

A Great Cloud Of Witnesses

- *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, Heb. 12:1*
 - Abraham waiting for Isaac's birth :17; Rom 4:
 - Moses refusing Pharaoh's daughter. :24
 - *He that loves father or mother more than me*
 - Passing through the Red Sea : 29
 - Could we have done that?

The Time Will Fail Me

- *And what shall I more say? for the time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens. Heb. 11:32-34*

The Frail Ones Included!

- Some needed more help, but they made the list.
- Gideon first torn down Baal at night.
- **Gideon:**
- *But **if you are afraid to go down**, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, 11 and you shall hear what they say; and afterward **your hands shall be strengthened** to go down against the camp." Judg. 7:10-11*
- That is exactly what these passages are here for. To strengthen our hands.

Gideon's Encouragement

- *there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed." 14 Then his companion answered and said, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp." 15 And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. Judg. 7:13-15*

Barak Would not Go Alone

- *Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "Has not the Lord God of Israel commanded, 'Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; 7 and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand'?"*
8 And Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!" Judg 4:6-8
- His going was enough.

Not Only the One's Delivered!

- Others were **tortured, not accepting deliverance**, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had **trial of mockings** and **scourgings**, yes, and of **chains** and **imprisonment**. 37 They were **stoned**, they were **sawn in two**, were **tempted**, were **slain with the sword**. They wandered about in **sheepskins** and **goatskins**, being **destitute, afflicted, tormented** — 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They **wandered in deserts** and **mountains**, in **dens** and **caves** of the earth. Heb. 11:35-38

This Great Cloud of Witnesses

- They encourage, motivate, and strengthen.
- God's intervention is assured no matter what:
- *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 17 If that is the case, our **God whom we serve IS ABLE to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace**, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. 18 **BUT IF NOT**, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."* Dan. 3:16-18

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Do We See a Glimmer in Ourselves

- *He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*
- *6 So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" Heb. 13:5-6*
- We know the proclamation is true.
- Can we boldly say the conclusion?
- The faith that is reckoned for righteousness is based on God raising Jesus from the dead. If we have confidence in that ... Anything Less... should also be obvious to us.

Jesus Called it “O *You of little faith*”

- There are certain “*bare minimum*” trust and confidence applications we must make, or our faith is too little and too small.
- *Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. 36 For **you have need of endurance**, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 “For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now **the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.**” 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who have faith to the saving of the soul. Heb 10:35-39*

“Training Wheels” -- Daily Necessities

- *"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on.*
- *Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them*
- *Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; ... if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?*
- *"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" Matt 6:25-32*

Preparation for Harder Things

- *"If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, Then how can you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, In which you trusted, they wearied you, Then how will you do in the floodplain of the Jordan? Jer. 12:5*
- While Judah is still in prosperity, and the persecutors were still prospering, Jeremiah wavered. This was God's answer.
- We need to Heed it.
- Are we already wavering and struggling?

The Apostles Had Similar Problem

- Jesus expected them to make applications, when they failed to, He rebuked them.
- *a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. 38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" 39 Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, **"Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"** Mark 4:37-41*

After Feeding the 5000

- *Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men. 45 Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida Mark 6:44-45*
- *Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He was alone on the land. 48 Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Mark 6:47-48*
- *Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. 52 **For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.** Mk 6:44-45*

After Feeding the 5000

- Jesus had used this sign to instill same confidence as Moses after witnessing the 10 plagues.
- As Jesus sent them ahead, they had opportunity.
- Peter tried. Started with same boldness as Daniel.
- Asked to walk on the water with Him, but the wind and waves, caused him to waver and sink.
- Jesus expressed His disappointment:
- *“O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” (Mt. 14:29-32)*
- As we saw from the summation in Mark, Peter was not singled out here. He actually went further than the rest.

Even After the Resurrection

- From the time Peter made the good confession
“Jesus began to show to His disciples, that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised.” Mt. 16:21
Yet here they are acting just like the ten spies.
- With all the evidence, still refused to believe
- *He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.*
Mk. 16:14

- What Abraham could do just by witnessing the elements,
- what Joshua and Caleb could do after witnessing God's ability in the ten plagues
- What Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego could do after witnessing everything the Scriptures had revealed about God's power
- The apostles still could not do after Jesus entire ministry. There was no excuse.
- We have even more for we have their testimony on top of all this.

Finally! After the Resurrection

- *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” Acts 4:13-14*