaky situation it was but that's how calm the Lord was over this he knew everything was going to be fine and the great thing about this is that

Jesus isn't always also saying just claim that the wind and the waves don't exist just pretend that what you're going through isn't really happening and just live in victory well we should live in victory but the wind and the waves are real that bill that you can't pay it's real the medical situation you're going through it's real we can't be in denial of what's really happening it's just we have to realize over and over again that Jesus is bigger than that and he is at peace through it and we can get our peace from him we don't have to worry about drumming it up ourselves these guys had lots of reasons to have faith how many reasons has God given you and me to have faith how many times has he rescued us taught us saved us you know there's a lot of things that I've prayed for in my life that were answered with a no and at the time

I struggled like why Lord and then years later it would be like dodged a bullet there thank you you know God knows what's going on and he's preparing our hearts day by day through all of these circumstances what you're going through right now may be filled with a lot of joy so you know what praise loudly and give him thanks daily and you may be going through your own personal hell right now and I think it's important that we know that God loves us he's here for us he is at perfect peace and he is still on his throne you know when we were going Tuesday morning we were going through revelation and one of the first things that came up was John saw that the throne in heaven was occupied right the throne in heaven is occupied he sits there that means our king our master our father our good shepherd is in charge of all things he is at perfect peace despite the winds and the waves in our lives and we can find that peace in him he had healed the centurion's servant he had healed

Peter's mother-in-law he healed many people afflicted in many ways these guys just forgot about the power of God they forgot that he could deal with this wind and these waves they forgot about it sometimes little faith forgets that God cares about us sometimes little faith forgets the power of Jesus we can doubt in our own power and maybe that's a good thing sometimes because we're kind of like a gas tank we can we can some of us can go a long way on willpower and strength and that's good nothing wrong with that at all but that poppy will run out one day we have to lean on his peace the power of Jesus can work miracle in a person's life that we've been praying for and we've seen no results yet you may pray for years and years and years that the Lord would capture someone's heart heart and they just seem so hardened and indifferent to him and then one day you get a call and you're just like what has happened suddenly this person is talking about

[18:43] Jesus reading their Bible it's not on our time frame but don't give up and don't forget the power of our God the change of heart sometimes the ground just has to be cultivated enough for the plant to grow in the right way for long term he has the same power to provide for our material needs and concerns he has the same power to use weak instruments like you and me he has the same power to work in this wicked world in ways we'll never be able to understand and good and light will prosper and shine in ways that will surprise us even yet to come so let's put away little faith and trust more in the power of Jesus despite the wind and the waves around us because the third example is that we forget sometimes what Jesus has already done Matthew chapter 16 verses 5 to 8 when the disciples reached the other side remember he said let's go to the other side they had forgot to bring any bread and Jesus said to them watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees

and Sadducees and they began discussing it among themselves saying we brought no bread but Jesus aware of this said oh you little faith why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread not long before this

Jesus fed thousands of people not long before this they should have thought like hey he just did this this is no problem no idea where we're getting the provisions for but you know what our God is God he just calmed the winds and the waves and to that culture the sea was something heavily heavily respected the sea was considered death there was a respect there you read the book of Jonah and you're going to see that when the men were throwing Jonah off the boat Jonah was willing to go to death to avoid the will of God in his life and how that turned out was Jonah ended up doing what God wanted him to do in the first place just took a roundabout and then he pouted about it but that's for another day we'll get into that sermon but for here and now it's important to understand that the wind and the waves represented true fear for these guys and they had just seen Jesus calm the storm so wouldn't he feed these people again but they demanded that Jesus showed them a sign the Pharisees and the religious leaders if you really are who you say you are show us a sign from heaven and I don't think you could put the Pharisees and the

Sadducees in the little faith category I'd actually think that they're in the no faith category person after rebuking them Jesus went off again with his disciples would Jesus ever be worried about not having enough bread no not one moment and you being me in a situation where you've got something that you're thinking man we could use a little more of this or that you may be thinking father I got this idea and I don't even know where to begin to start because it's so much difficulty the Lord can provide bread and fish out of nowhere from his stores in heaven he can provide for us if we're following him he can provide for us yeast or leaven is used as a picture of a corrupting influence put a little into a lump of dough and it spreads see the disciples didn't get it not yet and what can happen with doubt is that it can seep into a faithful heart and it can grow and if we're looking at it the wrong way if we're looking at like Judas did when

Mary and John 12 poured out the ointment on Jesus feet his reaction is we could have given this money to the poor even though he was clearly already taking from the purse himself we could do this and do this and that is better but you know like we can get freaked out about that stuff and forget God has the power God is the provider God will find a way God loves you if the Lord has put something on your heart step out of the boat step out of the boat he's going to help you through that it's when we put our mind and our heart on circumstances and the winds and waves around us we start to sink and that's easier said than done I know but we have to start sometime I'll get to winds and waves again in a moment but verse 8 Jesus aware of this said oh you of little faith why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread you know the thing that I caught my mind in there is this is reasoned among themselves now I don't know about you but if you've ever been in university and you've been in a group project that's a terrible idea right reasoning among themselves

I have never been a part of a group project where everybody fully was engaged there's always two of us that were doing all the work one guy never showed up one guy just kind of showed up and just doodled like it was unbelievable the reasoning among us doesn't always work and this is the problem is that they had already seen Jesus do amazing things perform miracles feed people heal people and then he says you know we're going to feed these people the first thing they do is like okay we got to figure this out we're going to form a bread committee we're going to see who's going to bake it and it's not going to go very far but we're just going to see and just hope the Lord provides and Jesus is probably just like oh you guys we just did this trust me so we forget what Jesus has done in our lives and when we come up against difficulty we forget even then we forget those moments we need to remember a little faith forgets that God cares for us a little faith forgets the power of God a little faith forgets what Jesus has done in the past if we took a moment to talk about the amazing things that God has done in our lives it would probably take all day and then some we probably have to be here for a week and you know I can say right now those of us that are old enough none of us are going to look to a younger person and say you know what

[24:56] Jesus isn't worth it none of us have stories where we could say to a younger person those of us are old enough and say don't bother you know why you already know the answer to that because we've seen the Lord prove himself over and over and over again we have faith in what he's done so you know what tell the younger generation have faith have faith you don't have to have your life all figured out right now I'm 55 I'm still working on it I hope that isn't discouraging to

you but you know we could still have to figure things out but we have to trust in what the Lord has for us because he provides he protects he guides and he loves you loves you but it's just so easy to forget and I think it's a deliberate tactic of the enemy I really do that we forget all of the good things that God has done for us and we get freaked out in a moment and stuck there don't forget what the Lord has done so the fourth example of little faith a little faith puts its eyes on circumstances and not on Jesus as you probably guessed we're going to walk on the water now Matthew chapter 14 verses 28 to 31 and

Peter answered him Lord if it is you command me to come to you on the water he said come so Peter got out of the boat walked on the water and came to Jesus but when he saw the wind he was afraid and beginning to sink he cried out Lord save me and Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him saying oh you of little faith why did you doubt you know I don't think we give this enough pause you're in a boat and Jesus is walking on water towards you I would do a double take and I would think what was in my morning coffee you know like what is happening right now but they saw him they knew him and as I mentioned before when the word especially in the new testament with the greek and it says if this is you it's not so much a question as it is easily translated to be since this is you okay it's like you know Jamie if you're married to Chelsea right which we know you're married to Chelsea it's the same thing as saying since right we know that so it's the same thing with the Lord here none of this would make sense and yet Peter got out of the boat I mean that is a miracle right there he saw Jesus and just as Peter does feet first he just got out of the boat and he had faith Peter wasn't supposed to deny the reality around him he wasn't supposed to deny that this is impossible with human understanding he wasn't supposed to deny that this was scary that this was something new unseen unheard of perplexing fill in the blank we're not supposed to deny those things it's just that Jesus is greater and that is what Peter should have remembered even though the wind and the waves were real they weren't as real as Jesus so let me say this even though our problems collectively as individuals are very real be the health financial however you want to label that

Jesus is more real than them he is and he's on his throne and he's praying no he said oh you of little faith at the end Peter was worried about the circumstances more than he had faith in Jesus and like I said we shouldn't be in denial of the circumstances we just have to put God in his proper context of understanding he's God above not God within the circumstance we can fix our eyes on Jesus and only having a little faith doesn't do that Peter had faith in Jesus he still sank it's because he took his eyes off of him for a moment so fix your eyes on Christ verse 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him and said to him oh you of little faith why do you doubt I mean oftentimes we feel like we have to argue our faith I don't know about you but there are some people that I have met and I enjoy it too that will argue their faith or can argue their faith there's been people they've talked to you that may have just said well what about this and this and this and this and this and they just want to get into it and and debate that's a part of their process is to argue okay that's okay I'm not afraid of that at all but here's the thing that the Lord was showing me this week if there's can be so many good people at arguing for their faith why can't we be really good at arguing our doubt where's the interrogation for our doubt people will criticize our faith all the time I mean go to work sometimes and that's just you know you walk in the door and people will say you know one thing I worked for an advertising agency at one point after I was pastoring my first church and I remember walking in there and one guy said oh the reverend's here you know it's like well thanks you know I know what you're meaning by that but we can get attacked for our faith so let's maybe set our headsets just a little bit different start attacking your doubt start interrogating it I'm doubting that God will provide well has he let you down in the past this way can you read the Bible and show me an example where God hasn't provided in his time in the right way can you go through different things that the word has said and show that God has chosen not to be faithful anymore despite him saying that he is can you show me in the Bible where he says that God lies to us do you see what I mean if we just get to interrogate our own doubt a little bit more it puts it into perspective because every question I just asked it's like no of course not his promises are yes and amen he comes through for us in ways that we never expect never understand in ways that are better better sometimes than we possibly can ask for we're blessed with all ages in this church and like I said I've never heard one of us older folk turn to a younger and say it's not worth it so I do want to leave a challenge before I close if you're like me and you're an older person in this church find a younger person and say man it's worth it hold on you know cling to Jesus because we know those

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