

faith

2-19-12

---During our first week of our VISION series we talked about how important it is to look BACK in order to ascertain a clear view of our future. As we look back we should always find an initial moment and many subsequent moments of SUBMISSION. A point in time where we laid down our lives, our excuses, our desires, our plans, our gifts and even our faults and failure to His vision for our lives.

---2 WEEKS AGO we talked about how important it is to look UP in order to ascertain a clear view of our future. As we look up to Him in utter, complete surrender He is able to pick us up. As we make Him our focus, the focus of His vision for our life becomes much clearer.

---LAST WEEK we focused on a third facet of clarifying God's vision for our lives...Looking WITHIN as we sought to SYNC our lives to rhythms and whims and of His Holy Spirit just as Jesus did with the Spirit of the Father...

---TODAY, with our vision clarified by looking back, looking up and looking within we finally get to look forward...FORWARD IN FAITH.

---TODAY we look at the one component that ties the previous three together. Without it there is no practical desire to SUBMIT, SURRENDER OR SYNC for without FAITH, you'll never trust Him enough to do either. And obviously, without FAITH its impossible to trust Him for what has yet to happen.

---I'M CONVINCED GOD HAS AMAZING PLANS FOR EVERY SINGLE SOUL HERE FOR JACOB'S WELL COLLECTIVELY BUT W/O FAITH WE WILL NEVER EVEN HAVE THE CHANCE OF EXPERIENCING IT...

---WORSHIP BAND

Matthew 14:22-33

²² Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home. ²³ After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone.

²⁴ Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves. ²⁵ About three o'clock in the morning [Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.] Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, "It's a ghost!"

²⁷ But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage. I am here!" [Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.]

²⁸ Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water."

²⁹ "Yes, come," Jesus said.

So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the strong [Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.] wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted.

³¹ Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. "You have so little faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?"

³² When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. ³³ Then the disciples worshiped him. "You really are the Son of God!" they exclaimed.

3 Things God wants us to see to notice in this passage for today's teaching...

1)- "I am here"--- Just hearing His familiar voice, sensing His familiar presence was enough to calm them down enough that Peter was able to begin a subsequent conversation. When we become familiar with His voice and the sense of His presence it causes our faith in the truth "I am with you always, even to the end..." to become sight. We too can have our fears transformed into courage when we place our faith in the fact that HE IS HERE.

2)- "but when he saw the strong wind and the waves"--- once Peter's eyes were distracted away from Jesus and on His circumstances his faith plummeted, as did his feet! It's not enough to commit to moving forward in faith, every single step following the first one must be taken the same way...by faith.

3)- Peter gets a lot of Dutch rubs for taking his eyes off Jesus. But here's the deal, as John Ortberg pointed out in His book "Get Out of the Boat"... Peter had a story to tell that the other 11 didn't. How many stories have gone untold because they were never experienced due to a lack of faith. God's glory is magnified when we place our faith in Him and He does the miraculous...he wants to do this! He did not save us to keep us safe! He did not call us to protect us until the day we die. He saved and called us to do the extraordinary and to do it in a way that required Him and that assured that He and He alone would get the glory.

---WORSHIP BAND

¹ Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see.

⁶And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

---FAITH is far more than an emotion, far more than a doctrinal creed or statement of faith, far more than a religious practice. FAITH is the lens that allows us to see forward even when there appears to be no way. FAITH is the foundation that our feet step out onto even when there appears to be nothing but air (Indy Jones III) or water (Peter) holding us up. FAITH is the key that allows us to look back and submit, look up and surrender, look within and sync and look forward with clarity. FAITH is the fuel that allows us to then move forward.