

8/4/18

## What to do when Faith dies?

### Opening Text: Luke 24:13-21, 25-27, 33-39

The agony of the cross, Jesus's death and burial was a massive blow to His disciples. Up to the time of Golgotha, the ministry of Jesus had been building in momentum, in an unstoppable crescendo. The cross was the most unexpected of outcomes for everyone who had followed Jesus and seen His miracles, up to that point.

The passage we read today described two of Jesus' disciples walking back to the life they had left before starting to follow the Master. It wasn't just Jesus who had died, it was also their faith and every dream they had carried. From their own words we see that

a) They no longer had a vision for their future.

Everything they said about Jesus was in the past tense:

**V.14** – *“and they talked together of all these things which had happened” ...*

**V.19** - ... *“Jesus of Nazareth who was a prophet in mighty deed and word before God and all the people”*

b) They no longer had hope

**V.21** – *“But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel”*

There were hoping but not anymore. There was such disappointment in their words.

**Proverbs 13:12** – *“Hope deferred makes the heart sick”*

c) They no longer had faith

**V.25** - ... *“slow of heart to believe”*

**V.38** – ... *“why do doubts arise in your hearts?”*

- Their old **doubts** were making a comeback into their lives. While they were with Jesus they had faith but now they had doubts. Doubts were ‘arising’ – as if from the dead, from their old lives before they met Jesus.
- Instead of faith, **fear** was arising as well – **Verse 37** says that *“they were terrified and frightened”*
- Even **superstition** was making a comeback - ... *“and supposed they had seen a spirit”*. There was a time while they were with Jesus that He walked on the water and they thought they were seeing a spirit. But Jesus said, *“Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.”* (Matthew 14:26-27). However, at this point they no longer had faith in Jesus, now they believed again in spirits and ghosts.

The truth is that it was Jesus who walked on the water, not a ghost. It was Jesus who arose from the dead, not a spirit! Our faith needs to be in Jesus not in ghosts or superstition!!

It is faith, not doubt, that needs to ‘arise’ from our hearts!

Two chapters before our opening text, Jesus told Peter:

... *“Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. <sup>32</sup> But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.”*

**Luke 22:31-32**

The devil wants our faith to fail. The disciples' faith came under attack and for some when Jesus died, their faith died also. No wonder the first message of Jesus post-resurrection was about having faith. Their faith had died but needed to be resurrected!

**John 20:26-30** - *<sup>26</sup> And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” <sup>27</sup> Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. **Do not be unbelieving, but believing.**” <sup>28</sup> And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” <sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” <sup>30</sup> And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*

What to do when faith dies? How do you resurrect your faith when you have experienced loss and disappointment? How do you believe again?

#### **4 Steps to Resurrect Your faith**

In John 11 we read the story of a Lazarus who died and how Jesus brought him back to life. In that story, we see that it was not just Lazarus who died: his sisters' faith had also died: *“If only you had been here”*. Consequently, it was not just Lazarus who needed resurrection: their faith also needed to be resurrected! Jesus challenged Lazarus' sisters to believe again:

**John 11:25** - *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. <sup>26</sup> And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”*

Jesus made another 4 statements that reveal 4 steps to resurrect your faith:

##### **1. V.34 – “*where have you laid him?*”**

Where did you bury your faith? Where did you cast it?

**Hebrews 10:35** - *Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.*

Where did you bury your faith? Locate your faith again.

- The place where you buried your faith may be an instance when you didn't see immediate results, or you thought it was too late,

- It may have been at time when you got tired, ran out of steam and simply gave up.
- I have come across people who bury their faith out of offense with God,

Whatever the case may be, locate your faith. Go back to it, never to leave to behind again. Make that decision today!

## 2. V.39 – “*Take away the stone*”

**V.39-40** - *39 Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.” 40 Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?”*

Take away the stone! What heavy thing is covering your faith? Maybe some heavy burden, maybe a past failure or disappointment, maybe the memory of a traumatic event, maybe a lie from the enemy to keep you from ever trusting God again.

After you make the decision to get back into faith, you need to remove any obstacles out of the way. Let nothing stop you from trusting God again.

Remove and renounce disappointment, dislodge the lies of the enemy, pick yourself up and force that stone out of your way!

## 3. V. 43 – “*Lazarus come forth!*”

**V.41-43** - *41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. 42 And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.” 43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!”*

Jesus wanted them to believe again. Jesus wants you to believe again. He came with a shout of resurrection. Join His shout and declare:

Faith come forth!  
 Dead, forgotten, shattered dream, come forth!  
 Vision that died, come forth!  
 Promise of God over my life, come forth!  
 FAITH COME FORTH!

## 4. V.44 “*loose him and let him go*”

Lazarus was mummified. He was bound hand and foot. Jesus commanded them to loose him. Speak resurrection over your faith and then release your faith, step out in faith again. Do the works of faith. The Just shall live by faith.

**James 2:20** - *But do you want to know, O foolish man, that **faith without works is dead?***

This is a message about resurrecting faith not about a faith that is dead. This passage says that faith has to have corresponding works to be alive. Put your faith in action. Loose your faith and let it go. Do not have a mummified faith. Step out in faith. Step out of the boat and walk on water!

### **Concluding thoughts**

**John 12:9-11** - *<sup>9</sup>Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. <sup>10</sup>But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, <sup>11</sup>because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.*

They tried to kill Lazarus again. The enemy will try to kill your faith again. Be sure to keep a vibrant, active faith in Jesus. Be sure to keep feeding your spirit with the word of God and let your faith in Jesus be unshakable!