

## “Lord, Increase Our Faith”

- I. The apostles said unto the Lord, **"increase our faith"** (Luke 17:5).
- II. **All of us are going to meet some problems in this world and we are going to need an increase in our faith.**
  - A. We are faced with the everyday problems of life.
  - B. Faced with temptations of the flesh.
  - C. Faced with the temptations that come from living in this fluent society.
    1. We can have a great many things that are not good for us.
    2. And so, as we live from day to day, there is a real need that we have an increase in our faith.

### Main points of this lesson:

1. What we mean when we ask for an increase in faith.
2. The strength of our Christianity is really based on the amount of confidence that we have in God.
3. How we obtain an increase in faith.
4. What is the result of an increase in confidence?

### Body

- I. What do we really mean when we say, **"Increase Our Faith"**?
  - A. The apostles were rebuked for not being able to perform a miracle.
    1. They didn't have the *faith* or the **confidence** in the power of God to do so.
    2. So really, what they needed was an increase in their **confidence** in God.
  - B. The Jews that came out of Egypt with Moses had confidence in God and His promises.

1. When God held back the water at the Red Sea, they had confidence in God that He would deliver them from the Egyptians.
2. But later when Moses went up on **Mt. Sinai** to receive the law they lost their confidence in God because Moses was gone such a long time.
  - a. They built themselves a **golden calf** in which to place their confidence.
  - b. Do you think they did this because they didn't believe in God?
    - 1) Certainly not.
    - 2) They did it because they didn't have enough **confidence** in God.
    - 3) Every time they failed it was because they didn't have **hardly enough confidence** to cause their actions to be what they ought to have been - and so we have their example.

C. But now let's go to this side of the cross.

1. We can see that the same kinds of problems exist in our age that existed then.
2. Over the years there have probably been more that have **drifted away** from the faith than have remained true.
  - a. How many do you know who became Christians but who are no longer worshiping God?
  - b. How many do you suppose there are who have worshiped here, but have since given up the faith?
    - 1) All kinds of excuses are made.
    - 2) But whatever the reason they give, the basic problem is always - **a lack of faith**.
  - c. It may be that they have been overcome by the **every day problems** that every one of us must face.
    - 1) Having to go forth in the world and make a living, facing those who are not Christians, being associated with them - this may be a problem with some.
    - 2) But **if** their faith is strong enough, they can meet that adversary.
  - d. Or maybe they have been overcome by the lust of the flesh, and

engaged in the sin of fornication, and this has been their problem.

1) But again, they could have stood if they had enough faith.

e. Those that fall away, for whatever excuse they give, the real reason, (cause) is a **lack of faith**.

1) Not a lack of faith in God himself, as to His **existence**.

2) But it is a lack of **confidence** in the promises that he has made, either good or bad.

## II. The Strength of our Christianity is Really Based on the Amount of Confidence that we have in God.

A. Whatever temptations we have, whatever we face, whether we stand faithful is determined by the **amount of our confidence** in God and His promises.

B. If we can truly believe that there is such a place as heaven, and that God says we can go there if we do certain things - if we truly believe, our lives will measure up.

C. When we fail it is because we don't hardly believe the promises made or that there is the power to back it.

## III. How Do we Obtain an Increase in Faith?

A. Someone would say, "**Well, a prayer - apostles prayed asking God to increase their faith**".

1. Certainly, there is nothing wrong with **asking** for an increase in faith.

a. The apostles did it and we ought to do it.

b. But it would be foolish to say, "**Lord increase our faith,**" and not **seek to learn and decide** how it is that that faith is to be increased.

c. You must understand that you must accept the responsibility of doing what you can do for yourself.

- 1) When we look at **history**, particularly God's dealing with Israel, we learn that He generally **requires something** of his people when they seek His help.
- 2) One must do all that he can do for himself and understand that God will help.
- 3) The Jews came up against nations much stronger than they were.
  - a) They asked for help and God helped them.
  - b) But he didn't just strike their enemies dead, he helped them through their efforts.
    - i. They had to obey through faith. (Jerico)

2. We pray for our daily bread - we are supposed to.

- a. But that doesn't mean that we are to **set down and fold our hands** and say, "Lord, give me my daily bread".
  - 1) If we do this, and nothing else, we'll starve to death.
  - 2) The same thing is true with **an increase in faith**.
  - 3) We can pray from now on, but if that is **all we do** we will not accomplish anything.
- b. So, we need to understand how that the increase in our faith is going to come about.

B. The record says, *faith comes by hearing the Word of God*. Rom 10:17

1. Someone might say, that means believing **there is a God**.
  - a. I don't really believe that it does.
  - b. **You can believe in a creator without ever reading or hearing anything from the Bible.**
    - 1) **Psalms 19:1** *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork"*.
    - 2) There is much evidence to the fact that there is a Creator, aside from the Bible.
    - 3) You could totally reject the Bible and still must believe in some supernatural power.
    - 4) But that is **not the kind of faith** that the **Christian must have**.
      - i. The Christian must have **faith** or **confidence** in the promises

of God that are revealed in the pages of the Book that God has given us.

- c. King Agrippa believed the prophets, which is to say that he believed in God, but he **did not obey** after Paul preached Christ to him.
  - d. It wasn't that he didn't have *faith*, he didn't have **confidence**.
2. **John 20:21** *And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*
- a. ***"...these things were written...might believe..."***
  - b. Or, in order that we might have CONFIDENCE.  
**Acts 2:22** *"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know".*
    - 1) We need to hear words about **Jesus Christ**, from both the **Old** and **New** Testament.
    - 2) But we especially need to hear words **of** Jesus Christ as revealed **through His apostles** as they were inspired to speak and to write.
- C. All our faith is based upon **evidence**. **Heb. 11:1** *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen".*
1. **Faith** is the **foundation** of our hope, and it is based on **evidence**.
    - a. The Christian **faith** is not blind faith, or a **feeling** that something is true without any evidence.
    - b. Here is some of what we have on which to base our faith:
      - 1) Prophecy.
      - 2) Scientific accuracy,
      - 3) Archeological finds,
      - 4) Unity of the Bible, etc. (mountains of evidence that make it possible to know beyond the shadow of a doubt that God exists)

2. The **measure of our faith** is proportional to the evidence that we **have heard, understood, and accepted**.
  - a. And the **amount** of our faith is **always seen in our actions**.
  - b. **Faith is manifested by actions!**
3. The rest of this chapter (Heb. 5) is proof of this point.
  - a. The **8th verse** is one example: Abram *"obeyed and went out not knowing whether he went"*.
    - 1) How strong was **his** faith?
    - 2) He had enough confidence that he would **go blindly**, not knowing where, but under the instructions of God.
    - 3) God didn't have to **prove** anything to **him** - he had **confidence**.
    - 4) That confidence led him to *go out*.
      - a) Now he could have believed in A god yet not believed in **the** God of Israel.
      - b) He could have demanded proof - asked for more evidence that God could do what he said, as did **Gideon** who asked God to cause the dew to fall on a fleece of wool - then for the ground to be wet and the fleece dry.
      - c) **Abram didn't need that** - that's the reason he is such an example of one who had faith.
  - b. Abram was called on to do something that is almost unbelievable – to take a son and slay him.
    - 1) We might could understand Abram going, he might not have been happy in the **land of Chaldea** anyway.
    - 2) But you can't **reason away** this last act of faith.
    - 3) He passed this last test.
  - c. **What about us?**
    - 1) Are we passing the tests that are given to us daily?
    - 2) If our actions are not right, or if we don't take the necessary and proper actions, then our confidence is not strong enough.
    - 3) So, we have a **great need** for an increase in our faith.
    - 4) God makes faith possible, (He has provided the evidence) but it takes a **faith** to achieve.

- a) The Bereans Acts 17:11 (“searched the scriptures daily...”) to assure that what the apostles were teaching was true.
- b) This is **part of what is involved** when we talk about the kind of effort that we have to put forth in order to pass God's tests - to prove to Him that we have **confidence** in Him.

B. We have already mentioned the fact that faith is based on evidence.

1. The evidence that we depend on for proof is **testimony**, just as in a court of law.
  - a. A **lawyer**, in presenting his case, will have **witnesses** take the stand - witnesses whose credibility cannot be shaken.
    - 1) These witnesses will give their testimony.
    - 2) The jury is instructed to **pay attention** and to make their decision based upon the testimony of men.
    - 3) If there is enough evidence to constitute proof, one way or the other, they reach a verdict.
  - b. Much of the testimony for our **faith** comes from that which has been revealed to us in the Bible.
    - 1) If you don't have confidence in God, then **you need to learn** to trust him.
    - 2) Example: If you got into a car with someone you knew nothing about, and you were driving but you couldn't see to your right, you wouldn't have enough confidence in him to let him tell you if anything was coming before pulling onto the highway. But if it was someone you trusted, or had confidence in, you could do that.  
**The point is you learned to trust this person.**
    - 3) It cost the taxpayers a lot of money when a jury can't reach a verdict, and they just keep wasting time, and no doubt sometimes it is simply because some just didn't pay close enough attention to be able to decide.
    - 4) If you haven't reached a verdict, or come to the decision that what God has said is true and that you are going to trust Him, then don't you think that it is time to **start looking at the evidence** and quit being a "doubting Thomas" as the saying

goes.

- c. Thomas rejected the testimony of the other apostles when they said, "*We saw Jesus today*".
    - 1) He said, "*Unless I can feel the nail prints in his hand and thrust my hand in his side I'm not going to believe*".
    - 2) 8 days later Christ comes, and he tells Thomas to come forth and feel those nail prints and thrust his hand in his side and Thomas says, "*I believe*".
    - 3) This is where we get the expression, "***Doubting Thomas***", but we ought to be grateful that it took that kind of evidence because these men's testimony became that upon which is based our evidence for the Christian religion.
    - 4) These men **demanded proof** and therefore when they gave us their testimony, it was worth something.
      - a) **Luke 24:48** "*were witnesses*" - they were **eyewitnesses**.
      - b) Without this we really could not have the kind of faith or **confidence** that we talk about and need so desperately.
2. We should not be afraid to test the Bible against any evidence that someone might think that they have against it.
    - a. If someone claims that the Bible has contradictions don't be afraid to honestly study the matter.
    - b. If someone claims that it is out of harmony with science.....
    - c. If someone claims that it is out of harmony with history.....
    - d. Whatever evidence is brought against the Bible, don't be afraid to study it open-mindedly with the attitude that you are going to believe what is most rational.
      - i. **This is the way to increase your faith.**
    - e. If you are afraid to do this - if you are afraid to put your religion to the test, you don't have, nor ever will have, confidence in God, until you change.
      - 1) You can build your confidence by reading the Bible, but that isn't all that you can do for yourself.



- 2) There are many books on evidence of Christianity, and they too build faith. (Much FREE stuff on the Internet. Just search for it.)

#### IV. What is the Result of an Increase in Confidence?

A. First think about the non-Christian's need for an increase in faith.

1. There is probably no one here that does not believe that God **is**, and that Christ is His divine Son, yet there are some here who are not Christians.
2. What do you suppose the solution is?
  - a. Yes, an increase in confidence is needed.
  - b. When that confidence is obtained there will be repentance and conversion.
  - c. If someone lived below a dam and he was told by someone who he had confidence in that it had broken he would act upon the faith that something terrible would happen if he didn't get to high ground quick.
    - i. It would not only be foolish to not listen, but it would also be suicide.
  - d. **The very idea of not believing what God has SAID, WARNED about, and PROMISED** and acting foolishly, even committing spiritual suicide!
  - e. How important it is that we learn who we can trust and that we take action **through faith** when our wellbeing demands it!

B. For those that are Christians, we also need an increase in faith.

1. The clearest indication I can see of this is **a lack of action**.
  - a. We aren't seeing **enough action** among Christians.
  - b. People are not fulfilling their responsibilities.
  - c. This is clear evidence that we need an increase in our faith.
2. It would seem logical that an increase in faith among the members of a congregation would result in several changes.
  - a. More personal work. (Checking on the stray sheep, the needy etc.)

- b. More thought and work put into lessons that are presented...
- c. More in attendance, (morning and night) and
- d. The contributions made to carry on the work of the Lord will increase.

C. An **increase in our faith** will demand that we stay with the Book.

- 1. When people don't stay with the Book it is also evidence of lack of faith.
  - a. So, there are many who need an increase in faith for this reason.
  - b. Even some of our brethren who are doing things that are contrary to the pattern, need an increase in faith.
- 2. Any time we get away from the Book and do things our own way, it's time that we try to increase our faith.

D. If Christianity is to be **spread** today, we must have an increase in our faith.

- 1. Most of us will admit that we aren't doing all that we could be doing.
- 2. So really, every one of us needs to think about what we can do to achieve an increase in our faith.

## Conclusion

### I. Where Do You Stand Before God Today?

A. Are you one that believes that God is and that Christ is who he said He was, that He came into this world and gave his life, but it hasn't really affected your life?

- 1. If it hasn't affected your life your faith isn't strong enough yet.
- 2. You have not believed that testimony to the extent that obedience followed.
- 3. If you could just have confidence that there is a heaven and that those that have enough faith will go there, you would be **motivated to obey**.

B. If someone who you have complete confidence in told you something which demanded quick action in order to preserve your physical wellbeing, you would take that action.

1. For instance, if your **doctor** told you of some action that you must take, whether to do something or quit something that you are doing, or you would **die** soon, if you had the **confidence in him** you would somehow muster up the will power to do what was necessary.
  - a. He says that **those that obey Him** will live in heaven with him.
  - b. Whether you are a Christian or not, the action you take, or fail to take, will show God and others, just how much confidence you have in God.
  - b. Whether you act or not will also determine your eternal destiny.
2. Do you have confidence in Jesus? Do you really trust him?  
**Are your actions showing it?**