

Increase Our Faith! (Part 1)

Luke: All Things New



Series Goal

That Mercy Hill Church would be made new as we follow the One who is making all things new!



Sermon Text

Luke 17:5-6



Big Idea

Faith in Christ is a gift from Christ. We cannot believe in Him without help from Him. Therefore, when riddled with fear and doubt, we, with these apostles, ought to flea to Jesus and beg Him to increase our faith!

Have you ever been with these apostles here? You open up the Book and you read, and you come away saying: “If that’s true, if that’s what You’re doing, if that’s what You’re calling me to do, if that’s where this is going . . . *increase my faith* . . . because, right now, I don’t have it.”

(1) The Nature of Faith

It occurs to me that before we can really deal with this idea of increasing our faith, we must make sure we have a good sense of what faith actually is. For this I want to outline for you the threefold definition of faith that was forged at the time of the Reformation.

Aspect #1: *Notitia* = Content—The idea here is that faith has an object. It is faith in something or someone. Faith doesn’t just float out here somewhere in and of itself. It attaches to God, His Word, His Son (cf. Rom 10:14, 17).

Aspect #2: *Assensus* = Assent—To assent to something is to express approval of it or agreement with it. It take the content, in other words, and says: “Yes and amen! That is true.”

Aspect #3: *Fiducia* = Trust—Here we have the idea that because we know these things and because we know that they are true, we now place our personal trust and reliance in them and the One revealed to us in and through it all. *We know. We agree. We trust.* That’s the biblical understanding of faith. That’s what these apostles are asking Jesus to increase.

(2) The Gift of Faith

What I want to bring out for us here at this point is that truth which is clearly standing behind this request and is, no doubt, plainly implied in it. And that is that faith, ultimately, is a gift from God. The implicit truth guiding them here is that mysterious reality that our faith *in* Jesus ultimately comes *from* Jesus. Therefore, we can come to Him in our moments of doubt and ask Him to increase it!

The apostles, though they become pillars in the faith, were certainly not always so. We watch them flounder in unbelief again and again throughout the gospels until, ultimately, it seems they have given up on Jesus entirely. When we ask how then did they come to be so strong in faith, one of the places we can look for an answer is Luke 22:31-34. There we come to see that Peter’s faith doesn’t fail (and, by inference, the other Apostles’ faith doesn’t fail) because Christ won’t allow it! Because Christ is interceding for it. Because Christ is upholding it and seeing to its increase. Because faith is not something ultimately of me, it is a gift of almighty God (cf. Acts 13:48; Rom 12:3; 1 Cor 2:14; 1 Cor 12:3 Phil 1:29; 2 Th 2:13-14; 1 Pet 1:3-5; Eph 2:8)!

Reflection Questions



- If an unbelieving friend asks you what biblical faith is, how would you respond? What verses would you point them towards? What did you appreciate about the threefold definition above? What do you still find confusing?
- What has the status of your faith been lately? Where is it being tested and tried? In what ways do you need Christ to increase it? What words from Scripture are you struggling to believe and trust? How can your Home Group pray alongside you for this?
- How do you feel about the idea that faith is a gift—that you need Jesus to believe in Jesus? What comforts you about this truth? Is there anything that confuses or troubles you about it? How should we live our lives in light of it?