

“Faith”
By Brother Parrish Lee
Sunday, April 14th, 2013

Our general pastor, Pastor Paine, has asked that we would spend three months out of each year on sound doctrine. This is one of those months. Last week, Bob Heitzler preached on baptism, and the sound doctrine for baptism. Today we’re going to talk about faith. In that sound doctrine, our scripture for the month is:

2 Timothy 4:1-4 ...the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine...

...Turned unto fables. A warning from Apostle Paul, as led by the Lord, to the churches all down to today, that we would hear the truth and resist fables. That’s the Scripture for the month. However, today’s subject is going to be on faith. Our Scripture for today is:

Esther 4:11-17 ...who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?...

If we could just bow our heads for just a moment: Lord, we thank You for the time that You have given us, this wonderful day that You have given us. For, truly, You have breathed in us the Breath of Life and given us this day, and this is the day that You have made. We thank You for the time of gathering together, and coming to worship, to praise Your Name, to extol You and to thank You for being able to be led in Psalms, and the psalmist’s praise. We pray at this time, that, as You have said in Your Word, that Your Word would not return unto You void, but that it would accomplish that which You have sent it to do (Isaiah 55:11), that Your Word would accomplish Your will in our lives today, that it might feed us and strengthen us and bring us to a more communal walk with You, Lord. That You would be able to consider us Your children in whom You are well pleased. We thank you and we pray all this in Jesus’ Name. And every one said, “Amen.”

Such a beautiful testimony, as we are able to go into the story of Esther. I went through and I read the whole thing. Awesome, awesome testimony that our sister Esther had lived with. To catch everyone up on this story, what had happened, there was this king of the land. Israel was in captivity, and there’s this king of the land, and this King had a wife; she was the Queen, of course. The King was in his house, in this great room, and the Queen had her whole section of this house. The King had called for the Queen to come to him, her name was Vashti, and she said no. He asked again, “Queen, come!” and she said again, “No.” She was having a good time doing what she was doing. All of the King’s inner court and his advisors, they got together and they said to him, “King, you’ve got to do something about this, because, if the Queen says no to you, and she gets away with it, you know what’s going to happen? all of our wives are going to tell us no, and then what will we do? So, King, you have to do something about this (this was before suffrage and the women’s liberation movement).” A decision was made, the King said, “I know what I’ll do. I’ll go through the land, and I’ll pick the fairest of the maidens (of the virgins) and I’ll choose one of them, and I’ll make her a queen. Ha, ha, ha!” So, that’s what he did. they went out, and they brought the fairest of the virgins, and they brought them to the King’s palace, and they had their own room, where they spent time for purification, they called

it. In preparation for the King to choose one. Esther happened to be one of the ones that was gathered in.

In the course of this time, there was a man that rose up, and his name was Haman. He had some political aspirations, we would say. He wanted to be on the inside; he wanted to be in the inner circle; he wanted to be in the loop. He started climbing the political ladder, if you will. He was getting inroads, and he was getting a little higher and a little higher, and he got to the place where people started bowing before him. Yeah, he started getting those little accolades, that little acumen. There was this other guy, named Mordecai, who would not bow to Haman, because Mordecai was a Jew, and Mordecai had already made his mind that he was not going to make obeisance to anybody except his God. Haman noticed that Mordecai wasn't bowing to him, and he got a little perturbed (I am really abbreviating this story, everybody; *really* abbreviating it). So Haman is perturbed, and he makes up his mind, "You know what I'm going to do to that guy? I am going to figure out how to get that guy out of the way." So, not only did Haman want to get Mordecai out of the way, he wanted to get all the people *like* Mordecai out of the way. Haman secretly built a gallows, because, in his mind, he was going to end this guy, he was going to figure out how to do it. After all, he was given some prestige; he was given some clout; he was given some notoriety. "I am quite important around this place." He's looking for some letters, and these letters are going to give him permission to wipe out all the Jews; wipe them out. Yeah, this is where he is. The news of these interactions, these things going on, came to Mordecai. Esther, she is now in the King's palace. She is the niece of Mordecai. Mordecai finds out that Haman has provided a massive amount of people to take him, and not just him, but all the Jews. Mordecai sends a note to Esther, "Esther, you have to do something. You have to do something." This is where we pick it up. We pick it up here at verse 11. He sends a note, and, in verse 11, this is Esther's reply: "All the King's servants and all the King's provinces do know that whosoever, whether man or woman, who shall come unto the King into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his, that is, of the King's, to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days." That is her reply to Mordecai. They told Mordecai, and in verse 13, Mordecai answered Esther, and Mordecai says, "Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews." They don't know that you're a Jew, but you know that you're a Jew. Don't think that because you're up there that you're going to get away. Don't think that. In verse 14: "For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Now, obviously, Esther had to make a decision. We're talking about faith here. Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, (verse 16) "Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish."

You know, Saints, so many times in our lives we as Christians, we face situations, many times from people who have the rule over us: bosses, politicians, maybe even family members. We find ourselves in these situations, and the question always arises as to what to do. Any time a Christian is in a situation, God has already planned a deliverance. I want to go on record with that. Every time a Christian is in a situation, God already had the deliverance. It's not a mystery! It's not up there in space! God already had a plan for that. Make sure that we know that. God already has a plan. We're living in a day and time where He is so much looking for us

to be His example and testify of His Word, then could that deliverance come, and everybody will know that the deliverance has come to somebody who loves the Lord. It has come to the house of somebody who loves the Lord.

We just happen to be in a day and age when people don't want to get involved in things; people want to slide by in the easiest way possible. They just want to hide out and not be found. "Let it all go past, and, you know what? I'll find some accolades, and I'll say, 'Hey, good job on y'all! But don't, you know, ask me to stand up. Please. Pray for three days and nights? no, come on. Can't we just say grace? "Thank you, God. Amen." And as far as fasting, well, don't you know I'm hypoglycemic? Not only do I have hypoglycemia, but I like sugar, and [Tastykakes](#). You know what? I guarantee you this thing: You ever make up your mind to go and fast? that's the time when they're going to bring the donuts. That's the time when somebody's going to cook your favorite meal. That's the time when somebody brings something from somewhere and you know it's been made especially for you, and if you don't partake of it right now you're gonna miss out. "You're gonna miss out. Break your fast. God knows. Do it another time; some other time." This is why this is in the Bible. God knew; He knew as soon as it was coming, He knew. He knew that we were going to ... This is what you call a set-up. This is what you call being set up to be that testimony. It's almost easy to be caught away with that. If you're talking faith, this is a great story. This particular story; how she went up before the King (we're not going to go through the whole thing). She had testimony, and she put something with that testimony, she put her faith with it. She put her faith with her testimony, and that directed her to a **Godly action**. When you put your faith with your testimony, it will direct you to godly action.

Now, the Bible says that God has given to every man a measure of faith (Romans 12:3), (every man, woman, and child—every person) so then, the question: what are we supposed to do with our faith?

Hebrews 11:1-6 ...without faith it is impossible to please Him...

Number one: What does God want us to have with our faith? He wants us to have substance, and he wants there to be some evidence. Number two: God wants our faith to have a good report. Number three: God wants our faith to help bring out understanding. Number four: God wants our faith to bring in our offerings, and to bless our offerings. He wants faith with our offerings. Number five: (You got to love this one) God wants our faith to please Him, and, yes, our faith is going to translate us. By our faith we shall be a translation. Hallelujah! By our faith, we will be caught up in what they call the rapture of the church; not to touch this ground, not to see this earth no more! Be able to ascend to our heavenly home, where all of our gifts and treasures are. Great day in the morning. I'm keeping this kind of light, because I don't want to start shouting and disturb the other people in the building. Number six: God wants our faith to please Him.

Now, the Bible says that we need to contend for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 1:3). Not just any old lucky, weak, some kind of faith; God wants real faith, and He wants that faith to be just like it used to be. We are supposed to contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints. The faith of Moses, the faith of Elijah, the faith of David, the faith of all these people that did all these great things. We are to contend for that same faith.

I got a quick story to share: Once when I was at work, my two bosses were sent out to another state to help this plant. Before they left, they had to make a decision: who are they

going to leave in charge? They're going to be gone for two days, and who are they going to leave in charge to run the rigmarole, and they said, "Hey, let's let Parrish do it; he'll do a great job." Wouldn't you know it, they took off the night before, and that day we had the biggest power outage we had ever seen. I don't mean like that bad storm that knocked down all those power lines; there was something underground that blew up, so even the wires couldn't be hooked back together. We had that kind of power outage. I had to ask, "God, why? Why now? God couldn't You have waited two days, or the day before? God, why?" All of the sudden, I had my boss's boss's boss (the managers and directors and the plant manager) are coming to me and asking questions. People that I never talk to, are coming straight up to me for some answers. I didn't understand. I said, "God, you *knew* this was going to happen. God, where's the warning? Why me? Why have I got to be in the spot to make these decisions and trying to figure this stuff out." We stood to lose many, many millions of dollars. I had my co-workers (he don't know more than me), some working with me, and some did not work with me (because the thought they should have been left in charge—that was a set-up. They were looking for me to fail to the max! fall flat on my face, and give them an opportunity—"I should have been the one in charge"). They did not understand, either. None of us understood at the time. The reason I was getting thrown into conversations with people that I never talk to—in this amazing power outage I was going to have to be the one making the decisions—the reason was that God was putting me on display. God was lifting up a godly person, lifting him up, and they knew! They just didn't like, just like the testimony of James and John when they went before the Pharisees—they knew that they were unlearned and ignorant, but took note that they had been with Jesus. They knew I wasn't all that sharp. They knew I wasn't the smartest .boat.in the rack. They knew I wasn't the brightest bulb in the tray. They knew, but they were amazed—"Man, this guy's making the right decisions." I was too busy to complain—all I could do was trust in God. After that, they said, "He may not be all that sharp, but there's something going on with him that causes him to have to make the right moves." That's us, saints; God's setting us up all the time—throws us into situations for a testimony. Having me talk to people that I never talk to for a testimony. I didn't understand that. Just like all of us. God sets us up all the time, puts us in situations. Now, after all of that, we got the plant back up—stood to lose many, many millions of dollars—after all of that was over and we successfully had things going, there was a lot of amazement that, in the midst of this great trouble, that things worked out. So, when it was successful, and the reports came in, they got together and they made a decision. We've got to give that guy a promotion. We've got to promote this guy.

Just like Job; Job was set up. God wanted to bless Job long before the trials came. What did He say? "Have you considered my servant, Job?" (Job 1:8) Long before the trials came, God was considering him. Have you considered him, Satan? You've been going to and fro upon the earth... And then the trials came. Job maintained his integrity. Now, just suppose, what if Job had thrown up his hands and said, "Aw, naw, that's enough of that. I don't deserve it, Lord, You know I don't deserve it.?" But God could see the end and Job trusted in what God could see. Because Job trusted Him, didn't quit, didn't fail, didn't throw up his hands and walk away, didn't resign, didn't sign off, didn't say, "God, choose somebody else." Job received his promotion, and we have a record of that. We have a record, the Bible says that the latter end of Job was more than his beginning (Job 42:12). God gave him more at the ending than what He had at the beginning. That's what we call a blessing. That's God promoting one of His servants.

So, for us, we have to make sure that, when we go through something, we don't take our trust away, our faith away from what God has for us. Throw up our hands and quit and say,

“You know, if this were somebody else, they wouldn’t be able to handle it. It’s somebody else’s turn, I go through more and more.” God is setting us up because He intends for us to be blessed more in the end than we were in the beginning. It’s always up to us. What are we going to do with this faith? He’s putting us on display. He’s showing everybody around. Here is that light of the world.

I have a current event: I subscribe to this thing called, “Religion Today.” Many people subscribe to different things; this is one that I subscribe to. There was this one [article](#) a couple of weeks ago that I just had to bring up. It says that Iran put five Christians on trial. Guess what they put them on trial for? for their faith. This is in there, so we can pray for them. We need to lift them up before God. We got China; we got Iran; and, Lord knows, Sri Lanka, we know that they’ve been beaten and persecuted in Sri Lanka. They say that they are a believer in Christ, and the people who are not, want them to shut up and go away. They want Jesus gone. They put them on trial for their faith. First of all, yeah, we do need to pray for them. Second of all, no, I am not looking forward to going to Iran. If I were, and they put on trial (or put any of us on trial) for being a Christian, the verdict better be guilty; it better be, “Oh, we tried this person, and you know what we found out? They’re a Christian. They really are a Christian,” not no, “Oh, this one’s innocent, you can go. You’re on your way.” Iran, putting people on trial for their faith.

2 Peter 1:5-6 ...add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge...

Add this to your faith; add virtue to your faith. I had to do a little lookup to be sure what ‘virtue’ meant, to make sure I had this thing right. The definition of [virtue](#) is: Any particular moral excellence of thought, feeling, and action. You know what we need to add to our faith? virtue. We need to add morally excellent thought and morally excellent actions to our faith. So, the question should be, how can we increase our faith?

Luke 17:5-10 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith...

The Apostles said to the Lord, Increase our faith. (At this point, the ushers passed out some mustard seeds. We can’t do that over the internet, so here is a picture of a mustard seed:



One key point here: It doesn’t say faith the *size* of a mustard seed, it says faith *as* a mustard seed. When we went to Israel, they were passing these things out. They were like peas in a pod, but they were so small that they could easily drop. I thought, “Wow; is this the thing that He was talking about?” There’s four things we want to bring out about mustard seeds: 1. A mustard seed might be small, but it’s real. So, your faith has to be real. It doesn’t really matter the size,

but it has to be real. 2. Mustard seed has to be planted and watered to grow. Our faith has to be planted; it has to be used. Then, it has to be watered, nurtured, cultivated for it to grow. 3. I've been told (I'm not a farmer—I'm not a country boy at all. I love asphalt and concrete. I am a man that is a city boy through and through. No question about it.), but, somebody who does know something about farming told me something about mustard seeds: if you plant mustard, that's exactly what you're going to get. If you plant mustard with a whole bunch of other things, that plant is going to come up mustard. It doesn't mix with anything else. It will not take on the characteristics of the surrounding plants—mustard will stay mustard. Our faith has to stay our faith. We don't mix in a lot of conjecture and philosophy; we can add to it, but we don't mix it with our faith, because our faith has to stay our faith. 4. It starts off small (see how small these things are?) and, even though it starts out small, Jesus said it can grow up to be the biggest plant in the whole field. They can take over everything. That's our faith. It might start out at whatever size it does, but it can grow to take over everything.

This (verses 7-10) means two things: We need to serve the Lord, and we need to have humility. One more story, and one more Scripture:

I had the opportunity to fellowship with some brothers and sisters recently. As I was fellowshiping with my brothers and sisters, one of the sisters said, "Sometimes, when I talk to my husband, I just want him to listen to what I have to say. I just want him to listen. I don't want him to be giving some answers. I just want him to listen to what I tell him. If I want an answer, then I'll tell him, but if I don't want an answer, I don't want him to give me one. Men are always trying to fix something." Well, duh. What's wrong with that? If there's a problem or an issue, naturally, you want to fix it. A brother who is married said to me, "No, no, no, no, no, Parrish, look: if your wife wants you to listen to her and not give an answer, then you should just listen, and don't give her no answer. That's how you minister to your wife. That's makes for a successful relationship." I thought, "What a simple principle. Look for her needs and minister to her needs. I could probably use that kind of instruction. Hmm." That actually means I need to evaluate my relationships. Do I want to show up and bring a solution, or do I want to minister? I thought about my relationship with my family, and I thought about my relationship with my co-workers, and I thought about my relationship with my church family, and then I thought about my relationship with my Heavenly Father. Do I want to go by the letter of the law and make sure I'm checking all the boxes, or am I really, really seeking to minister? Am I really seeking to have a communal relationship?

You ever see that commercial about the spaghetti sauce? This woman finds that she had made a decision for one spaghetti sauce, and when they got her to try another spaghetti sauce, it was so much better. She says, "What other questionable decisions have I been making?" It's a goofy commercial—a little funny. The point is, we need to check out everything.

1 Peter 1:7-9 ...Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

The Scripture says that the trying of our faith is more precious than gold, and the end of our faith is the salvation of our souls.