



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC The Faith to Be a Blessing

SPEAKER Elder Edric Sng

THEME Minister the Grace of God

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

WHAT IS A 'CHRISTIAN' BLESSING?

What makes a blessing a “God” thing instead of just a *good* thing? What is the defining feature of a *Christian* blessing? After all, anyone of any religion, even the unreligious, can do good things. But what makes our blessings a “Christian” one is **faith**; faith that spurs blessings to point others to God.

Elder Edric explains what it means to have ‘the faith to be a blessing’. He talks about how we grow it so that we can truly step up to our full potential to bless those in need of the love of God.

SIX DEGREES OF FAITH

Apart from the cross at Calvary, another visible demonstration of the love of God can be found in John 11 at the resurrection of Lazarus. But this passage isn’t just about the love of Jesus, it also showcases the different types of faith. Through Jesus, we see the example of perfected faith. But in those around Him, we see the degrees of imperfect faith, such faith that **prevents us from seeing the full and awesome power of God working in our hands and lives**.

1. FAITH WITHOUT COURAGE [vv1-8]

⁸“But Rabbi,” they said, “a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?”

The first degree of imperfect faith is a one that allowed **fear** to dominate the disciple’s thoughts. **Faith demands the courage to cross over into the land of giants**. Faith without courage means we never put ourselves in that place where we see God overcoming the impossible. Because if we dare not go near our enemies, how will we bless them? Would we rather be inoffensive than to face up to the stones they might throw, holding up the shield of faith to ward off all attacks?

To His disciples, Jesus responds in encouragement: We’re not going to stumble. Trust me. [vv9-10]

2. FAITH WITHOUT WISDOM [vv9-13]

¹¹After He had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.” ¹²His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.”

In attempting to impose their own diagnosis against Jesus’, the disciples demonstrated faith without wisdom. When God speaks, we need only be silent and listen. The other thing to catch is that God speaks not in exact literals but in Scriptural principles. Wisdom, therefore, is knowing how to **apply the principles of the Word of God into every realm of life**, taking the repeated principle and filtering it through the

situations of life. Faith requires the discernment to unpack knowledge and apply it to your daily decisions. God values wisdom; He says to gain it even if it costs you everything [Prov 4:5-7].

Again, we see Jesus responds with patience. “Lazarus is dead,” He tells them plainly. [vv14-15]

3. FAITH WITHOUT HOPE [v16]

“Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

Thomas is an example of a defeated Christian. He demonstrates a faith without hope. Throughout his journey as a disciple, he constantly doubts the power of Jesus and even here in John 11, he is a long way from acknowledging Jesus as His Lord. But without hope, what is there even to be faithful about? **Faith without hope is no real faith at all.**

All of Christian life should be about running *towards* something, not *from* something. Looking towards the prize, instead of backward, over my shoulder, worrying. God cares enough about us that He sent Jesus as a messenger of hope – hope in this lifetime [Psa 27:13] and beyond [2 Cor 4:16-17].

4. FAITH WITHOUT APPLICATION [vv17-27]

When Jesus tells Martha, ‘your brother will rise again’, she takes it that Jesus is talking about eternity [vv23-24]. When Jesus reiterates that ‘He is the **resurrection** and the **life**’, she again mistakes this as a promise to be fulfilled in the future. Just like Martha, some of us are guilty of overthinking things even though God speaks plainly. The same thing applies when it’s time to bless someone. The doubts creep in – will it be effective? Does it really matter? Will they really care?

But we are reminded that **faith without application is dead**. We cannot be mere hearers, we must believe and then act on it!

5. FAITH WITHOUT AN OPEN MIND [vv28-32]

³²*When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw Him, she fell at His feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”*

While Mary’s statement here wasn’t one of a lack of faith in the power of Jesus, it demonstrates how, in her human mind, she had limited Jesus’ power to only that of preventing death, but not conquering it. She based her faith on what she knew and had experienced, not seeing that God can work beyond our imaginations! Sometimes it’s a matter of seeking answers and waiting on the Lord, to let God work beyond the box we’re so fond of putting Him in. Instead of saying ‘God, do this which I ask You’, try saying ‘God, do that which You choose to.’

Faith demands an open mind to the infinite power and possibilities for an infinite God. And once we’ve perfected this aspect of our faith, then will we truly see God working through us in **whatever** way He chooses.

6. FAITH WITHOUT REVERENCE [vv33-37]

³⁵*Jesus wept.* ³⁶*Then the Jews said, “See how He loved him!”* ³⁷*But some of them said, “Could not He who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”*

These Jews were right in their acknowledgement of Jesus’ power. But unlike Mary, their spirit was wrong. This wasn’t an acknowledgement in awe. This was an accusation. Their faith was one without reverence. This imperfect faith surfaces when we focus on what God hasn’t done, instead of thanking Him for what He has. Instead of revering Him, we revile Him.

Then, Jesus shows them a better way – he shows them what perfect faith can achieve [vv38-44].

When our faith is fully aligned to God, true blessings follow. Miracles flow. But that requires faith with courage, faith applied with wisdom, faith full of hope, that comes with an open mind and with true reverence; and on top of all that, the 7th key that perfects, sharpens, quickens, makes powerful and

effective out faith: Faith with love [v35].

THE ONLY THING THAT COUNTS

No one doubts how much the people cared for Lazarus. But the lesson here is that a blessing cannot just stay in the head and the heart – it must come through in the **hands**. If Jesus had wept and then walked away, then Jesus' faith and Lazarus would have been truly *dead*. Faith is found wanting if we don't know how to express it in love. [Gal 5:6]

In this season of blessing, reconsider: instead of viewing it as a time-bound *campaign*, let's see it instead as a **revolution**, one where so much goodness abounds and surrounds all who need it, astounds those who experience it, confounds the cynics and critics – and from it, where Jesus' name resounds. We need to live out a faith where we are a blessing to others. Because as we sow love, we sow hope. And then somewhere triangulated in that holy place of faith, love and hope, those who are blessed can start to see the heart of God.

QUESTIONS

1. In your own words, share what sets a good deed apart from a godly deed (blessing).

2. In which area of your faith is growth needed? Share why you think this is so and how you imagine 'growth' to look like.

3. Whether or not you're already involved, it's time to take your blessing campaign to the next level. How do you see yourself being part of this blessing *revolution*?