

## Be Thou Faithful Unto Death

### Introduction.

- A. Christ gave the church in Smyrna a very important command in **Revelation 2:10**.  
 Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.
1. If you study this passage, you can see the importance of the concept of having faith and remaining faithful to God.
  2. The words "faith," "faithful," or "faithfulness" occurs 348 times in the Bible.
- B. The Bible clearly teaches that if faith is not maintained, it will be lost.
1. Not only must we be saved from our sins, but we must stay saved.
    - a. Obedience to Christ is not a onetime thing.
    - b. We must keep on obeying.
  2. The life of a faith begun is worthless if it is not completed
    - a. List to the apostle Paul in **Col.2:5** - For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your *good* order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.
    - b. The Hebrew writer admonishes us concerning our faith in **Heb.6:11-12** - <sup>11</sup> And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, <sup>12</sup> that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.
- C. What happens to our faith is crucial.
1. It is critical that we maintain a lifelong faith.
- D. For this lesson, I want us to analyze our faith based on this passage of **Rev.2:10**.
- I. First of all, let's look at *The Growth Of Our Faith***
- A. Even though we have encountered many different experiences that should have matured our faith considerably, our faith may in fact still be small.
1. Jesus found this to be the case of His disciples in **Matt.8:25-26**.
    - a. We find them in a great storm on the sea.
    - b. The disciples are fearful of their lives
    - c. Yet, Jesus was asleep

d. Let's pick up the story at **vs.25**. <sup>25</sup> And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing." <sup>26</sup> And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.

2. They should have known they were safe with the savior.

- a. They had been with Jesus long enough to know what he was capable of.
- b. Their faith should have been stronger.

B. Desire for greater faith characterizes the faithful Christian (**Mark 9:24**;

1. In **Luke 17**, Jesus teaches His apostles about the temptations to sin.
2. And after that in **vs. 5**, **The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"**

C. We need a growing faith.

1. Our faith grows by hearing God's word.

- a. In Jesus' parable of the sower, **Mk.4:20**, **those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it - and the result is they bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.**"
- b. Jesus told his disciples in **John 8:47**, **Whoever is of God hears the words of God - Then He goes on to say, The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God."**
- c. Paul tells us the same thing, **Rom.10:17**, **So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

2. The Psalmist tells us that we should meditate on the word of God.

- a. He tells us this five times in the **119th Psalm**. **119:15, 23, 48, 78, 148**) **I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. <sup>16</sup> I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.**

## II. Now, let's look at ***The Testing Of Our Faith***

A. We should not feel remorse for difficult circumstances or shrink from any hardship that strengthens our faith.

1. In fact, according to James, we should receive trials with gladness. **James 1:2-3** - <sup>2</sup> **Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, <sup>3</sup> for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.**

2. James isn't the only one that mentions this testing of faith. The apostle Peter says in **1 Pet.1:6-7**, <sup>6</sup> *In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,* <sup>7</sup> *so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*
  3. According to Paul, our trials sharpen our focus for eternity (**2 Cor. 4:8**, <sup>8</sup> *We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair;* <sup>9</sup> *persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;*
  4. Listen to what else Paul tells us, dropping down to **vs. 16**, <sup>16</sup> *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day.* <sup>17</sup> *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, **16-17**).*
- B. Now, I know that it is not easy to develop a strong faith during a time of crisis, but we prepare for “big” tests of faith by triumphing in “small” tests of faith throughout our daily lives.
1. It's just like the master told the 5 talent and the two talent men in **Matt.25:21**, *'Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'*
  2. We should be encouraged by **Rev.2:10**.
    - a. Our persecution is only for a short time.
    - b. And then, we win the crown of life.
    - c. Paul faced these persecutions and met them head on. He said, <sup>7</sup> *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.* <sup>8</sup> *Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. **2 Tim. 4:7-8***

### III. Now, let's think about ***The Addition Of Our Faith***

- A. People's definition of “faith” is too limiting.
1. It is far more than conviction or confidence in something that is unseen.
  2. Faith compels us to work (**James 1:22**). *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only*

## B. Faith by itself is not enough.

1. It is complemented and added to with other qualities in our inner character.
2. Peter gives us a list of these characteristics in **2 Peter 1:5-11**. He said, add to your faith: virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. <sup>8</sup> For if these things are yours and abound, *you will be* neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## IV. Finally, let's look at ***The Steadfastness Of Our Faith***

### A. It is possible to have believed "in vain"

1. Paul tells us in **1 Cor. 15:2**, *hold fast to the word I preached to you— unless you believed in vain.*
2. Every Christian needs to be exhorted to "*stand fast in the faith*"
  - a. Paul tells us, *Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.* **1 Cor 16:13**

### B. We cannot always control circumstances, but we can decide to stand firm.

1. We can be like Job, whose faith was not shaken.
  - a. It is said of Job in **Job 1:22**, *In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.*

## Conclusion.

### A. In reality, Faith looks forward.

1. It has to do with future realities.
  - a. Paul said, *For we were saved in this hope,* **Romans 8:24**
2. If we concentrate solely on the past and the present, we could lose our salvation. **Hebrews 3:14**, *For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,*
3. This "end" is our salvation, and awaits those who have remained faithful. *an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.* **1 Peter 1:5**
4. Friends, we can be as close to God as we choose to be."
5. And that choice is based on our faith.

B. Christian friend, what kind of faith do you have?

1. Do you have a faith that grows?
2. Do you have a faith that will stand the test?
3. Have you added to your faith?
4. And is your faith steadfast?
5. If your faith is not what it should be, strengthen your faith today.
  - a. Repent of your shortcomings and allow your faith to grow once again.

C. If you are not a Christian, faith is the first thing you need.

1. Then you need to act on your faith
  - a. You need to change your life through repentance.
  - b. You need to acknowledge your faith that Jesus is the Son of God.
  - c. You need to submit completely to His will through baptism for the remission of your sins.

D. Act upon your faith today

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