

***It is important to ensure fellowship with God before the study of the Word.***

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (**1 John 1:9**).

***Standing on the Essence of God - -***

**Isaiah 41:10** Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. *American Standard Version*

**Matthew 14:31**

<sup>31</sup> Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him [*Peter*], “**You of little faith, why did you doubt?**”

***Lack of faith comes from not taking God at His word.***

**Matthew 6:30 – rebuke #1**

- The believer must trust in His Heavenly Father to provide for him as His child.

<sup>30</sup> “But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will He* not much more *clothe* you? **You of little faith!**”

**Matthew 8:23 – rebuke #2**

- The storms of life refine the believer’s faith.

<sup>23</sup> When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. <sup>24</sup> And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep. <sup>25</sup> And they came to Him and woke Him, saying, “Save *us*, Lord; we are perishing!” <sup>26</sup> He said to them, “**Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?**” Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm.

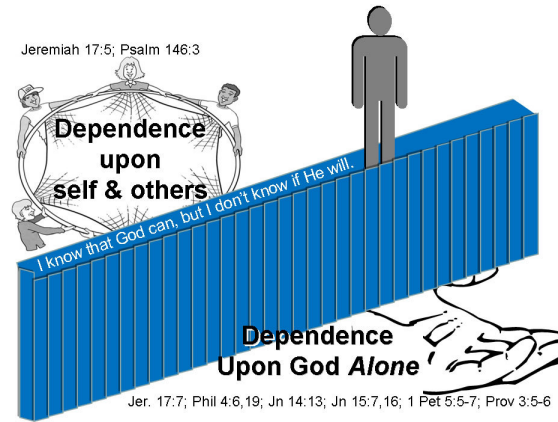
**POD - Lack of faith results in **worry and fear**.**

**Matthew 14:22-31 – rebuke #3**

<sup>22</sup> Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away. <sup>23</sup> After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone. <sup>24</sup> But the boat was already a long distance from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary. <sup>25</sup> And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea. <sup>26</sup> When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. <sup>27</sup> But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “**Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.**” <sup>28</sup> Peter said to Him, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.”

*Peter is expressing his willingness to get off the fence line.*

*Knowing God can do things and trusting that He will do things is the challenge to faith!*



**29** And He said, “Come!” And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

- Peter got out of the boat by \_\_\_\_\_.
- Peter walked on the water by \_\_\_\_\_.
- Peter came toward Jesus by \_\_\_\_\_.

*Peter is trusting in the Lord alone.*

*Peter is in a position that if the Lord were to fail him, he would be in utter peril.*

*Peter’s faith is tested by the details of life – THE WIND.*

**30** But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!”

*Peter began to sink because his faith began to \_\_\_\_\_.*

**31** Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, “**You of little faith, why did you doubt?**”

*Even though Peter’s faith failed him the Lord did not fail him.*

POD – Believers sink when they walk the fence line.

POD - Believing God can and wondering whether He will is a lack of faith that places us on the fence line where we ought not to expect to receive anything from the Lord. You ought not to expect to receive . . .

- . . . His Strength *to do what it is He wants you to do.*
- . . . His Wisdom in any matter.
- . . . His Guidance *required to get you where He wants you to be.*
- . . . His Answers *to your prayers.*

**Phil. 4:19** And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

*Faith is strengthened as you face the details of life – in light of taking God at His word!*

*For if we are faithless, He remains \_\_\_\_\_ . 2 Tim. 2:13*

**Matthew 16:5 – rebuke #4**

**5** And the disciples came to the other side of the sea, but they had forgotten to bring *any* bread. **6** And Jesus said to them, “**Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**” **7** They began to discuss *this* among themselves, saying, “*He said that* because we did not bring *any* bread.” **8** But Jesus, aware of this, said, “**You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread?**” **9** “Do you

not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets *full* you picked up? <sup>10</sup> “Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets *full* you picked up? <sup>11</sup> “How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” <sup>12</sup> Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

POD - Lack of faith prevents us from understanding what the Lord has to say to us in His word.

**Jeremiah 33:3** - Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'

### Acts 9:36

Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which translated *in Greek* is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did. <sup>37</sup> And it happened at that time that she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her body, they laid it in an upper room. <sup>38</sup> Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, imploring him, “Do not delay in coming to us.” <sup>39</sup> So Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them. <sup>40</sup> But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, “Tabitha, arise.”

Peter went **boldly** to the \_\_\_\_\_ . Heb. 4:16

<sup>40</sup> But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed,

*Peter simply prayed in faith without any doubting.*

*Do you think Peter said, “**Father I believe you can do this, but I don’t know whether you will?**”*

*Peter turned to the body and said, “Tabitha, arise.”*

And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. <sup>41</sup> And he gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. <sup>42</sup> It became known all over Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

Peter allowed his faith to be exercised.

What turned Peter’s little faith - his feeble failing faith, in the face of the details of life - into great faith despite the details of life that he faced?

- Peter was a witness of the resurrected Christ - simply seeing God do what He promised He would do.
- Has God made promises to you in His word?

**“Seeing is believing”** - - but only for those who walk the fence line!

**“Seeing is believing”** - - but only for those who think God can but don’t know whether He will!

***I’ll believe it when I see it!***

POD - Blessed are they who do not have to see to believe.

### John 20:11-18

But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; <sup>12</sup> and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. <sup>13</sup> And they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “Because they

have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." <sup>14</sup> When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away." <sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher). <sup>17</sup> Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'" <sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and that He had said these things to her.

*Note what the disciples said!*

#### **Luke 24:11-27**

But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them.

<sup>13</sup> And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. <sup>15</sup> While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and began traveling with them. <sup>16</sup> But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.

*Does your lack of faith prevent you from recognizing God's dealings with you?*

<sup>17</sup> And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup> One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?" <sup>19</sup> And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, <sup>20</sup> and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. <sup>21</sup> "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. <sup>22</sup> "But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, <sup>23</sup> and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. <sup>24</sup> "Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see."

#### **Luke 24:25 - rebuke #5**

<sup>25</sup> And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" <sup>27</sup> Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

#### **John 20:19; 24-29**

So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. . . *lack of faith!*

<sup>24</sup> But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> So the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I **see** in His hands the imprint of the nails, and **put my finger** into the place of the nails, and **put my hand** into His side, I will not believe." <sup>26</sup> After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "**Peace be with you.**" <sup>27</sup> Then He said to Thomas, "**Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.**" <sup>28</sup> Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, "**Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.**"

➤ Faith does not become great overnight!

- Great faith is a process.
- Peter denied the Lord three times in **Matt. 26:69-75** and wept bitterly when He remembered that Jesus had said, “**Before a rooster crows you will deny Me three times.**”
- Do you know why Peter denied Him?
  - Because of his lack of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Because his \_\_\_\_\_ wavered in the face of the details of life.

**1 Peter 5:7** casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

**Jeremiah 17:7** Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD and whose trust is the LORD.

**Which side of the fence are you on?**

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*All Scriptures quoted are from New American Standard unless otherwise noted.*