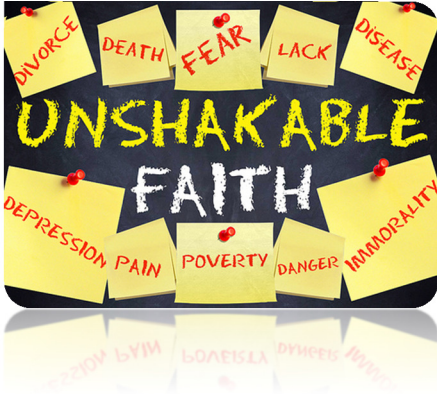




How Do We Develop Unshakable Faith?

Jeremiah 6:16: (NRSV) *Thus says the LORD: Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls...*



Faith. It is the basis of all religion, for it is faith in something larger than oneself that draws people to a common belief. Faith. It is a necessity in any functional society, for it creates the environment for citizens to rely upon their leadership. Faith. It is a key in any deep and enduring relationship, for it provides the fertile soil that feeds a lifetime of growing together. Faith. It is critical in the bringing together of two at odds parties, for it provides a bridge that both parties may equally travel upon. Faith. It is a staple of our lives - so how do we make it firm, unshakable and permanent?

What is faith?

Faith: Strong's #4102 persuasion, credence, conviction. Reliance (especially upon Christ for salvation), constancy (in such profession). By extension, the system of religious truth.

"Faith" is always from the same Greek word in the entire New Testament.

Credulity: *noun*

Readiness or willingness to believe especially on slight or uncertain evidence (gullibility)

Does faith come in degrees or stages?

Yes! True deep and powerful faith must be built and developed as any muscle must be built and developed.

The following story is VERY tragic - we will tell it throughout this program to illustrate unshakable faith in an "average" person.



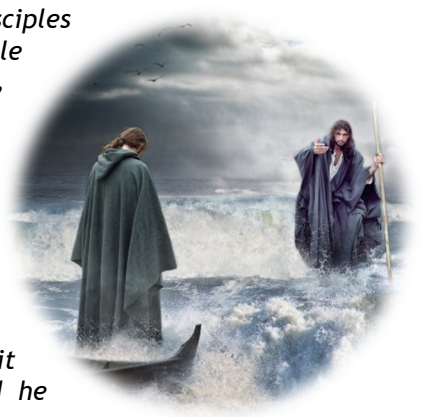
Introduction - one year later, CBC Heather Hiscox interview with Marc Woerlen

- (Interviewer) *It can be incredibly hard to cope with losing one family member in a tragedy. Losing eight is almost impossible to imagine. Mark Woerlen knows tremendous loss. One year ago a fire killed his entire family, eight people in all. How does a person deal with such a tragedy and find the strength to carry on? CBC's Heather Hiscox spoke to Marc Woerlen recently. Here's some of their conversation.*
- (Marc) *It's been a nice project. It's kept me busy picking this out, picking that out.*
- (Interviewer) *Building a house, rebuilding a life, a life that Marc Woerlen could never have imagined a year ago; a life without the people that were supposed to live in this house near Ottawa with him.*



The Apostle Peter and the learning curve of faith:

Matthew 14:22-33: (NASB) ²²Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, while he sent the crowds away. ²³After he had sent the crowds away, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray; and when it was evening, he was there alone. ²⁴But the boat was already a long distance from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary. ²⁵And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, it is a ghost! And they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, take courage, it is I; do not be afraid. ²⁸Peter said to him, Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water. ²⁹And he said, come!



In our journey of faith, we are often told by Jesus to take courage. Sometimes we respond as Peter did - with insecurity - with an "if," for we need an "extra" reassurance to truly step out in faith.



"Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)" (Verse 1), Hillsong cover by Sarah Reeves

You call me out upon the waters
The great unknown where feet may fail
And there I find you in the mystery
In oceans deep my faith will stand
I will call upon Your name
And keep my eyes above the waves
When oceans rise
My soul will rest in Your embrace
For I am Yours and You are mine

...And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

Faith was successfully executed!

But...

³⁰But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, Lord, save me! ³¹Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and took hold of him, and said to him, you of little faith, why did you doubt? ³²When they got into the boat, the wind stopped. ³³And those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, you are certainly God's Son!

This was not a failed faith; it was merely an immature and untested faith that needed work.



Are there specific steps necessary to build an unshakable faith?

*Jeremiah 6:16: (NRSV) Thus says the LORD:
Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for
the ancient paths, where the good way lies;
and walk in it, and find rest for your souls...*



We would like to suggest a four-step approach based upon our theme text:



This may seem like a useless step - after all, everyone knows there are crossroads. The key here is to know *which* crossroads are life-altering crossroads versus the crossroads of mere preference or convenience.

If you want to lead a life of great faith, there are life-altering crossroads to which we have to pay attention. We need to recognize these as they come up. It is easy to go with a default decision.



Sometimes the crossroads are subtle and therefore dangerous:

Jude 1:3-4: (NASB) ³Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. ⁴For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Unshakable faith has to have the right foundation so we do not put our faith in the wrong things.



Let's help one another - one year later, *CBC Heather Hiscox interview with Marc Woerlen*



- (Interviewer) He had seven kids. His wife, Monica, was pregnant with their eighth. But one year ago this week, Marc Woerlen buried them all. They died as they slept, in a fire in the family farmhouse. Woerlen survived because he wasn't home. He was in Ottawa preparing for his family's imminent move.
- (Marc) Some have a trial one way, and some have a trial another way.
- (Interviewer) Even in those black first days, Woerlen was willing to answer my questions.
- (Marc) God planned it the way He planned it, and let's help one another get through it.

The decision to accept all things from God stated "matter-of-factly" reminds us how subtle true faith could be.

Sometimes the crossroad is clearly laid out:

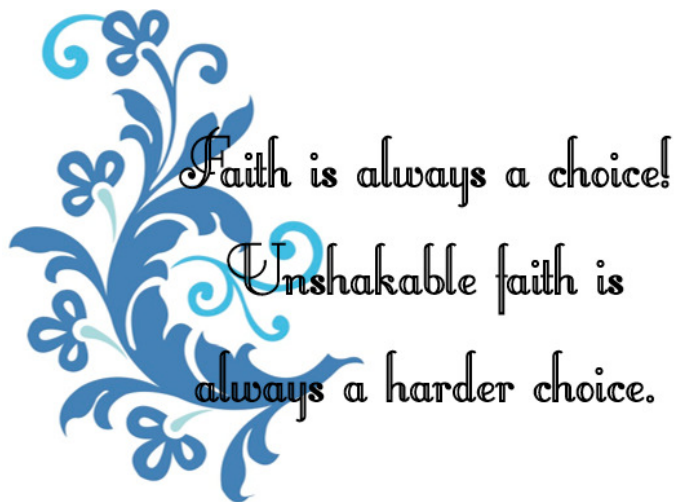
Ruth 1:8-11: (NRSV) ⁸But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, go back each of you to your mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹The LORD grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband. Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. ¹⁰They said to her, no, we will return with you to your people. ¹¹But Naomi said, turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husbands?

This was an easily defined decision. Literally, she could go either one direction with Naomi or the other without her with no subtle in-between. We will continue this story later.

Sometimes the crossroad is outlined by history:

Joshua 24:14: (NASB) Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.

We will continue this story later as well.



Faith is not a feeling; rather, it is a decision to live a certain way based on our understanding.

We can tell if we know there are crossroads by the questions we ask:

Habakkuk 1:1-4: (NASB) ¹The oracle which Habakkuk the prophet saw. ²How long, O LORD, will I call for help, and You will not hear? I cry out to You, Violence! Yet You do not save.

Sometimes we think that unshakable faith never doubts. Here we see that unshakable faith is courageous enough to ask the hard questions that provoked its doubt, expecting a powerful answer, for our vision of the road before us is truly imperfect and therefore fuzzy.

Unshakable faith verbalizes to God with brutal honesty what we see!

³Why do You make me see iniquity, and cause me to look on wickedness? Yes, destruction and violence are before me; Strife exists and contention arises. ⁴Therefore the law is ignored and justice is never upheld. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore justice comes out perverted.

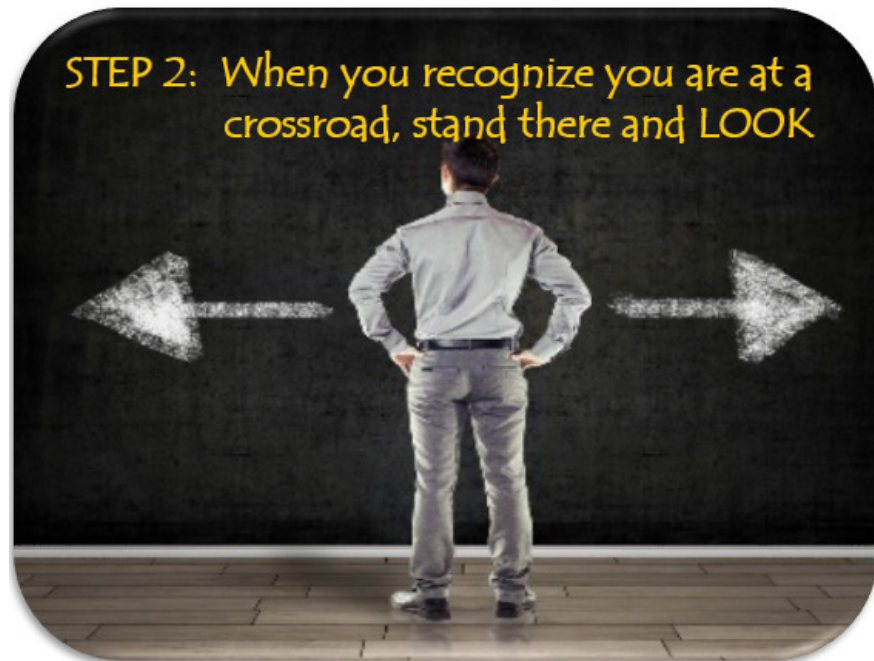
More questions, now in a challenging fashion: "Do You see how bad this world is?!"

Habakkuk 1:12-13: (NASB) ¹²Are You not from everlasting, O LORD, my God, my Holy One? We will not die. You, O LORD, have appointed them to judge; And You, O Rock, have established them to correct. ¹³Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, and You can not look on wickedness with favor. Why do You look with favor on those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up those more righteous than they?

Habakkuk: "You ARE God, so help me understand!" These are the same questions people ask today, but more out of desperation than faith: Why does God permit evil? Why do bad things happen to good people?



Does having unshakable faith mean you automatically know which road to take?



To “look” means to perceive; to take a breath, put away feelings and bring out our godly vision. The Hebrew word, *Seleh*, used in the Old Testament Psalms means to pause and consider what was just spoken so you find what you need to move forward.

Back to Ruth and Naomi:

Ruth 1:12-15: (NRSV) ¹²Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons, ¹³would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the LORD has turned against me.

Naomi makes the two young women truly consider what is at stake.

¹⁴Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. ¹⁵So she said see your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.

Naomi continues to give Ruth a way out, assuring she will decide what to do rather than just follow a feeling.



A caller from Connecticut suggests: Luke 18:8: ...However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth? No one can make you feel inferior without your consent. We strive to have the same composure Jesus had when he was in front of Pilate.



It is often after tragic events that our standing and looking are most important...

Inner peace a process - one year later, *CBC Heather Hiscox interview with Marc Woerlen*

- (Interviewer) *With the beard, his outward appearance is different now. But his inner calm, his unshakable faith, are just the same.*
- (Marc) *I have a peace that...there's no words for it. I don't know how else to be in my situation, right?*
- (Interviewer) *How long did it take for you to come to that peaceful place?*
- (Marc) *Oh, it's an ongoing process. You know, every day...you know, there's some times that are tougher to go through than others, so you remind yourself that continually.*

Sometimes you can lose that peace or the circumstances of the moment get to you - that is human nature. The key to unshakable faith is having the ability to look down the road and see something solid. That becomes "home base" for you.

Many would blame God and lose their faith after such a tragedy. The very reason people blame God is the reason we should have rest and peace in God.

Back to Joshua:

Joshua 24:15: (NASB) *If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve...*

What is *agreeable in our sight* when we stand at a crossroad? What do we see that provokes us to move one direction or another?

Here is another example of faith in adversity...

A crossroad at which someone technically did not even have a right to stand and yet, unshakable faith delivers!

Matthew 15:22-28: (NASB) ²²*And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed. ²³But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and implored him, saying; send her away, because she keeps shouting at us. ²⁴But he answered and said, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ²⁵But she came and began to bow down before him, saying, Lord, help me! ²⁶And he answered and said, it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. ²⁷But she said, yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs, which fall from their masters' table. ²⁸Then Jesus said to her, O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish. And her daughter was healed at once.*

Jesus engages the woman - he tests her faith and she is unshakable!



"Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)" (Verse 2), Hillsong cover by Sarah Reeves

Your grace abounds in deepest waters
Your sovereign hand will be my guide
Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me
You've never failed and You won't start now



I will call upon Your Name
And keep my eyes above the waves
When oceans rise
My soul will rest in Your embrace
For I am Yours and You are mine

Hebrews 11:6: (NASB) *And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.*



What observations do we have so far about developing unshakable faith?

- Recognize the Crossroads of Faith in our lives.
- Stop, breathe and look at the crossroad - slow yourself down, because faith is never in a hurry!



The *ancient paths* are NOT necessarily the traditional paths; rather, they are the paths of those who walked in the blessing of the Almighty.

Do not confuse *ancient paths* with tradition. Sometimes they can be the same, but more often than not, they are different. We have to go to the source - the Old and New Testaments.

Back to Ruth and Naomi:

Ruth 1:16: (NRSV) *But Ruth said, do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God.*

Ruth decided based upon her understanding of God through Naomi and not on her own heritage. She left behind the gods of her past and clung to the God Naomi proclaimed. She left behind tradition and found something stronger.



Back to Joshua:

Joshua 24:15: (NASB) ...whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Human nature is SO inclined to always look for a new way or an untried way, and sometimes this is good. However, when it comes down to the deepest core values of life, the ancient ways of God Almighty always ring true.



Moments of reality - one year later, CBC Heather Hiscox interview with Marc Woerlen

- (Interviewer) People who suffer a loss, and not nearly even as total a loss as yours has been, often talk about the initial stages of being almost like in a dream or a very surreal or unreal situation. And then it becomes real to them at a certain moment. For you, what was the moment?
- You never know when it hits you or where it hits you. There's so many different scenarios when you're out and about doing your daily life, and then you realize you could be at McDonalds having a hamburger when there's a family right across the table from you, and you realize: that's what it was like.

Isaiah 26:3: (NASB) The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You.



"Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)" (Verse 3), Hillsong cover by Sarah Reeves

Spirit, lead me where my trust is without borders
Let me walk upon the waters
Wherever You would call me

Take me deeper than my feet could ever wander
And my faith will be made stronger
In the presence of my Savior

Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God. - Corrie ten Boom

We can truly know which path is the "ancient one" by taking humanity out of the way:

1 Corinthians 2:3-5: (NASB) ³I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, ⁴and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

The Apostle Paul made sure they were not following the wisdom of a man but instead the wisdom of God. Tradition is resting our faith in the power of men. The "good way" of the ancient paths is the power of God!



The account of Jesus and the father of a possessed young man:

Mark 9:23-24: (NRSV) ²³*Jesus said to him, if you are able! All things can be done for the one who believes.* ²⁴*Immediately the father of the child cried out, I believe; help my unbelief!*

So, to develop an unshakable faith requires us to - through humility - acknowledge where we are weak, all the while focusing on the strength we can access through our Lord!



Steve and Robin are CQ listeners from New York who came to visit the studio today!

Unshakable faith can be displayed by being asked to do what is different (to say the least!):

Hebrews 11:7: (NASB) *By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.*

God saw Noah's faith and trusted him with the task of preserving life in the face of worldwide judgment. God had to find the right man with the right faith.

What does it mean to "walk the walk" of unshakable faith?



A caller from the Philippines suggests: Hebrews 11:6: *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

I am blind, so I walk by faith and not by sight. I learn from the Bible how the Ancient Worthies (those described in Hebrews 11) have showed us how to walk by faith and trust that God will do what He plans. Watching Israel and tracing history is faith-strengthening.

Rest for our souls in faith does not necessarily mean ease of life; rather, it is a rest in knowing that you are walking in the will of God. Life does not become easy with unshakable faith, but it does become more peaceful.

Psalms 119:105: (NASB) *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*



STEP 4: Walk the "ancient paths" for there you find the rest of faith...

 Faith in God and His plan - one year later, *CBC Heather Hiscox interview with Marc Woerlen*

- (Interviewer) When we met last year, we talked often about how prayer was sustaining you, and you said to me a year ago that this test had in fact reinforced - had strengthened - your faith. Is that the same thing today?
- (Marc) Most definitely, yeah. If it wouldn't be for my faith, I would be in a mental ward.
- (Interviewer) Have there been times, though, in this past year where you've been angry at God or have questioned His plan?
- (Marc) I've never been angry with God right from the first day, but we do sometimes wonder why He got...
- (Interviewer) Why you?
- (Marc) Why...yeah, exactly.
- (Interviewer) And have you come to be able to answer that, for yourself?
- (Marc) No, I don't know why He's picked me for the situation, but I'm at peace about it.

"Faithless is he that says farewell when the road darkens."
-J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

Back to Ruth and Naomi:

Ruth 1:17-18,22: (NRSV) ¹⁷Where you die, I will die—there will I be buried. May the LORD do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you! ¹⁸When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her... ²²So Naomi returned together with Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, who came back with her from the country of Moab. They came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Ruth truly does walk the walk of unshakable faith, standing against what would have been natural. But she saw something deeper and stronger, and therefore more desirable for her life.



A caller from Connecticut suggests: John 4:52,53: *The fever left him yesterday about one in the afternoon. Just at that time, Jesus had said to him, your son will live. The moment of faith is the moment of choice. It is the moment of change. At each moment, we have choices.*

The Christian chooses trusting God. 1 Peter 1:8: *Even though you do not see him now, yet believe in him. In a problem, our steps follow. But the faith choice is the real action, the action that immediately puts us in Christ. We may not see immediately, but we know. Matthew 8:13: Jesus said let it be done to you according to your faith, and the servant was healed in that hour.*

Back to Joshua:

Joshua 24:16-17: (NASB) ¹⁶*The people answered and said, far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; ¹⁷for the LORD our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and who did these great signs in our sight and preserved us through all the way in which we went and among all the peoples through whose midst we passed.*

The people of Israel at this time displayed unshakable faith based upon what they knew to be true. How are WE doing with that...?



A caller from Tennessee suggests: The book of Hebrews was written to encourage the early Christian community. Our Bible is like our barbell. We can lift it, work out with it; the Lord doesn't tell us to believe just for belief's sake. He gives us examples, like the "ancient paths," the ancient people of faith like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Noah, Moses and Jesus. These are examples to us of how to live in faith and what our faith should look like. If we practice, read and lift the Bible up, when we come to our crossroads (which in my case is like a 10-lane intersection!) then we have the strength of faith to do what it takes with God's help.

Walking the walk of unshakable faith:

1 Corinthians 16:13-14: (NASB) ¹³*Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. ¹⁴Let all that you do be done in love.*

1 Peter 5:8-9: (NASB) ⁸*Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.*

James 1:2-4: (NASB) ²*Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

A comparison between unshakable and untraceable faith:

1 Kings 18:20-22: (NASB) ²⁰*So Ahab sent a message among all the sons of Israel and brought the prophets together at Mount Carmel. ²¹Elijah came near to all the people and said, how long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him. But the people did not answer him a word. ²²Then Elijah said to the people, I alone am left a prophet of the LORD, but Baal's prophets are 450 men.*



What does a mature and unshakable faith look like?



What do you live for now - one year later, CBC Heather Hiscox interview with Marc Woerlen

- (Interviewer) You're able to smile, though. What has brought you happiness in this past year?
- (Marc) There are many things. I can still look around and see many happy children, and I've got lots of family. There's lots of kids in my extended family still, and I've got lots of friends. Life is still good, you know? I'm not living in depression.
- (Interviewer) So what, then, do you live for now?
- (Marc) I ask myself that too sometimes. Yeah, well, just to continue to be faithful.

Faith needs to drive us.

Matthew 12:20: (NASB) *A battered reed he will not break off, and a smoldering wick he will not put out until he leads forth justice to victory. And in His name the Gentiles will hope.*



God knows how fragile we are.

Remember the example from the beginning of the program of Peter walking on water? This was not a failed faith; it was merely an immature and untested faith that needed work.

Peter and the Apostles, after Pentecost at the Crossroad of Contradiction:

Acts 5:17-39: (NASB) *¹⁷But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates...and they were filled with jealousy. ¹⁸They laid hands on the apostles and put them in a public jail. ¹⁹But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said, ²⁰go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life. ²¹Upon hearing this, they entered into the temple about daybreak and began to teach.*

Would he still preach even though he was just thrown in jail?

Peter and the Apostles at the Crossroad of Holiness vs. Convenience:

Now when the high priest and his associates came... and sent orders to the prison house for them to be brought. ²²But the officers who came did not find them in the prison; and they returned and reported back... ²⁵But someone came and reported to them, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people! ²⁶Then the captain went along with the officers... ²⁷When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them, ²⁸saying, we gave you strict orders not to continue teaching



in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. ²⁹But Peter and the apostles answered, **We must obey God rather than men.** ³⁰The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging him on a cross. ³¹He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins...

Physically we want convenience, but Peter's faith had grown substantially. This brings the Pharisees to a crossroad...!

³³But when they heard this, they were cut to the quick and intended to kill them. ³⁴But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law, respected by all the people, stood up in the Council and gave orders to put the men outside for a short time. ³⁵And he said to them, men of Israel, take care what you propose to do with these men. ³⁶For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody... ³⁷After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census and drew away some people after him; he too perished, and all those who followed him were scattered. ³⁸So in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown; ³⁹but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God.

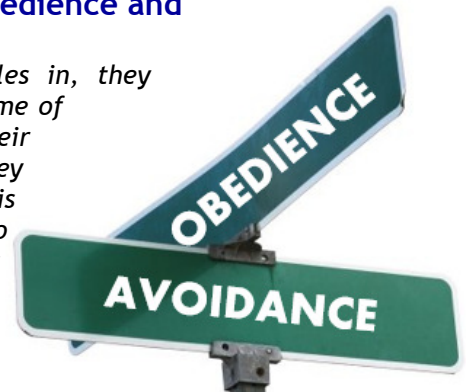


"Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)" (Verse 4), Hillsong cover by Sarah Reeves

I will call upon Your Name
Keep my eyes above the waves
My soul will rest in Your embrace
For I am Yours and You are mine.

Peter and the Apostles at the Crossroad of Obedience and Avoidance:

⁴⁰They took his advice; and after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and then released them. ⁴¹So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for his name. ⁴²And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.



A life of faith will inevitably bring us to countless crossroads. It is only through humility, prayer, understanding and grace that we can wisely choose the ancient paths of faith and peace...

So, how do we develop unshakable faith?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!

And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!





Jeremiah 6:16: (NRSV) Thus says the LORD: Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls...

A few more thoughts on faith:

Faith develops through observation and application:

Matthew 8:23-27: (NASB) ²³When he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus himself was asleep. ²⁵And they came to him and woke him, saying, save us, Lord; we are perishing! ²⁶He said to them, why are you afraid, you men of little faith? Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm. ²⁷The men were amazed, and said, what kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?

The Bible teaches us to prove our faith and NOT be credulous:

2 Timothy 2:15: (NKJV) Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22: (NKJV) ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise prophecies. ²¹Test all things; hold fast what is good. ²²Abstain from every form of evil.

Faith develops through testing:

James 1:2-8: (NRSV) ²My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; ⁴and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing. ⁵If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. ⁶But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind; ⁷the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸for the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord.



Jude 1:3: (KJV) *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*

1 Peter 5:7-9: (KJV) *⁷Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. ⁸Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: ⁹Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

The result of a developed faith:

2 Timothy 4:6-8: (NASB) *⁶For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; ⁸in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

A few faith-strengthening areas of Scripture - these are things that were not known by mankind at the time they were written, therefore such knowledge could have only come down from above.

Meteorology: Water is recycled in the earth's water cycle:

Job 36:27-29: (NRSV) *²⁷For he draws up the drops of water; he distills his mist in rain, ²⁸which the skies pour down and drop upon mortals abundantly. ²⁹Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, the thunderings of his pavilion?*

Oceanography: The ocean currents:

Psalms 8:8: (NRSV) *The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.*

Astronomy: The sun moves around in an orbit:

Psalms 19:4-6: (NRSV) *⁴Yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun, ⁵which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy. ⁶Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hid from its heat.*

The earth is round - and it has an atmosphere:

Isaiah 40:22: (NRSV) *It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in.*

The Pleiades - six stars visible, yet seven mentioned:

Amos 5:8: (KJV) *Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name:*

A very direct prophecy:

Ezekiel 37:1-5,11: (NRSV) *¹The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, mortal, can these bones live? I answered, O Lord GOD, you know. ⁴Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live... ¹¹Then he said to me, mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.*



Finally, the words to the song we played:



Oceans (Where Feet May Fail), Hillsong cover by Sarah Reeves

You called me out upon the waters
The great unknown
Where feet may fail
And there I find you in the mystery
In oceans deep
My faith will stand

And I will call upon your name
And keep my eyes above the waves
When oceans rise
My soul will rest in your embrace
I am yours and you are mine.

Your grace abounds in deepest waters
Your sov'reign hand will be my guide
Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me
You've never failed and You won't start now

So I will call upon Your name
And keep my eyes above the waves
When oceans rise
My soul will rest in your embrace
For I am yours and you are mine.

Oh You're my God and You are mine...

Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders
Let me walk upon the waters
Wherever you would call me
Take me deeper than my feet could ever wander
And my faith will be made stronger
In the presence of my Savior

(Repeated a number of times)

I will call upon your name
Keep my eyes above the waves
My soul will rest in your embrace
I am Yours and You are mine