

UNDERSTANDING FAITH SERIES

THREE WAYS TO INCREASE FAITH

This morning we want to look at three ways to increase our faith. Romans 10: 8 -16 *“The word is near you even in your mouth and in your heart,” (that is the word of faith which we preached.) But if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus Christ and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made to salvation. For the Scriptures says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For “whoever call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things.” But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord who have believed our report? So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.*

As we look into how to increase our faith, we want to remind each one of us here that you may have faith in certain areas of your life but not faith in other areas. And so when we increase our faith it has to be applied area by area. In learning skills in the natural you cannot learn all at one time. If you want to be a specialist in something you have to spend more time examining and learning the skill of a particular trade to develop skill in that particular area. So time has to be spent area by area. That is why in the educational system when you reach a certain age and a certain grade, the college or university will ask what subjects you would like to major. The reason is everyone has a limited time to avail himself or herself to study a subject. And we cannot try to master all subjects at one time because we will end

up mastering none. The only way to master a subject is to take it one by one. After we have mastered one subject we go on to the next subject. That is what you can do. You could go through life and study all you want to know in the science stream. Get a degree in that area and then later specialize in another area.

There are some people who have done that like some of the missionaries in the early days like David Livingstone. He holds about five doctorate degrees. But he does not earn them all at once. It is not possible to put all your time and effort into everything. As it is in the natural so is it in the spiritual. We may have faith for finances, but we may not have faith to believe God to pray for people to be healed. And some have faith to pray for people to be healed. They have developed their faith in healing but they have not developed their faith in finances. Some have faith in certain areas but not have faith in other areas. It does not mean that if you are strong in faith in healing you will automatically be strong in finances. It does not mean that. Some are strong in praise and worship. I have come across full time praise ministers. And as I speak to them they have no faith for their finances. They totally depend on their organization or their managers to supply their needs. They have no idea what it is to exercise faith. And they are so dependent on advertisements and when I checked with them, I realize that they are operating fully in the natural in that area. But when they operate in the area of their ministry they operate with great faith. Sometimes you find someone so strong in faith in a particular area maybe in believing God for miracles. And the next moment you went out for lunch with him, you find out that guy has no faith for finances.

Normally Christians will assume that if you are strong in one area you will be strong in the other area too. But it is not always so. And the problem is it is not automatic. We have to stretch our muscles in those areas. If you are a good runner it doesn't mean you are a good swimmer. For swimming develops different muscles from running. The runners have especially strong legs or they develop their leg muscles. So it does not mean in the natural that if you are good in one area you will be good in the other areas. And the spiritual life is that way. There are so many aspects in the spiritual life. And it takes faith to operate in the anointing. People who operate in the anointing sometimes don't develop faith in practicing the Word of God in their life or faith in teaching. So people develop faith in one area may not develop faith in another area. Nothing is automatic. It takes an effort to move into those areas. Don't take it for granted that God will take care of that area. Without

faith it is impossible to please God. You may developed faith in God for healing but it doesn't mean that you can say God will take care of your finances when you have not develop any faith in God for finances. My friend you have to develop faith in that area too. It's not automatic. Having realized that we need to know the keys to develop faith in all these areas. The same three keys apply.

Rom. 10:17 emphasizes that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. The word "word" comes from the word *rhema*, which means the spoken Word. Paul is referring more to the spoken Word than to the written Word. In Rom. 10:15 - 16 he says about the preaching of the gospel, the spoken word. In fact in verse eight look at the part that is in brackets. It says *the word of faith, which we preach*. It's important to speak the Word. And one of the keys to increasing your faith is by the words that you speak. It's the spoken word. And unless you speak out there will be no growth. The process of speaking the Word is involved in your growing faith. It's a *rhema* of God's Word.

And Mark 11: 23 *For assuredly I say to you whoever says to this mountain be removed and be cast into the sea and does not doubt in his heart but believe that those things he says will come to pass, he will have whatever he says*. Saying is important to our spiritual growth in our life. And as we have shown there are two aspects of saying. One is the saying to get the Word into us. The other is the saying to decree the Word. But in both counts the Word needs to be released through our lips. There is something released when we speak the Word of God. Rom. 10:17 says faith comes by hearing and hearing is by the spoken word of God. Speaking the words will produce an increase of faith in your life. Both are important. There are two areas of speaking. One is to take the general word that is written in the bible, the written word of God and speak it out loud, whether you personalize it or you read it as it is. I have tried both and they are powerful.

In the early days of my ministry I didn't know that there were cassette tapes available of bible reading. So what I did was that I read part of the bible into tape so that it could hear it for myself. I remember in a house of one of the sisters who have some recording facilities there. I sat in that house and I read the bible onto the tape. I remember I was reading the book of Acts. I read the whole book of Acts onto the cassette tapes and that is twenty-eight chapters. It took me several hours to

finish reading the book of Acts into the cassette tapes. But I noticed something took place as I read that Word. The Word by itself is printed on white paper. There was potential power but it needs to be released. But when I began reading the Word, something happened. I have not even personalized it. I was just reading the Word as it is. I have not changed any part of the Word. Just the mere reading of the Word out loud caused something to happen. I experienced what I call a spiritual sense of taste that I have mentioned about. There was something that took place in my spirit man. It felt like you just had a good meal except it is in the spiritual sense. Faith is only potential in the written Word. It needs to be spoken with our lips and our mouth in order to release the energy that is inherent in the book.

This book the written Word is like many little segments of stored energy. Each verse is like a little stored battery fully charged with electricity. If you buy a battery in the supermarket and you take it home, that battery has energy but you need to know how to bring out that energy in order for it to be useful for you. What you need to do is to put it into the right connection to a toy or an electrical gadget. Yet there must be a proper connection. Sometimes it doesn't work because the connection has gone loose. So you adjust it a little bit so that the contact is being made. So we know the laws to draw out the power that is there. The only way to release that potential energy inherent in the Word is to speak it out. There are too many people going around with batteries that are powerful but the batteries are not being tapped. It just remains as it is. You can't use it as it is. The life inside it needs to be released as a source of energy.

Lets take another example that is far more powerful. There is a tremendous amount of energy that is inherent in each particle and matter. When Albert Einstein came and said $E = mc^2$, then only scientists realized that energy is inherent in the mass of all atoms. If we could somehow break the atom we would release the energy that is inside the atom. Scientists have discovered that when they could succeed in doing that, the energy that is released became the most powerful weapon man has ever handled. It was far more powerful than any explosive invented in that time. Man realized that they got a tremendous source of power in their hand, the energy that is inherent inside the tiny atom.

Similarly when God gives His Word there is more energy than we realized stored in the Word. But the Word must get to be spoken for the energy force to be released out. Jesus did not say that the mountain would be removed by your thinking. But He says the mountain will be removed by your speaking. The mountain is not going to go unless you speak. No matter how much you think and no matter how much you believe, unless that Word is spoken the energy is not released. The spiritual energy that is stored in the Word is only released when you speak forth the Word. So there is enough of the Word here to give you enough energy, enough power, enough dynamite to cause your life to be prosperous, to cause your life to be abundant, to cause your life to be successful. There is enough energy here to make you a multi-millionaire. There is enough energy here to make you healthy and heal every sickness and disease in the world. There is enough energy here in the written Word of God to make your ministry a tremendous success and help you achieve what God has called you to do.

But the problem is that people are not tapping it. They have forgotten that the key is in their mouth. The key to the kingdom of God is in your mouth. But don't swallow it - give it out. In Matthew 16 the Lord was talking to His disciples. They were on their way to Jerusalem and the Lord turned to them and said, "Who do men say that I am? And they said, "Elijah and one of the prophets etc." Then He turned to them and said, "Who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "Thou are the Christ the Son of the Living God." And then Jesus blessed him and said, "Blessed are you Simon son of Jonah for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father who is in heaven and I give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Whatever revelation he had, whatever Word he received in himself it was when he spoke it out that the Lord said the keys of the kingdom are given to him. See the key to releasing the kingdom is in the spoken Word.

In my experience it was just the mere reading of the Word that such energy was released. How much more when you personalized it – it would be fantastic. You could take the Word and personalized it and speak it forth in your life. Today what you are is partly a result of what you have said in the past. Right now in the position that you are in, in secular or in spiritual, you are what you are because of the books you read, partly because of the people you meet and partly because of the words you spoke about yourself.

I have a whole pile of Kenneth Hagin's Word of Faith magazine from the early days. But there was one copy that was quite precious to me. Inside it was one of his graduation ceremonies. And in his graduation ceremony was all these guys wearing red robes. And he stood up and said these words. "All that I am today is because of the words that I spoke about myself. What have you been speaking about yourself? I am good for nothing. No wonder in five years time you are still good for nothing. What have you been speaking about yourself? Think back; examine your past and remember what you have been saying about your life. What you are today is partly the result of what you spoke."

There is power in the spoken Word. And that causes a tremendous growth in your faith every time you release it. For more faith to come and pass through you, the energy of God has to pass through you and be released from you. No wonder Jesus said he that is faithful in little would receive more. When you release what you have, you create a vacuum to receive more. The more Word is released the more faith comes in. And your capacity to receive increases with the muscles of faith being stretched. Sometimes when God tells you about something you must do and you have discerned that it is the will of God, you need to speak it out. Even though God said something about your life that you must do, you still need to say it. You still need to say it in private. You still need to say it in public. For saying it involves the process of increasing the capability within you and the faith within you to be stretched to achieve it. That is why I write down on my personal list my objectives and goals that I discern that I should accomplish in this life. I will from time to time open it and read it and say those words. Think about what it will do to you.

Lets suppose that you are starting your own ministry and you don't have many open doors. And you discerned that God wants you to travel to three countries to be a missionary. Think about what happen everyday as you wake up in the morning. You say, "Father I thank you that I am going to these three countries." Every morning you confess that. Every night you confess that. The process of the miracle starts happening. If God has called you to build a church, and you have discerned God's will and you keep on saying to yourself, it builds your faith to do it. Saying it increases your faith to do it. The more you say it the more faith you have to do that thing. Remember this law that we are applying is based on the other

laws. You are not supposed to say anything unless you discern it is God's will. If it is not God's will for you to do it no matter how much you say it, it is going to fail. This law is based on the other laws. This law by itself is not functional as it is based on the other laws. However, on the other hand there are some people who say things that God never asked them to do. They are bound for failure. Don't remain in this extreme.

On the other extreme there are those who know what God told them to do. They discerned it very clearly but their mouth has special glue to shut it tightly. They have not told anybody what God wants them to do. And they are around for ten years and nothing seems to happen. And many times they come to God and say, "Lord, you have been speaking to me about all these things. I have been praying. I have been fasting. Why is it this thing is not happening?" Let me tell you why. You are not saying it. Saying it removes the mountain than preparing the circumstances around you. Whether you are heard or not but saying it is important to build your faith. Even though God spoke those things to you and your faith for those things has remained the same after ten years, if you have been saying those things, you move to the midst of it.

There must be a balance. Don't go over to one side and say those things that God has never told you to say. Don't go over to the other side by not saying those things that God told you to say. Be balanced in the middle. When God told you to do something you must constantly say it. Say it in the midst of unbelief and doubt. Say it in the midst of ridicules. When people laugh at you, you still say it. The first person you have to convince is yourself. The second person is your loved ones and the third group of people is the body of Christ. Some people have not even convinced themselves. They look in the mirror and say, "Are you sure you are going to do it? You say, "Brother how can I get rid of this doubt?" The doubt has to be cut off by your words. You have to say it constantly. Saying it increases your faith and capacity to do it. I told people long ago when we were involved in church planting that God is going to help us to build the largest sitting capacity church. I kept saying it. Now I would have a problem if God didn't say it to me. But if God said it to me I would have a problem if I didn't say it out. Some people will say, "Don't say it wait till you finished it then say it." The problem is faith works by saying first and then doing. You must constantly say it otherwise your capacity to do it is not developed.

The first key to grow in faith is to say it. Whether you are saying God's general word and you have to always start from there or you are saying something that God has spoken to you in your life, you have to say it, pronounce it, keep speaking about it. In the midst of doubts and ridicule keep saying it.

The second key is hearing. The words that people say contain unbelief and doubt or life and faith. We know that when people speak certain words, sometimes we can tell whether they are full of deadness, full of hurts or words full of power. Jesus in John 6: 63 says, "The words that I speak to you they are life." And the second key to increasing our faith is to always surround yourself so that you have an opportunity to keep hearing the Word. When I say hearing the Word it involves many things. The books you read. If you keep reading books filled with unbelief and surround yourself with such books, when the time comes for you to go you may not be ready. You are partly what you read. So the books you read are important. If you read the right books it inspires you. If you read the wrong book it causes you to sweat and ask, "Can I do it?"

Like we illustrated last week there is pressure involved in hearing the Word repeatedly. If like the disciples of Jesus one of them comes and says, "He is risen." And you say, "No I don't believe that." The second disciple comes and said, "He is risen." You say, "I don't believe." There are two witnesses now. And the third and fourth person come and say, "He is risen we saw Him." The pressure is placed on you to believe. The opposite is true. If God wants you to do something and you constantly surround yourself with the wrong group of people and they come to you and say, "No you can never do it. Brother so and so did that and he died." And you keep on mixing up with those people you will have very little faith to do it. It eats up your faith. That unbelief and negative speaking have canceled out all the faith you have developed in your private devotional life. And you know canceling is not enough. You got to earn and move beyond that. Earning money just to pay off debts still leaves you at zero. You have to earn more than enough then you can start going into the plus. And all the faith you get is only to get rid of the unbelief that you are hearing. And in the end when it comes to balance book on faith you still have zero. And people are what they are partly because of what they read. People are what they are because of the friends they mix with. The bible tells us in

the book of Psalms chapter one how important it is to mix with the right people. Psalms 1: 1 *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly. Are you walking in the counsel of the ungodly? Nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful but his delight is in the law of the Lord.* The bible advises us it is important where you walk where you stand, where you sit. Its important how much time you spend in fellowship.

David Cho Yonggi, pastor of the world's largest church makes this observation in one of his church growth tapes. He said he noticed when he goes to a pastors' conference that all those unsuccessful pastors would gather together and share the same problem why they failed. But there are other types of pastors who gather together. These are those who got vision and those who really want to do something and they seem to click together. And they talk about the same thing. Talk about the things of the Lord. So in the end you got the failure club and the vision club. And after five years you look around at those ministers, failures breed failures. The failures talked the same talk, sat the same seat. The successful walked the same walk, talked the same talk, saw the same vision. And part of how we talk and walk is influenced by our fellowship.

So we know the power that is involved in fellowship. And for some people if they got bad habits I would encourage them to keep themselves surrounded with good people until their lifestyles become a part of them. And there are some areas of your life you know that you have to remove off before God could do more things in your life. You know those are bad habits and you try to break it personally. You find it difficult. Mix with the right crowd. It adds a greater motivation to conform to the things of God. Keep yourself in the right fellowship. And as you keep mixing before long after two years you look and say I don't like those things anymore. Those weaknesses are gone by themselves. What happened was that style of life took some time to sink into you. By the time all these friends have been with you for two years and you look at yourself you realize that it has become your habit to walk the right walk, to talk the right talk, to live the right life.

So under hearing the Word a lot of things are involved, for example your reading life and your fellowship life. As you fellowship you talk. All of us talk when we fellowship. What I do when I go into a fellowship that talk the wrong talk I close

my spirit up. I find that if the conversation drifts to negative things, to things that don't build my faith, inside me I have a trap door. I close it. I lock it. But my spirit is shut up when people say things that eat up faith. I learned to protect and guard my faith because I know its faith that helps us to do things. So I shut up my spirit, I close up my spirit. I learned that from Evan Roberts. There is a very old book by Howard Duncan about Evan Roberts. When Evan Roberts was on the street, this author said he saw all these people ridiculing him and saying all kinds of nasty things. And he just walked very calmly, sat down and continued on. And he was so amazed he said, "How did you do it?" Evan Roberts said he just closed his spirit.

Let me illustrate where people are doing it without realizing it. When I lay hands on my brother, I could sense whether he is opening up his spirit to me or not. Don't talk about laying of hand. How about just teaching people? Do you realize you could sense whether people are opened to you or not. So if our spirit can be closed, it is closed by a choice. They can be around you but you choose not to accept them. Do you notice that you can sit here this morning and you choose not to believe anything? The moment you make the choice you close your spirit. So you could sit in any place and in any kind of atmosphere and you make a choice not to accept any thing in that place. Straight away a mechanism in your spirit closes up. This is operating partly in the natural all the time. There is a natural opening and closing. There is a spiritual opening and closing. Both are related and both are taking place.

Lets take for example a couple. They are at the lower income group just making ends meet. So the husband and wife and their child come together and they said, "We can live in a better flat than this squatter area. We can believe God will supply our needs." And so they set their minds to the possibility to believe that God can prosper them and bless them and provide them a better living condition in a better flat. The moment they said, "Yes it is possible," the moment everything in their system say, "Yes its possible," their minds begin to find ways to make it possible. The moment the decision is made immediately the mind began to move to the ways. "How shall I do it? Shall I look for a job with a better pay? Shall I be stricter in my budgeting and save more to enable me to move into that?" You begin to examine your resources and how you can reach there. The moment you say its possible, your mind begins to find ways to bring it to pass. The moment you say I can't do it, your mind shuts up. Your mind has a funny way of staking the odds against you. Your mind is just like a computer. If you want all the negative things,

you click in and the mind will list out all the negative things. If you believe in the possibility, you punch in it will list out all the possibilities. So its important for us to know that fellowship plays a role in all these areas.

And we must learn how to open our spirit to the things of God. So there are some situations where we guard the input into our lives. Sometimes people say things that are against us. We just close our spirit. People are going against the things of the spirit all the time. You could speak with them for one hour and it doesn't get in. But another person comes in and within five minutes received everything the Lord wants for them. So it is happening all the time. So the second way to increase our faith is to watch what we hear. Watch what you hear involves what you read and involves the people you fellowship with. There is something that you see clearly from God. And you follow along sooner or later there will be enough people flowing in the same stream. I know churches that have grown big but they change their policy based on consensus instead of basing it on God. Then they start losing their anointing.

The third and last area is Luke 17. How to increase our faith, number one on speaking, number two hearing and number three acting. Luke 17: 5 *The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."* He illustrated the answer in verse nine and ten, *"Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, "We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do."* That was Jesus' answer. Jesus was saying in His parable to them that increasing their faith would involve acting. Some people say, "God called me to be prosperous and to be a Christian entrepreneur in the world to bring in the prosperity into the body of Christ." But they are not even giving at the moment. They will never reach that level because now you got to start acting and learning to give into the body of Christ before you reach there. So its important for us to realize that if you talk about having faith to go and spoil the world and bring in all the riches of the world that you may bring it to the body of Christ. But right now you are not even bringing it to the body of Christ as you are. It is tested by your action right now. You are saying it all the time and you are fellowshiping with all the right people but you are not acting at all. Acting is involved in our faith. How can you have faith to give millions of dollars away when you cannot even give hundred dollars or hundred thousand dollars away? It takes faith to give. And you are talking about bringing the riches

into the kingdom of God so that you could give. You want to be come a billionaire so that you could give billion of dollars. You are talking about giving billion of dollars away when you don't even have faith to give a hundred thousand. Do it now. Show it in your action. Do whatever you can do at your level of faith and that will be part of the process of growing in faith.

You talk about the ministry of praying for the sick. What are you doing now? Right now whatever opportunity you have, you should be learning to minister. You talk about ministering to thousands. Right now what are you doing? In the house group are you ministering? We learn to operate the gifts of the Holy Spirit in home groups. In the early days of my ministry not many doors were opened. I used to preach from home to home. And it is in those homes that I learnt to operate the word of knowledge and the revelations of God. I don't wait for the big meetings to come and then say now it is time. Act right now whether you are in the ministry or whether you are in finance start right now where you are or you will never grow. Acting on the word, acting on faith is part of the process of increasing faith. We will never increase in the area of faith unless we start acting in that area right now.