



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC	I Gotta Have Faith, Faith, Faith	SPEAKER	Elder Goh Hock Chye
THEME	Living the Christ Life	DATE	17 & 18 Apr 2021

MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Elder Goh opened with examples of faithful obedience from Hebrews 11, to show that God's favour was on those whose faith and trust led to obedience. Abel was the second son of Adam and Eve, after his older brother Cain. Both brought sacrifices to God, but Abel's was a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain's. Scripture also said Sarah received ability to conceive through faith because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. By the time the promise of God was realised, both Sarah and Abraham were, 'as good as dead' in regards to having children. These clearly illustrate Hebrews 11:6 - And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

FOUR ASPECTS OF WALKING BY FAITH (JOHN 11: 1 - 45)

1. Trust in God's Greater Purpose

John 11: 1-8 details about Mary conveying the message that her brother Lazarus (whom Jesus loved) was sick and Jesus responds with a delay as He stayed two more days in the place where He was. Following this, Jesus courageously decides to go to Judea and minister to Lazarus and his family, even though it was dangerous to go there. Jesus' disciples were shocked that He would return to the region of Judea when He was a wanted man there as the Jews wanted to stone Him. Jesus walked in the confidence of someone who really trusts God.

It is evident that Jesus has a greater purpose which we are not privy to, even as the disciples think of His safety. We live our lives using our finite minds and we focus on the natural most of the time. However, to walk by faith, we must live in the supernatural power of our Lord Jesus so that we can experience the greater glory of God. This is because God will reveal himself in our circumstances as He puts himself and his attributes on display for the watching world to see His purposes. As we forsake our wisdom and thinking and shift our focus to trust in Him, we can be assured that we will see the goodness and purposes of God.

2. Wait on God's Better Timing

In John 11: 23-38, we see Martha plainly stating her disappointment in Jesus' late arrival. When Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." After four days there was absolutely no hope

of resuscitation, based on human logic. We know that Jesus subsequently raised Lazarus from the dead, despite what seemed impossible.

All of us would have experienced disappointment in some ways or see that the answers to our prayers turned out opposite to what we had hoped for or we have been praying for so long but we don't see the answers to our prayers. Be hopeful! Jesus does not follow our timeline as He has His own timing. Surrender our burdens and cast our cares unto Him. While it appears that Jesus first refused to grant Mary's request, He fulfilled it after asserting that He does things according to the timing and will of God, not man. God is punctual to the moment: He is never before His time and certainly, never behind it. Through His actions, Jesus demonstrated that His delays were not denials. They would bring greater glory to God. Let's posture ourselves to wait on God's better timing.

3. Hope in God's higher way

The issue of faith is not whether we believe in God but whether we believe the God we believe in.

Hebrews 4:15 – 16 clearly states that we have a high priest who is able to sympathise with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. So we can with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. In John 11: 35, a deeply moved Jesus wept as He comes to the tomb. Our Lord Jesus feels for us. He is definitely not passionless and compassionless. His higher way was to raise Lazarus from the dead but Mary's plan was to prevent him from dying. Isaiah 55 says: For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

4. Move your stone

When Jesus commanded the stone to be removed, Mary said by this time there would be a stench, for he has been dead four days. Based on human understanding, her facts are absolutely correct and impeccable. However, Jesus asked for the stone to be removed and those around helped to move the stone away. It is a reminder that we need to act on what Jesus has asked us to do. Sometimes, we cannot figure out the logic behind the commands. But if we obey and believe in God's ways, we will see the glory of God. Taking note that it takes more than one person to roll away the stone, it highlights the need to live in a community so that others can support and help us keep the flame of hope alive. God wants to do miracles with everyone's participation so that we are part of the action. God's glory was on display for Mary, Martha, disciples and those around to see. In doing this, he caused many people to believe that he was the Christ. This undeniably impressive work of God has helped them put their faith in Jesus.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we are encouraged to live by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). This is only made possible because Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. By faith, as we come to Jesus, believing that He exists, He will reward those who earnestly seek Him.

QUESTIONS

1. Which of the four aspects of walking by faith resonates best with you now?

2. Have you been disappointed recently or praying for a matter that God has seemingly not answered? Share how you can apply what you have learnt from today's message.

3. The Bible says "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ." As the message is about living by faith, what are some practical ways we can build up our faith in God?