

BELPRES CHURCH

ARE YOU KIDDING ME?

Mark 5:21-36

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Well, good morning. Well, what I set up, I better be good after all of that. Let's see. How do we do this? All right, let's go. Well, welcome. Good to be with you. It is so good to see everybody here on time today. It's so wonderful. She wish. Glory be to God. I must admit from the very beginning, it is a little interesting trying to preach to an empty room. Oh, I shouldn't say... No, the staff are here. God bless each and every one of you. Oh, I should get lots of amens today. Right? And besides, there's no service after this so I get to preach longer. Woo-hoo. So this you will get more than just the introduction the other service got. Amen.

God is good too, isn't he? I am indeed grateful to be here with you today. Love this congregation and what it is you're doing and how you leaning into what God wants for his people to be. I'm excited about that. I'm excited for your pastoral staff because they're catching. They have the heart of God and they want this congregation to have it as well. And we're grateful for that. And the fact that you are trying to lean into this third way reconciliation thing is absolutely incredible because this is exactly what the world needs for us to live into all that God has for each and every one of us. Amen?

Amen.

So I'm going to just jump right into this. The all in theme to me is just so exciting that you're being challenged to think, what does it really mean to be a devoted follower of Christ? And then to live into that, not just understand it, but live into it. So I'm here to talk about faith, right? So I titled this sermon, faith, are you kidding me? Why? Because there's so many narratives in the Bible and you read them, you go, Oh yeah, really. Right? Are you kidding? Did that actually happen? And the reality is is that every word is something that's been inspired by God and something that we can learn from. Amen.

So let me just jump right into this. From the very beginning I just want you to know that those of us who are devoted to the Lord are called to walk by faith. Period. Amen. We're to walk by faith. If you read Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 11:4, James 2:24, they will all say the exact same thing and that is this, that the righteous live or walk by faith. Not by sight, but by faith. And how many know that there are times when things actually happen and occur in the spirit before they manifest physically? And as people of God, God calls us to this place to trust him, to rely on him and to lean on him. So we're to walk by faith, not by sight. Walk by faith, not by sight.

Some people say, if I see it, I can believe it, right? Some of us have to believe it in order to see it. So God, would you help us to be people who walk by faith and not by sight? The second thing is that how many know that we all have a measure of faith? Every one of say amen.

Amen.

As believers in Christ, he has given us many things. He's given us hope. He's given us joy. He's given us peace. He gives us wisdom, but he also gives us a measure of faith according to Romans 12:3. Now let me ask you a question. So how many of you got in a car and drove here today? How many of you have been on an airplane recently or drove across a bridge recently? Huh? If you did any of those, guess what? It required faith. I travel a fair amount, not as much as some others, but every time I'm flying somewhere, people say, oh, how was the flight? And anytime that flight goes up and come down, guess what? That's a great flight, right? But I always assume that when I get on the plane, that I'm going to reach my destination. I don't really think about it. Why? Because there's a certain amount of faith built into that. If I go across that bridge, I'm assuming that once I start, I'll get to the other side and it's a faith move. I just believe that is going to happen.

So we all have a measure of faith and I pray that that measure would grow in each and every one of us. That we would always be people who learn to trust the Lord. Now your pastor had a great quote. He says, "We are a community that lives in faith and not fear." And I want us to really embrace that, that's what Pastor Deli was saying because we're living in a time where fear kind of governs a lot of things and we should not be governed by fear, but rather governed by, somebody say it with me, faith.

Faith.

Oh, you guys sound so good. Ooh, preach it preacher. All right. So faith. So we've been talking about faith. So let's talk about what is faith. I'm just going to allude to three Greek words that talked about faith, right? So faith is a conviction based on hearing testimonies, if you will, and has always used a faith in God or faith in Jesus. You hear something and it stirs you, right? Faith is also talks about something that's faithful, something that's

reliable, something that can be trusted and it is said of God and it has also said of people who serve God.

Now I can always rely and trust in my wife to tell me what to do. She's just an expert at that. Honey, this. Honey, that. Honey, do this. Honey, what about that? Did you call me here? Honey, did you do? Oh Lord, geez. I can trust that woman to try to tell me what to do because she's faithful. Amen. She's reliable and that's what faith is. It's this ability to trust and rely in God and those around us. Amen. It's a firm conviction and it produces a full acknowledgement of God. When we come to this place where we really know who God is and understand who he is, it brings a certain assurance to us and it brings a certain acknowledgement and there's a personal surrender that occurs when we trust God.

God, would you help us be people who come to a place where we can trust you fully? Trust. Trustworthiness of words have fidelity. Some of you are probably old enough to remember the Hi-Fi radios and TVs. It means that it was a quality machine, high fidelity, and fidelity is a part of this word here in the Greek as well. And we know that God is high quality. Amen. And so we place our faithfulness in God. Now, belief is an opinion held in good faith without necessarily referenced to is proof. We just believe that certain things will occur and will happen.

You know of a fellow named Abraham? Remember that fellow Abraham? Now he walked by faith. And Abraham's, it says that the object of Abraham's faith was not the promise itself. The promise was an occasion for him to exercise faith. Abraham's faith was actually in God. And because he has faith in God, he exercises faith when certain circumstances arose. Amen. So the question for us is not if we have faith. The question is, what do we have faith in and whom do we place our trust?

Let's take some time to look at our text. Going back to Mark chapter five it starts with Jesus restoring a person that's demon-possessed. Ooh. And this fellow was breaking iron. They couldn't contain him, they couldn't tie him down. When they would he would break the chains and they could do absolutely nothing with him. And Jesus comes up on him and sets him free. And it did something to people who heard him. But in the middle of the passage it talks about Jesus raising the dead girl, excuse me, and healing this sick woman. And I want us to look at this text and I want us to think about what does this text say. In order for faith to work, we need certain things.

And so the first thing is in order for faith to work, there must be a problem. There must be a problem. And in this text there are two problems. One, the synagogue leader's daughter was not doing well. And two, there was a woman who had this bleeding condition. She had it for 12 years the Scripture says, and she spent all of her money trying to find remedies for it and it just got worse. That was a need. That was the

problem. Amen. That was a problem. So in order for faith to work, there's got to be a problem. So can God help us not to be afraid of hard things that come into our lives? Because then it gives an occasion for God to do something significant in us and those around us. How many know when God does something for you it also impacts others? Amen. Which is why we pray for one another and we share our needs with one another because then all of us can see God doing his thing.

The second thing is this, there has to be a need. In order for faith to work there's not just a problem, but a need. And a woman had a bleeding issue that needed to be fixed and needed to be rectify. She wanted it eliminated. So the need existed. Amen. I was thinking about, just not too long ago, we ran into this young couple that I'm working with and the wife can't find a job yet. She's got degrees in all of this and the husband was laid off and his unemployment was running out and they were concerned about making rent.

And in talking with them, I pray with them and a thought came to my mind then I said, "Oh, I got an idea too." And I said, "I tell you what, let's talk a little later because I got a few more things to do." And I saw him the next day and I said, "Okay, so what are we going to do to fix this need for rent?" He said, "Guess what? Is already taken care of?" I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Yeah, God surprised us and our rent is fine and we should be okay next month and the next month." And the need was there. And it was an occasion for God to do something pretty dynamic. Amen?

Amen.

So in order for faith to work, there needs to be a need. The third thing is in order for faith to work, there needs to be a testimony, right? The woman heard about Jesus, that what the Scripture said. How did she hear about Jesus? Jesus obviously had gone around the area doing some incredible things. People begin to talk about it. She heard about it because somebody testified and because of that she believed and hope that God could do something for her as well. Now this is where we come in because I believe that we need to testify of the good things that God has been doing in our lives and in our congregation. People need to know that God is alive and that God is well. Amen.

We need the noise that abroad people need to hear that God is up to something, that he's doing something and so there has to be this testimony, this sharing of the faith. So Wednesday night, he comes into the church and he tells me about how God came through and met this need to meet their rent. Amen. And he said, "And I think it's going to be okay from here on out." He was testifying to me. It boosted my faith and saying, God, you worked really in that case. Amen. In that case.

The thing is that in order for faith to work, there has to be some kind of action taken. Now remember the woman, she's bleeding. She's in a crowd. She hears about Jesus,

and she says, if I can just touch his cloak, if I can just touch the hem of his garment, if I can just get... Just give me the hem, baby. You know? And so she had to reach out and touch Jesus. We need to be people who will reach out and touch Jesus. Amen. She came up behind him in the crowd, she touched his cloak and when she touched him, she felt something happen that changed her circumstance and her situation. Wow. She did something.

God, would you help me not to be afraid to take some kind of action that demonstrates that I have faith in you, that I rely on you, that I trust you. Amen. Now, how many know that faith is invisible? It really is. You don't know if people have faith until you actually see them do something or testify to something. Huh? Is that right? Did anybody but me? Huh? That's true. Amen. And so it takes an action.

Then the final thing in order for faith to work is that it takes a belief that God cares. How many people do you know that don't think that God even gives a rip? That even thinks about them, that he's mindful of them, right? But God cares. And so remember Jesus is pressed in the crowd. Lots of people around. This woman touches his cloak and some healing virtue goes out. And this is what it says, that once Jesus realize that the power had gone out from him and he turned around in the crowd and asks, "Who touched me?" And his disciples going, "Are you kidding me? Who touched you? Come on, look around you, look around you." He say, "No, no, no. Somebody touched me." And finally the woman identifies herself and he says, "Daughter, your faith has made you whole."

She believed that God cared. Now remember, remember this happened after the leader of the synagogue, Jairus came and said, "My daughter's sick. Can you do something about it?" And Jesus is on his way to Jairus' house and he's interrupted by this other healing that takes place. But Jairus came because he believed that God cared. He believed that Jesus cared enough to come to his house to see his daughter and to do something about it. And so a belief that God cares is important. Amen. And my prayers for each of us is that we indeed would grow in our ability to know that God cares. That no matter how big or how small the issue is, God cares, which is why he tells us through Peter to cast all of our cares what? On him. Why? Because he cares for us. He literally cares for us.

Oh Lord God, thank you. Thank you. Thank you. All right, that's our text. So let me share some trues with you. I'm going to just style them as facts right now. Okay? Just a few trues. The first one is this. Some people believe because of someone else's testimony. Some people believe because of somebody else's testimony. So let me encourage us as people of God, as people of faith, devoted followers, people who are all in, that we would indeed share with others what God has done and is doing, and let's rest sometime and tell them what God can do. That makes sense to anybody but me? And let's share often and let's share gleefully. I don't know about you, but I'm just excited about my relationship with God. Even going through the hard times and say, I don't understand it,

but I know that he still cares for me. People go, huh? Yes, he still cares and he will help me in due season. Amen.

The second fact is this is that sometimes blindness faith, and that's because hope is present. Because I hope in God because I rely on God because I in God because I'm surrendered to God even though I don't see it, I just go for it. God, I believe you're the hope drives me. Hope pushes me. Hope causes me to trust God. And so sometimes it'll cause me to do something and blindly, if you will. Amen. So it's not really blind because we have hope and we know the one in whom we have hope. The other thing is that we have faith in God because he's what? Faithful. Somebody say that, he's faithful.

He's faithful.

God is faithful. Yes. Let's always remind each other, honey, he's faithful. My great aunt would always say, my grown up name was Rodney, but she would always say Ronny. It's Rodney. She said "Ronny, but you got to just trust God." She'd always say, "Just trust God because he's faithful." And that's the truth. Amen. We have faith in God because he's faithful. It didn't take a lot of faith is another thing, is another fact. It didn't take a lot of faith to move God, but it takes some faith Amen. It doesn't matter how big or how small your faith is. I think it talks about this little mustard seed thing. You ever tried to hold one of those things in your hand? Is really, really, really small. God has said, no, no, no, no. I've given you a measure of faith, use that.

It didn't take a lot of faith, but it takes some faith. And may we be people who more and more learned to exercise our faith in God. Trust God for things that seems impossible. I'm trying to grow out of my tendency or my proclivity to put God in a box. Because if I can't do it I don't think God can do it. God can do what seems impossible. In fact, it says in the Scripture, what's impossible with man is not impossible with God. And so let's trust God. Amen. Let's trust him. Let's trust him. Let's trust him. Let's exercise the faith that we have.

And another fact is that God wants us to trust him. So the question is, what does he want you to trust him for right now? What's he asking you to trust him for right now? God will put us in situations where we have to trust. He'll put us in a circumstance where only he can do something about it. Amen. Lord have mercy. How many know that the Bible says he'll never put more on you than you can bear? But there are times I looked at him and said, God, you must've mixed me up with somebody else because I can't bear this. This is way too heavy for me, Lord. What? Oh, but we can trust him and God wants us to trust him. So let's not again fight those circumstances that we find ourselves in that are untenable or that we don't understand, but let's trust him in the midst of it.

Another fact is this, faith is to be lived in public. In the power of what Jesus did. He could have healed everybody. He healed, restored everybody. He restored in private, in the back rooms and where, but some of those things were done out in open. Why? Because he wanted the masses to know that he's capable and that he is able. So let's be people who live our faith in public. Let's not be ashamed. Let's not be afraid. God, would you help us in this area?

Another the fact is this, is that it does not... That faith does, excuse me. Our faith needs to operate. Excuse me. Our culture needs us to operate in faith on their behalf. Okay? Our faith needs to operate on the behalf of somebody else. I love that story in Mark two where the four guys is bringing their friend who can't walk to Jesus. They get there, the place is crowded, they tear up the man's house and they let him down through the roof. And what does Jesus say? And he saw their faith. And sometimes our faith is for the benefit of somebody else's faith or somebody else's benefit. Amen.

Finally, faith does not make things easy. No. What it does is makes it possible. That was good. Wait, let me write that down. That was really good. So faith does not make things easy. It makes things possible. So again, as we close, the question is not if we have faith. No. The question is what do we have our faith in? Who do we have our faith in him? Amen. So let's put our faith to work for the good of the world and those around us. May God help us. Amen. Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not to your own understanding and all of your ways acknowledge him that he might direct your path.

Let's pray. God, again, we thank you for who you are. We're able to thank you for so many things that you do for us, but we want to start with the fact that you are Holy and righteous and that you are caring and that you are mindful of us, God, and that you are faithful. God, and then we do thank you for the ways that you demonstrate your care for us. Help us God again, to be people who trust you with all of our heart, and it's in your Son's strong name that we pray. Let everybody say...

Amen.

Amen. And God bless you.

Discussion Questions: Read John 17:20-23; Philippians 4:2-3

1. Recall at time when you felt you were caught between a rock and a hard place and God came through.
2. What biblical narratives encourage your faith the most?
3. Can you name someone who has influenced your faith in God the most?
4. When do you find hard to trust God?
5. Can you think of a time when you felt God let you down?
6. What does the Apostle James mean when he says "faith without works is dead?"
7. How can someone else know that you have faith?