

# Courageous Faith

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Welcome to our second week in our 6-week series on 'Courageous Living'. Before we jump into this week's study on courageous faith, how did you see God work in and through your life last week as you sought to embody courageous love?

## Faith, & the importance of faith

How did you feel God speak to you through the sermon on Sunday?

When you think about courageous faith, what comes to mind? Would you describe yourself as someone who has a lot of faith or is this an area where you feel God is calling you to grow in?

Read together Hebrews 11:1-6

What is the biblical definition of faith? What would be some big picture examples of faith that would be common to all believers?

Why is it impossible to please God without faith? What does this tell us about God? What does this tell us about how we are to respond to God?

Consider the biblical characters listed in the 'hall of faith' in Hebrews 11, what do you see is common to the faith they exhibited? What can we learn from their example?

## An example of faith

Read Mark 5:21-36

What particularly stands out to you from this passage? Is there anything you find personally encouraging or challenging?

When you think of her back story (v26), would you expect her to have more or less expectation of finding a cure for her condition? Would you say the woman exhibited a lot of faith or just a little bit of faith?

Jesus clearly commends her for having faith, so consider what was:

- The object of her faith?
- The reason for her faith in Jesus?
- The motivation for having her faith to begin with?
- The outworking/expression of her faith?
- And what can we learn from these?

This woman's faith comes in the midst of personal struggle. She had a chronic, ongoing, embarrassing (potentially painful) condition, was broke because she had spent all she had to try and solve the problem. On top of this the bleeding likely resulted in her being considered ritually unclean and therefore impacting her social acceptance. When you are in tough/troubled times – what effect does that have on your faith? Why is that?

This passage and others (eg: Acts 14:8-10, James 5:14-15) link faith with healing, or with answered prayer (eg: James 1:5-8, Mark 11:22-24). What is your understanding of what the Bible teaches on the role of faith in prayer?

### True faith expresses itself

Look up and read James 2:14-26

How would you explain the relationship between faith and action? How have you seen this in your own life?

What sort of actions should accompany faith given the definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1?

The Scriptures call believers to 'live by faith' (e.g. Romans 1:17, 2 Corinthians 5:6-7, Galatians 2:20). What do they mean by that phrase? And how can (and should) living by faith characterise our lives as believers?

As we have been reading about and discussing courageous faith, are there ways in which you feel God is calling you to have more faith, or to actions/decisions that will require courageous faith this week? How can this group help support and hold you accountable to these things?

2 Chronicles 20<sup>20</sup> As they set out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Have faith in the LORD your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful."

Matthew 8<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, "Shall I come and heal him?"<sup>8</sup> The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed."<sup>9</sup> For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

<sup>10</sup> When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith..."<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! Let it be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed

Matthew 17<sup>17</sup> "You unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me."<sup>18</sup> Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed at that moment.<sup>19</sup> Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"<sup>20</sup> He replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

Mark 11<sup>22</sup> "Have faith in God," Jesus answered.<sup>23</sup> "Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them."<sup>24</sup> Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

Acts 14<sup>8</sup> In Lystra there sat a man who was lame. He had been that way from birth and had never walked.<sup>9</sup> He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed<sup>10</sup> and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

Romans 1<sup>5</sup> Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake.

Romans 1<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.<sup>17</sup> For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Romans 4<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham.

1 Corinthians 16<sup>13</sup> Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong

2 Corinthians 1<sup>24</sup> Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm.

2 Corinthians 5<sup>6</sup> Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord.<sup>7</sup> For we live by faith, not by sight.

Galatians 2<sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 3<sup>7</sup> Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. <sup>8</sup>Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." <sup>9</sup>So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Galatians 5<sup>5</sup> For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. <sup>6</sup>For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

Galatians 5<sup>26</sup> So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith

1 Thessalonians 1<sup>3</sup> We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ

2 Thessalonians 1<sup>11</sup> With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith.

1 Timothy 6<sup>11</sup> But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. <sup>12</sup>Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Hebrews 10<sup>21</sup> and since we have a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup>let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup>Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Hebrews 11 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. <sup>2</sup>This is what the ancients were commended for... <sup>6</sup>And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

James 1<sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. <sup>4</sup>Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

James 2<sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? <sup>15</sup>Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. <sup>16</sup>If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? <sup>17</sup>In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. <sup>18</sup>But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds...<sup>26</sup> As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead

James 5<sup>14</sup> Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup>And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.

1 Peter 1<sup>6</sup> In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. <sup>7</sup>These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.

1 Peter 1<sup>21</sup> Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God