

Romans010700-012912  
Bridge of Hope  
January 29, 2012

## “Why Faith?”

Introduction: What a great day! It is so good to be able to worship together with you today. In our current series of messages we are dealing with the question of “WHY FAITH?” discovering some of the reasons for why Jesus expects us to live by faith. You can find the notes to the other messages on our website, [bridgeofhopechurch.net](http://bridgeofhopechurch.net). Let’s look again at what Paul said in **Romans 1:17** (NIV) *For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is **by faith from first to last**, just as it is written: “**The righteous will live by faith.**”*

As disciples of Jesus Christ we live by faith from the beginning until the end. When we live as a people of faith we are expressing our love for God through the lives that are lived out by faith in Jesus. This way of living brings pleasure to God and opens the path for His blessing to find its way to our lives and community. We are blessed because faith produces in us righteousness.

There is an interesting interaction between Jesus and His disciples that revolves around the issue of faith in Him. They are afraid and in their fear they are not living by faith in Him. Jesus calls them out on this and challenges them to live as a people of faith. Let’s take a look again at this text where we see fear and faith at odds with one another. We read in . . . .

**Mark 4:35–41** (NIV) *That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”*

*He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.*

*He said to his disciples, “**Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?**”*

*They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”*

Apparently Jesus expected more from His disciples. Their lack of faith opened the door for fear to set in. In this unfiltered interaction we get to see both the power of Jesus and His expectation for us. Jesus expects us to be a people of faith, a people who trust Him. When we allow fear to rule in our lives we are refusing to let faith take the lead. And when we refuse to let faith guide us we are not loving Jesus. Our faith, when alive and active in our lives, is really a statement of our love for Christ and our trust in Him.

Which brings me to my first question for today: **WHAT IS ABOUT FEAR THAT MAKES IT SO STRONG IN OUR LIVES?** (Discussion)

And . . . **WHY IS LIVING BY FAITH SO INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN IN OUR LIVES?** (Discussion)

The time is now for us to understand that our faith takes on fear just as fear wants to interrupt faith. In our last message we discussed, **WHY FAITH? BECAUSE FAITH TAKES ON THE FEAR TO TRUST GOD.** Today we will continue our talk as we answer the question . . .

- **WHY FAITH? BECAUSE FAITH TAKES ON THE FEAR TO HOPE IN CHRIST.**

1. **WHAT IS IT ABOUT HOPE THAT CAUSES PEOPLE TO BE AFRAID OF IT? (Discussion)**
2. There are a number of different reasons that people will give for why they no longer have hope, but when you analyze them you discover that most of the time hope is lost because of hurt or disappointment.
  - People move to hopelessness because something happens that takes their hope away.
  - And left unattended long enough, their fear of hope keeps them from ever allowing themselves to have hope again.
3. It seems as if we live in a society that is afraid to hope or at least to have hope in another.
  - There are reasons for why people choose to live in hopelessness over hope.
    - It isn't because a life of hopelessness is better.
    - People live this way because they are trying to protect themselves. They live this way because it takes less effort.
  - Our society has been big on giving praise to people.
    - It got to the point where it seemed as if praise was expected even when it was not deserved.
    - We were taught that praise would help those around us to excel and achieve.
    - This is true; praise is a strong motivator.
  - The problem is that we began to praise for the potential in people rather than for the things they actually accomplished
    - And we began to praise them when they didn't succeed because we didn't want them to feel bad or give up.
    - We thought this was good, but as we look back over the years we can see the effect.
  - **WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE EFFECT OF UNFOUNDED PRAISE IN A PERSON'S LIFE? (Discussion)**
  - The years of unmet expectations that come from a culture of unfounded praise has left its mark on this generation and left them feeling hopeless.
    - We did this in our society at large and in the church as well; and it has produced the same result in both.
    - It was meant to build up and encourage those who were coming behind us.
    - We wanted them to reach further and not be limited by things that had held us back.
    - We saw in them a potential that was incredible and tried to encourage them to believe that they could do anything.
    - And then they grew up and discovered that it wasn't going to be that way and there were some things that maybe they couldn't do.
    - They found that they weren't as great as they were led to believe.
    - Giving praise is good when people do things deserving of it, but it must be founded upon things achieved and not on the potential that we see in them.
  - The result of this, is a generation of people, young and old, who find it difficult to place their hope in Christ.
    - Why? Because they fear it will be like all the other misguided statements that turned out to be wrong or false.
  - They know deep down inside of them that Jesus can be trusted and that what He says is true, but they are not sure how to find their way to hope in Him.

- How do they hope without risking hurt or disappointment?
  - How do they know what is trustworthy and what is nothing more than wishful thinking?
  - For some the effect is much worse as they have been so disillusioned that they wonder if Jesus can be trusted enough to place their hope in Him.
  - They want to; they like what He said and the life He challenges us to live, but they watch the example of those who claim to be His followers, and it robs them of the hope they could have.
  - The life of hope that is professed before them isn't always the life they see being lived out in real life.
  - The remedy is for you and I to lead by example in the truth of scripture and demonstrate what genuine faith is like and how hope can be lived out in our lives.
4. Faith takes on this fear as it sheds light on Christ and helps us overcome our enemy.
    - We need to find hope in Christ who is the source of real hope.
    - We need to discover that we can place our hopes in Him.
    - Hope requires faith; faith in Jesus Christ is the substance of hope.
    - This is where so many get it wrong: Jesus is the substance of our hope and not what Jesus does or doesn't do.
  5. This is a battle that is being lost because instead of placing our hope in Christ we are drifting away from Jesus.
    - Somehow and somehow we need to change this course in our lives.
    - We need to come to grips that it isn't better to live without hope.
    - It is better to live in the substance of hope.
    - **HOW CAN WE TAKE ON THIS FEAR OF HOPE AND MOVE PEOPLE FROM THE HOPELESSNESS THEY FEEL?** (Discussion)
  6. Listen to a few scriptures about faith, fear, and hope and let them encourage you.
    - **Mark 5:35–36** (NIV) *While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?” Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”*
    - **Genesis 15:1–6** (NIV) *After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward. ”*

*But Abram said, “Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.”*

*Then the word of the LORD came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”*

**Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.**

- **Romans 4:18** (NIV) *Against all hope, Abraham **in hope believed** and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”*
- **Ephesians 1:18–19** (NIV) *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you **may know the hope to which he has called you**, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.*
- **Hebrews 10:23** (NIV) *Let us hold unswervingly to **the hope we profess**, for he who*

*promised is faithful.*

- **Romans 5:1–5** (NIV) *Therefore, since we have been **justified through faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access **by faith into this grace in which we now stand**. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. **And hope does not put us to shame**, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*
- **1 Peter 1:3–4** (NIV) *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into **a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.*
- 7. **Hope in Christ causes our faith in Jesus to grow just as faith in Christ overcomes our fear so that hope in Jesus can be found.**
  - They help each other.
  - They build one another up and actually assist each other in growing.
- 8. **We need to find a way to let faith go to work so our hope can come alive in Jesus Christ!**

Conclusion: Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things unseen. Faith is about trust and hope in Jesus as we live real lives facing real struggles. As you face the fears that have been robbing you of what God has intended for your life remember that faith is the dispeller of fear. Through faith in Jesus you can overcome the fear that has impeded your progress or stopped you all together.

#### **WHERE CAN YOU PUT FAITH IN ACTION TO OVERCOME FEAR THAT IS ROBBING YOU OF HOPE?**

The time is now to put fear in its place and the best way to do that is to place your faith in Jesus Christ. Today is a good day to step forward in faith and hope in Jesus!