



Main Idea: Faith is more than belief: it's trust in action.

Scriptures: Hebrews 11:1, Matthew 14:13-33, James 4:8a

[Show Muppet show clip:

<https://youtu.be/r4m4daLo0Lc?si=kNxwTBn9fXRorbZ>]

It's no secret, I love the Muppets! (I do. you don't have to.) And the reason I am showing you this is because tonight, we are launching into a series called Trust Issues. I don't know if you have ever been mountain climbing, but such a task requires that you put all your trust in those you are with. Clearly these pigs were more focused on their song than the actual task at hand, which is why they fell. I would not put my trust in those Muppets! In the real world, mountain climbers often tie themselves together for safety, especially if they are belaying (meaning they are coming down the mountain). The reason they do this is so if one of them slips and falls, the rest of them can catch them with the rope so they don't fly off the mountain.

[Insert personal story illustrating trust issues) When I worked at a church camp, we would do rappelling as an activity. The camp had an 80-foot sheer cliff, and we would tie off to a tree at the very top. A camper would be harnessed in, then they would hold onto the rope and walk backwards down the cliff. At the bottom was someone who acted as a sort of anchor. As the camper was coming down, if they slipped and lost their footing or for whatever reason let go and started falling, that person at the bottom could pull on a rope and it would catch them; it would stop their fall. So functionally, the only thing between the camper and falling to their demise beyond their own ability to hold on, was that person at the bottom.]

And to engage in such an activity, even though it was very safe, takes a great deal of trust in the people around you.

[And there were many campers who thought they might be able to trust that person at the bottom, but once they looked down realized that they were in way over their heads, and they lost faith in their safety. They understandably had trust issues.]

Sometimes our faith in God looks like that. Sometimes, we're going through life and things happen, doubts spring up, our faith is shaken, and we develop trust issues about God. The worries of life and the things going on around us create fear. Sometimes I've felt like that pig at the very top. He could no longer trust his friends, the guys that he had faith in that were supposed to be there for him in case he fell. And as soon as he got going, he was worried that maybe something would happen to him too. And of course, something did happen to him and that was funny. But when it comes to our faith in God, there are times when our doubt and fears become overwhelming. And there have been different points in my life where I have opened up to others about those fears and they'll say to me, "you just need to have faith. You just need to trust God." But what does it mean to have faith? What is faith?

Well, in this series we are going to explore what authentic faith is.

Tonight, we will start by talking about just that: what is faith? Next week, we'll talk about how God can be trusted, and what trusting in Him brings in our life. In week three, we'll talk about how often these trials that shake our faith, can actually deepen our faith and relationship with God. And then, we'll wrap the series up by looking at what faith *looks like*, how authentic faith changes the way we live.

So, let's jump into it: What is faith?

Christians like to throw this word around a lot, so much so that it gets confusing. Often, we associate this word *faith* with the word *belief*. For example, I believe that the sun exists and I have faith that it'll come out tomorrow. I believe that the Earth is round and I have faith that it'll keep on spinning. Faith certainly starts with belief, if I don't believe God is real, how could I put my faith in Him?

But faith goes beyond that. This is how the author of Hebrews defines faith:

Hebrews 11:1 (NIV)

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

Faith is confidence in what we hope for, and assurance about what we do not see. Instead of getting all technical and breaking this down for us, I

want to look at two accounts in the Gospel of Matthew where the disciples displayed this kind of faith. Turn to Matthew 14, we'll start in verse 13. Leading up to this passage, Jesus learned that John the Baptist, His close friend, His cousin, the one who baptized Him and paved the way for His ministry had been executed.

Matthew 14:13-21 (NIV)

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

"We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

"Bring them here to me," he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

We've all heard this story, Jesus feeding the five thousand. And this is just a quick example, leading up to an even bigger example of faith in action. But this is still worth looking at. Imagine this, you and everyone else in your school (or this church, or whatever club you're apart of) are out camping. It's getting late and you haven't eaten all day, and all you have are five hamburger buns and a 10-piece McNuggets. Do you think that is going to feed everyone? NO! And if I was leading such an expedition, I would be freaking out! But Jesus asked His disciples to have confidence in Him, and assurance about what they could not see. It seemed impossible, but because of their faith, Jesus was able to multiply the food, to the extent that everyone had more than enough. Everyone as in 5,000 men, not including the women and children.



- What's something silly or random that you trust completely without thinking about it? (example: your chair won't collapse, the Wi-Fi will work, Chick-fil-A sauce will taste good).
- Read Proverbs 3:5–6. Why do you think the writer warns us not to “lean on our own understanding”?
- Read Numbers 23:19. What does this verse tell us about God's character compared to people? What's significant about that?
- Read Isaiah 26:3–4. According to this passage, what is the result of trusting God? What kind of peace is this talking about?
- Read Romans 8:38–39. How does knowing that nothing can separate us from God's love help us trust Him more?
- What are some things teens today tend to “lean on” instead of trusting God? (friends, grades, sports, money, popularity, etc.)
- What makes it hard for you personally to trust God when life doesn't make sense?
- Have you ever experienced peace that didn't make sense, peace in the middle of stress, fear, or difficulty? What was that like?
- If God is trustworthy, what's one step of trust you could take this week (big or small)?
- **Challenge & Prayer**
- Whenever you feel anxious or stressed, pray Proverbs 3:5–6 or Isaiah 26:3–4 back to God.
- Invite students to share one specific area where they need God's peace, then pray over each other.

This preview includes a select number of pages from this resource.

If you like what you see, download the entire resource today!

downloadyouthministry.com