

## God's Plan For Your Faith

### GFC – 3/3/2020

We're in a sermon series entitled **20/20 Vision** – Seeing God's Plan for Your Life.

So far **we've taught on:**

- How to **discern God's plan** for your life
- How to **overcome the dream busters** that want to steal your vision
- God's **purpose, plan and pattern** – which is to **become like Christ**
- How to do the **hard work** of living your dream
- Pastor Doug taught on the **Journey** to accomplishing your vision
- Pastor Anthony taught on **God's Plan for your Future.**

Today I'm preaching on **God's Plan for Your Faith.**

Do we have **any believers** in the house today?

Do you have faith? If so, **what kind** of faith do you have?

You may not know there are **different kinds** of faith.

But it's **important** to know.

We are saved by faith, but **not all faith** will save you.

Do you have the **kind of faith** that will save you?

Some people think that no one can **really know** if they are saved or not.

That's **not Bible!**

1 John 5:13 says:

**These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.**

You need to **be sure** that you have faith that saves you!

1- The Bible talks about **3 different kinds** of faith.

James 2:14-18 says:

**What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are**

**needed for the body, what does it profit?**

**Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.**

**That's the first kind of faith – dead faith.**

**Faith with no life in it. Faith with no works.**

**People with dead faith say they are believers, but they've never changed. Their lives are no different now than they were before they started believing.**

**That kind of faith will not save you!**

**People with dead faith have no defense when the enemy attacks.**

**The enemy lies to them and they believe it.**

**The enemy tempts them and they give in.**

**The enemy condemns them and they give up.**

**Their absolute defenselessness shows that their faith is dead!**

**James goes on to say in vs. 19-20:**

**You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. How foolish! Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless?**

**That's the second kind of faith – demon faith.**

**I'm not saying this is faith in demons, but it's the same kind of faith that demons have.**

**That kind of faith is belief without repentance.**

**This kind of faith is just an intellectual agreement with facts.**

**A lot of people say they believe in God. So what?**

**Demons believe in God. Demons know the Bible is the word of God.**

**Demons know that Jesus Christ is the son of God.**

**Demons believe Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world.**

**Demons believe Jesus rose from the dead.**

**They know all of that is true. They saw it with their own eyes.**

**But they will never repent of sin and rebellion and submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.**

**And this world is full of people – and churches are full of people – who are 'believers' in name only.**

**They say they believe right, but they live wrong.**

They say they **believe in God**, but they live **like the devil**.  
 Listen – if your faith is **only in your head** – it will not save you.  
 You need much **more radical faith** than that.  
 You need faith that impacts your **heart and your life**.

Romans 10:8-10 says:

**The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.**

**For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**

We need more than **head faith** – we need heart faith.

We need more than **dead faith** – faith without works.

We need more than **demon faith** – faith without repentance.

We need **delivering faith** – saving faith – faith that results in **true change**.

James tells us what this **faith looks like** in vs. 21-24.

**Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?**

**And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.**

**I know these verses seem confusing to people because we are taught – rightly so – that we are **saved by faith, not by works**.**

Ephesians 2:8-9

**For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.**

Is James contradicting this?

Does the **Bible contradict** itself? No!

You see the passage in Ephesians **goes on to say** in verse 10:

**For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**

We are **not saved by works**, but true saving **faith will result in works**.

In other words, **true faith** will change your life.

**Works are evidence** of genuine faith.

What we do **does not save us** but what we do **shows whether or not** we have saving faith.

Don't tell me you've come to Jesus and you're still the same.  
When you really have faith in Jesus Christ you're a brand-new creation.

Jesus died to give us life and life more abundant.  
That abundant life starts here on earth and is made complete in heaven.

Faith that gives eternal life also works on your life in the here and now.  
The kind of faith that prepares you for heaven changes you on earth.

So, what kind of faith do you have?

Intellectual belief with no life change?

Or faith that leads you to trust God and obey Him? A faith that acts?

I hope so, or else your faith is dead.

And dead faith will not save you.

Dead faith will not protect you.

Dead faith will not win any spiritual battles.

That's why Ephesians 6:16 tells us

**Above all, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.**

Faith is something you must take up – raise up.

Faith requires something of you.

Faith requires you to do something.

No Roman soldier would have gone into battle without a strong shield.

That shield was the only thing between him and his enemy.

Without it he would have been killed.

The Bible says that the shield of faith will extinguish all the attacks of Satan! So, whenever we give in or give up, it's evidence that we have laid down our shield of faith and we need to pick it back up.

2- We must put our faith to work!

1 Corinthians 3:9 says **we are God's fellow workers.**

We work with God, which means there is work for us to do.

We cannot do God's part and He will not do our part.

Remember, faith without works is dead!

Here's some **practical examples** of how faith without works is dead in our daily lives.

- Dead faith wants **people to get saved** but **never shares** the gospel with them.
- Dead faith wants **financial blessing** without having to **tithe or give**.
- Dead faith wants a **harvest without planting** any seed.
- Dead faith wants a **good marriage** without having to **communicate, resolve conflicts or forgive**.
- Dead faith **wants a job** where you **don't have to work**
- Dead faith wants a **good grade** without **having to study**
- Dead faith wants to **overcome** without doing any **spiritual warfare**

I could go on and on, but **the point is** – true faith is **always expressed with works**.

I'm not saying there aren't **times to stand still** and see the salvation of the Lord. But you only stand still **when God says stand still!**

God blesses **faith in action** – not faith without works, which is dead.

Today we must choose to take up the shield of faith by putting our **faith into action**. There's a difference **between faith and belief**.

**I can believe a chair will hold me up. I can confess it will hold me up. I can pray it will hold me up. I can sing songs about it holding me up.**

**But I don't exercise any faith until I put my whole weight on the chair.**

**When I entrust myself to that chair I move from belief to faith.**

**You take up the shield of faith by putting your faith to work.**

**Not only must we take up the shield of faith, but...**

### 3- We must hold on to faith

**1 Timothy 1:18-19 says:**

**Fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith.**

The shield of faith is something we must **take up and hold on to**.

If you don't **hold onto your shield** of faith, you will **end up shipwrecked**.

**I've been in church all my life and I can tell you countless stories of people who looked like they were sailing alone fine – but something happened that shipwrecked their faith.**

I know people who let go of faith when a **prayer wasn't answered** like they wanted it answered.

I know people who let go of faith because they **didn't get a big enough return on their tithes**.

I know people who let go of faith because they **saw someone else let go of faith**.

I'm telling you as your **pastor who loves you** – don't **get your eyes** on anyone but God.

Don't **put your trust** in anyone but God.

The devil will use **every trick in the book** to get you to put down your shield.

When you **do that, you're defeated**.

Some of you wonder why your **faith cracks** every time the **enemy attacks**.

Or why your **faith fails** when the **enemy assails**.

Your faith **isn't enough** when **times are tough**.

Tough times show how tough your faith is. That's why my next point is:

4- We must **develop and maintain** our faith

You've **got faith**, because Romans 12:3 says:

**God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.**

But your faith **needs to grow!**

Colossians 2:7 says:

**Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.**

For your faith to grow - it must be **developed and maintained**.

**How do we** develop and maintain our faith?

We get **2 keys** from the way **Roman soldiers** maintained their shields.

The Roman soldier's shield was made of **hard wood covered** by 6 layers of tough, thick animal hide, or **leather**.

Although it was **very strong**, that leather had to be **properly cared for** or it would become **stiff and brittle** over time.

So every day a Roman soldier had to **apply oil into the leather** of his shield.

That **prevented his shield from cracking** in battle.

**Too many of us crack under the pressure of battle!**

**To prevent that – you must have frequent applications of oil.**

**In the Bible, oil represents the Holy Spirit.**

**To keep your faith strong, you need frequent anointings of the Holy Spirit.**

**Without the Holy Spirit, your faith will not develop.**

**Without the Holy Spirit, your faith will become brittle.**

**Without the Holy Spirit, your faith will crack under enemy attack.**

**It's not enough to have been filled with the Spirit years ago.**

**You need to be filled with the Spirit today!**

**Ephesians 5:18 commands us to be filled with the Spirit.**

**This is not a one-time event.**

**That's why the Amplified Version translates it this way:**

**Ever be filled with the Holy Spirit.**

**We have an ongoing, every-day need to be filled with the Spirit.**

**Without that, our faith will not win any battles!**

**There was another reason the Roman soldier's shield was made out of animal hide.**

**Before a battle, the soldiers placed their shields into tubs of water and let it soak until it was completely saturated.**

**Why did they do that?**

**Because their enemies had 2 kinds of arrows – the regular kind and the fiery kind!**

**The water-soaked shields put out the enemy's fire!**

**We must saturate our shields of faith by doing what Ephesians 5:26 says – the washing of water by the Word.**

**The word of God cleanses us – but it also protects us.**

**The shield of faith will extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.**

**When we are anointed by the Spirit of God and saturated with the word of God we can extinguish all the fiery arrows from the enemy.**

**How many arrows? ALL!**

**What are those fiery arrows? Fear, worry, doubt, unbelief, condemnation, accusation, deception and lies.**

**Those fiery arrows are thoughts like:**

**You're going to die of cancer.**

**Your marriage is going to fail.**

**You'll never amount to anything.  
You'll always be broke.**

**The fiery arrows of Satan hit their target only when we put our faith in Satan's words over God's Word.**

**We put on the shield of faith by believing God's word over Satan's words.**

**Just as the Roman's soldier's shield was attached to his belt - our faith is attached to the belt of truth - the word of God.**

**Faith and the Word of God are inseparable.**

**No word = no faith.**

**Little word = little faith.**

**Much word = much faith.**

**You must know the word, hear the word, speak the word and do the word. That's how we develop, maintain and exercise our faith.**

**I want to close with a true story about a man who put his faith to work. Charles Blondin was a 19th century French tightrope walker who did incredible feats.**

**All over Paris, he would do tightrope acts at very scary heights.**

**He would go across the tightrope blindfolded, or pushing a wheelbarrow, then he would turn somersaults.**

**An American promoter read about this in the papers and wrote a letter to the tightrope walker asking him to do his act over Niagara Falls.**

**Blondin agreed and in 1859 he strung a tightrope 1,100 ft. long, 160 ft. above Niagara Falls. 10,000 people came out to see him.**

**Blondin started on the Canadian side and walked over to the American side. He came across the rope suspended over the treacherous part of the falls -- blindfolded!!**

**And he made it across easily. Then he pushed a wheelbarrow across.**

**Then he sat down and made and ate an omelet.**

**The crowds went wild, and Blondin said, "Do you believe I can do walk back to the other side?" WE BELIEVE!**

**"Do you really believe I can do it carrying a man on my back?"**



**WE BELIEVE!** Then he asked, “Who will be that man?”

**There was absolute silence.**

Finally one man came out of the crowd and volunteered to get on Blondin’s back and be carried over.

There were **9,999 believers** that day – only one had faith. Only one put his **faith into action**. Only one **entrusted his life** into the hands of another. **All the others had dead faith.**

Now - what **kind of faith** do you have?

Is your faith **just a head faith**, or has it impacted your **heart and life**?

Have you taken up the **shield of faith** by putting your **faith to work**?

Has your faith become brittle?

Do you have a **saving faith**? You need to be sure before you leave **today**.

Are you trusting in **Christ and Christ alone**?

Saving faith takes **believing in the heart** and **confessing** with your mouth.

The shield of **faith extinguishes** all the fiery arrows of Satan.

So, when Satan **shoots an arrow** that says he is going to **make you sick**, you extinguish that arrow by having faith in **Jehovah Rapha**, The Lord our Healer!

When Satan shoots an arrow that says he is going to **steal your job and your money**, you extinguish that arrow by having faith in **Jehovah Jireh**, the Lord our Provider.

When Satan shoots an arrow to **condemn you**, you extinguish that arrow by having faith in Jehovah **Tsidkenu** – the Lord our Righteousness.

When Satan shoots an arrow to **steal your peace**, you extinguish that arrow by having faith in Jehovah **Shammah** – the Lord our Peace.

For every attack of Satan – **God has the answer.**

**NO!** For every attack of Satan – **God IS the answer.**

God’s **plan for your faith** is that you would **believe and trust** in the finished **work of Christ** for salvation, that you would **grow and develop** faith, that you would **hold on to faith** and that you will put your **faith to work** by taking up the **shield of faith**, **fighting** the good fight of faith and **defeating every attack** of the enemy in Jesus’ name.