

Faith under Fire 1 Peter 1:7

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, March 24th AM

1 Cor 13 closes with: *"For now we see through a glass darkly... (ainigma: obscured, unclear!) now I know (ginōskō: understand) in part..."* vs 12 How can we "trust" in the face of obscurity and uncertainty? *"Now abideth faith, hope, charity"* v 13 Faith is foundational to Hope and love. True

Faith is so important that God says it's: *"the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen... Without Faith it is impossible to Please God"* Hebrews 11:1,6 How does God move our faith from persuasion to "Conviction"? Jesus modeled this for us! (Isaiah 50:6-10) After 3 years of public ministry, Jesus rides into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to the acclaim of the multitudes. (Mark 11:9,10) Within days this same crowd would be crying to "crucify him"! (Mark 15:13) What happened that so drastically changed their cheers to jeers?

Faith must be tested to be Trusted! (Is. 48:10-12) *"Behold I have refined thee..."* (šārap': **purged, fused. {joined}**) Notice How Jesus sought to "Fuse the Faith" of His disciples.

1. Monday Mark 11:12-19

A. He Cursed the fruitless fig tree. V 14 *"He found nothing but leaves"*

- 1) The Fig tree is a picture of Israel! Hos. 9:10; Isaiah 5:7
- 2) Israel was "fruitless" in spite of God's care. Luke 13:6-9
 - Does God expect "fruit" from us? Jn. 15:8,16
 - What happens if we're "Fruitless?" Jn 15:2,3; James 2:26

B. He Cleansed the Temple. Vs 15-18

- 1) They were obstructing the Gentiles from Worship.
- 2) They resented Jesus' meddling. Vs 18
 - Are we instruments of outreach, or obstacles to people coming to God?

2. Tuesday Mark 11:20-13:37

A. Figs, faith and forgiveness. 11:20-26 *"they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots."*

- 1) Jesus related this event to Faith! *"have faith in God"*. (22)
 - a) Faith involves both recognizing God's will and responding to it! (Heb. 11)
- 2) What does Faith have to do with Forgiveness? Vs 25
 - a) Faith is the instrument through which God demonstrates His power and purposes!
 - b) Bitterness poisons that process! (Heb. 12:15)

B. The priests Challenge His authority. Mark 11:27-33

- 1) Why did Jesus bring up John the Baptist?
 - a) Since they had rejected the truth (light) of John's message, they would receive no more light! (Lk 16:29-31) *"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead"*
 - What are you doing with the "Light" God's already given you? 1 Jn. 1:7

C. Parables of the wicked stewards. 12:1-12 vs 12 *"they sought to lay hold on him... for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them"*

- 1) We're all "Stewards" of God! 1 Cor. 4:2; Mt. 25:14-30
 - Can God really trust us?

D. Tests and Traps. 12:13-34 *“they sent certain Pharisees and Herodians to catch him in his words”* 13

- 1) Taxes to Caesar. 13-17 *“render to Caesar the things that are Caesar, and to God things that are God’s”*
- 2) Sadducee Snare. 18-27 *“Ye do err not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God”* Vs 24
- 3) The Scribe’s set up. Mark 12:28-34 *“Which is the first (greatest) commandment?”*

E. Contrast of the scribes 12:32-34; 38-40

- 1) A Sincerely “seeking” scribe. 12:32-34 *“Master thou hast spoken truth”* Vs 32
 - a) Notice Jesus’ response. Vs 34 *“Thou are not far from the kingdom of God”*
 - (1) He had recognized the truth, (vs 32) *but hadn’t yet responded to it!* (Jn 14:6)
 - (2) Many stop short of the strait gate! Luke 13:24; Mt 23:13
 - b) Faith is a journey some never complete. Acts 26:27-28
- 2) The insincere “showman” scribe. 38-40 More about show than substance! Mt 6:2

F. The Widow’s mite. 12:41-44

- 1) Why did Jesus take the time to watch *“how people cast money into the treasury”*?
- 2) What did the wealthy have that the widow lacked?
- 3) What did the widow have that the others lacked? Which was more “valuable”?

H. Mt Olivet discourse. Mark 13 Closed with a warning about being ready! 34-36

Conclusion:

Why did the cheers of Mark 11 turn into the jeers of Mark 15? Lack of Genuine Faith!

Jesus still challenges us to: *“Have Faith in God!”* Mk 11:22 When Jesus didn’t restore *“the kingdom of our father David.”* Mark 11:10 (Their agenda, their timetable), they Turned on Him!

What happens to our faith in times of disappointment and darkness?

Faith: (Pistis) persuasion that becomes conviction. Mental “persuasion” must pass through the fires of trials in order to become refined into Moral “Conviction”. 1 Peter 1:6-7

Illustration:

Christian author and apologist CS Lewis finally gave his heart to Helen Joy Davidson, only to lose her to cancer within a few years of their marriage. This led to a time (he described as the “shadowlands”) where his faith was tested. Of this time he wrote:

“I pray because I can’t help myself. I pray because I’m helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me... It doesn’t change God, it changes me.”

Application: A Faith that doesn’t “challenge” us can’t “change” us.

If it can’t handle “Testing”, How can it “Transform” us?

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature!” 2 Corinthians 5:17

Such “faith” may be nothing more than Fantasy or perhaps just simply a mental assent!



1 Peter 1:7 *“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus”*