

Enjoying God's Best

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Hebrews 3:19-4:3

So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. 4:1 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. 3 For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'" although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

They could not enter in to the Promised Land because of unbelief. The writer to the Hebrews is speaking of their forefathers, who, in the wilderness after the Egyptian deliverance, could not make it all the way into the Promised Land. If you would have asked any one of the Hebrews following Moses, "Do you have faith? Do you believe God?" what do you think the answer would have been? Do you think any of them would have said, "No, we don't have any faith. We can't trust this God"? Not all; their answer would have been completely different. "Yes, we believe God! Yes, we're trusting God. We have faith in God."

How would you answer that question? Would you, like Israel, insist that you have faith in God? Do you believe in God? And if so, what are you trusting God for at this present moment? What are three things you're trusting God for knowing if He doesn't come through you will fail? Can you quickly name three things? How about just one thing you believe God to come through for you? Those who can give an honest answer of something specific they are believing God for are practicing faith. These are the ones trusting and depending on God. For those of us going through our memory banks trying to find at least one thing we're believing God for, I want to challenge—are you truly, sincerely trusting the Lord?

It's interesting that the Israelites did have enough faith to get out of Egypt. At some point along the way they all believed God enough to trust that they would be delivered and Moses would lead them out of slavery. Everyone here this morning, with few exceptions, would say with certainty, "I believed God to deliver me from my sins and He saved me." Very good! That's necessary. That's important. You should be able to say that. If you cannot say that right now, please look away from this preacher and look to Jesus. Look to Him and live! Believe upon Him and He will save you if you will simply put your life in His hands, turn over the controls, and give them to Him. He will save you and deliver you from the bondage that you are in. Sin is a slave master, a difficult one at that, but He will save you from it.

Most of us would say we have been saved from our slavery. But I'm asking you if you have entered into the Promised Land? God saved Israel not just from their bondage but to bring them into a good place where they could enjoy God's best. Remember this: God always saves you *from* something to something. He delivered them from Egypt only to send them into the land of promise, described as a land flowing with milk and honey. It didn't literally flow with milk and honey that was an idiom to say it was a great place, a place better than working for the Egyptians for a few cucumbers and a little bit of garlic and onion.

But in Hebrews 3:19 we see they could not enter in because of unbelief. They may have had faith to leave Egypt but they did not have faith to get into the Promised Land. The Hebrews did not exercise the kind of faith necessary to get into the Promised Land. Yet, if asked at any time during the 40-year trek through the wilderness if they had faith, they would affirm they did. I want to prove to you that they did have a faith; they exercised a kind of faith that devils exercise. Why would I say that? Why don't I just leave it at what the writer of Hebrews says, "they had unbelief"? Because they did have faith, just as we all do. Everyone trusts in something. They had faith, but it was the faith of a devil because they could only trust God for what they could see. Any devil can do that. Any demon in hell can believe God when they see what He is doing. In fact, demons probably do a better job of believing because James says they will even tremble, they will shake in fear, when they see God do great things.

Can you imagine what a demon must feel when Christ sets free a person it has oppressed and kept under sin's slavery and the demon must make a quick exit? Can you imagine how fearful it must be?

It's easy to believe when you can see. What kind of faith do you have? Do you have the kind of faith that can only believe God when you see it? This is the kind of faith the children of Israel had.

Jesus puts an order to faith. First you believe then you receive. You never receive and then believe. And yet, that's the way we want it. We want to receive it so we believe it. *Lord, if You would just answer my prayer then I'll know You love me.* This is wrong; He loves you whether He answers your prayer or not. The order is faith first and receiving second. Anyone can believe God after they've received.

Let me give you some examples of Israel's see it first and then believe it kind of faith.

In Exodus 4:29 we read,

"Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel.³⁰ And Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people.³¹ So the people believed;"

Moses returned after his exile in the desert after the burning bush and announced himself as Israel's deliverer. He performed before the Israelites the miracles that he himself had witnessed

at the burning bush. He puts his hand in his bosom and it comes out leprous, then he puts it back in and it's healed. He throws down the staff and it turns into a serpent, he picks it back up and it turns back into a stick. And the people believe. I would believe too, wouldn't you? I would believe if a man threw down a stick and it turned into a cobra. I wouldn't think it was an illusion, I would think this guy has God on his side.

This reminds me of someone else in the Bible. "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." What did Jesus say when He showed Thomas the holes in His hands and scar on His side? "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." That's the kind of faith God wants. This other kind of faith that believes when it sees is the kind of stuff Satan can muster.

So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped. (Exodus 4:29-31)

I wonder how much worship goes on in churches based upon something they have seen. Today we have heard a glorious answer to prayer. We've watched a couple move out in faith and before they did they brought it to us and said, "Please pray with us, and if you feel like this is what God has said to us, confirm it, and if not, we won't do it. We believe God is in the body, God is in the church and that the church is a unit and not comprised of individuals. It's a whole organism." The church confirmed it and they stepped out in faith.

I wonder how many of you in the last month have thought, "Hmm, I wonder if God really told them to quit his job? It's been almost three months and he hasn't found a job yet. I wonder if God really did tell them that?" Or, how many of you said, "See! I knew it wasn't going to happen. I knew that was just trying to force God's hand, or trying to be spiritual. Kudos to them, they're trying, but I knew it wouldn't work." But today you heard it and were able to worship. How much more were those who believed it before they saw it come to pass able to worship? Those who see it and believe it before they receive it are already in a state of worship. There is little to no worship in believing after you receive.

Moses and Aaron go to Pharaoh and say, "Let My people go." Pharaoh gets angry and says they have too much idle time, so he tells them to gather their own straw but they better not miss one brick's tally. He wanted the same amount of bricks. Then in chapter five verse 20, we read that the children of Israel really did not believe Moses when he said he was sent by God to deliver them. They rejected God's servant and deliverer and blamed Moses for their problems.

"Then, as they came out from Pharaoh, they met Moses and Aaron who stood there to meet them. ²¹ And they said to them, "Let the LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us abhorrent in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us.""

They could only believe what they could see. They saw the miracles the day Moses announced it but on this day all they could see was Pharaoh increasing their workload and they no longer believed Moses. When you only believe what you can see, your faith will fluctuate from day to day.

I know of what I speak because my faith is too often tied to what I see. One day God gives you some assurance about something and you can say, "Thank You, Father. It's going to happen!" The next day Satan throws his fiery darts right at your faith and your faith shrivels and you begin to doubt. You're not listening to a man of great faith, you're listening to a man of weak faith struggling to grow, unsatisfied with his current faith. Karen and I have told you what we're believing God for—a new home—and there's been times when I knew that I knew that I knew it was going to happen and then there were days I thought, "Where did that idea come from? This is crazy! God doesn't do those kinds of things, especially for me."

But then the Lord gently reminds me through His word,

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." (James 1:5-8)

I'm double-minded sometimes. I'm confessing to you. There's days my faith is strong and there's days my faith is almost nonexistent and it's hard to believe God. I'm like these people; I'm believing what I see or what I can feel. That's not the kind of faith that pleases God. That's the kind of faith that any sinner can exercise.

Once again the Israelites saw God's mighty hand deliver them by sending the 10 plagues. Before the tenth plague came they knew God was going to deliver them. There was no doubt. Why? They could see Egypt being brought to its knees right before their very own—eyes. They could believe it because they were watching it! On the night before they left they were excited. They had their garments and bags packed; they had their houses cleaned out and shoes on and were ready to go. Why? Because they could see it. Therefore they believed it.

They left Egypt and a few days later they get to the Red Sea and what happened? There was an impassable sea in front of them and the Egyptian army behind them and what do the Israelites say to Moses? Read it in Exodus 14:11-12.

"Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? ¹² Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.'" (Exodus 14:11-12)

Here we see they had rebuffed Moses at the very beginning, “is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, ‘Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?’” “Let the status quo remain. If we start thinking deliverance, we’re only going to get ourselves killed.” What was going on with their faith? Just a few days earlier they had believed but now they can’t trust Moses. They reject the idea that God has spoken to Moses and led him this far. They let what they saw determine their faith. All they could see was an impassable Red Sea and an Egyptian army.

But once again they saw God’s mighty hand deliver them in the parting of the Red Sea. What happened then? They believed. They had to believe in order to walk between those two walls of water, and then when they saw God destroy the entire army, the Bible says they started to sing and dance and praise the Lord.

However, with all their praise they were not believing *God*, they only believed what they had seen. There is a huge difference.

You can think you have faith in God, but the truth is you only believe what your eyes witness. You can even worship and think you’re worshipping because of your faith in God but your faith is not in Him but in what you saw Him do. How many people in our churches today aren’t converted because they believed something they saw and not the God who did it? They saw something, they heard something, and they believed it but they didn’t put their confidence in God. The Israelites saw God do this miracle and they believed what they saw and three days later at Marah complained again this time because God had led them to a place where there was no fresh water. After the miracle of sweetening the water, what did they do? They all began to drink and then they believed because they could taste the difference.

We could keep going with this because there’s at least 10 times we see this pattern over and over again in the wilderness. But finally, God leads them to Mount Sinai and gives them the law and they learn the law for one year under Moses’s teaching. The tabernacle is built with all its furnishings. Then the day comes when God lifts the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night and leads them to the edge of the Promised Land.

From Kadesh-Barnea Moses sent out 12 spies, one from each tribe. The 12 spies went into Canaan to bring back a report of what they saw, but—again—they could only believe their eyes, and what did they see? Walled cities and giants.

“But the men who had gone up with him said, ‘We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.’”³² And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, ‘The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature.’³³ There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.” (Numbers 13:31-33)

What was their faith built upon? What they saw. They didn't believe, but yet they did believe, did they not? They didn't believe God but they believed what they could see, which is not the kind of faith that pleases God. They walked in essence by sight and not by faith.

How much of our walk as Christians is exactly the same? We think we believe God but we're not because we walk by what we see and not by what is invisible. Faith has this amazing ability to take that which is invisible and render it as real as what you can see. That's what faith does. Faith takes something you cannot possibly explain, see, taste, or touch, and makes it real. We read about it at the beginning of the service.

"Faith is the substance of the things hoped for..."

Hope is a part of faith; it's not the totality of it. Faith hopes for things to come. Faith hopes but it's more than hope, it's the very substance of that thing you're hoping for. In other words, when you really believe God, *you know that you know* you already have what you've asked God for. Your faith causes you to hold it in your heart. God puts the reality of that thing in your heart. The substance, the reality, the essence of that thing is deposited within your spirit so you know, believe, trust, and are convinced and assured, that thing will come to pass.

"...the evidence of things not seen."

The *evidence*. If you see something it doesn't require faith. That's the point. Faith always sees the invisible as visible. How many of you have seen Jesus resurrected with your physical eyes? None of us have. How many of you have heard His literal, audible voice with your ears? None of us have. How then can you believe He arose from the dead? The answer is because faith makes it real. It doesn't make something unreal real. Don't misunderstand. It takes that which is real, though not visible to the human eye, and makes it real. Listen to me, if you ask God for something but you really don't believe it, you can't see it in your heart, you don't possess it in your heart, but nonetheless it comes to pass anyway—and I've had God do that, in spite of my unbelief—so that now you can believe it, that is not faith that pleases God. You only believe because you've got it in your hand. But that doesn't honor God. That doesn't show that God is gracious or good or powerful. When a person believes God is good and gracious, he or she will believe God in their heart before they possess it in their hands. This honors God because it is pure faith in God Himself and not what He does, and that after the fact.

Here is what glorifies God: when you can trust Him for something that He has promised, believing it to be real, when you have no other proof or evidence other than God said it. It does not bother you no one believes you when you tell them what you are trusting God for because you know what God has said. You have the reality in your heart. It is this that glorifies our God. And when God does bring it to pass, then others will see that God is faithful. But they will not be commended by God as having faith because they believed only what they saw.

How does this process work? First, God lets you know what His will is and although you can't see it or taste it, you know it's real. You can't explain it to anybody, you just *know*. It's intuitive; like a sixth sense. "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God," and when that word speaks, a substance is created in your soul. The evidence is there. Then you publically confess it to someone. If you don't publically confess it, do you know what can happen? A few days later Satan will begin to throw his fiery darts at you and you can start doubting and nobody will know it. God wants you to confess that thing so you are now in a position where you can't renege. But secondly, He wants you to confess it to others so that when He does it He gets all the glory. You're actually demonstrating the greatness of God. That's why God brings challenges into your life.

God's goal for His children is to increase their faith—He is challenging your faith all the time. Every one of you ought to be able to name one thing you believe God for and if He doesn't come through you're going to fail. If you're not trusting God in this fashion, then you're walking by sight and not cooperating by faith with the Lord, because He will challenge you to believe.

How many of you have challenges, difficulties, or issues right now? You have problems that are serious. That is God's main way of speaking to you and directing your life. When God introduces a problem into your life He's talking to you right then. By the way, it's not Satan that is responsible for our difficulties. He may be the tool or instrument God uses to introduce problems, but truly it's God that brings problems into your life.

How many of you have wondered, "Why doesn't God talk to me?" and you've got problems galore? God's been talking, you've just been too dull of hearing to understand it was God. I don't mean to be rude but let me just say it—you've been ignorant because you didn't know the truth. You've been looking at problems and saying, "That's the devil. That's bad. This is not good." And God's Word says every problem is God creating a need in your life so you can find His supply.

Every problem, every need in your life is God creating a vacuum in your life that only He can fill. He's trying to connect you with His provision. As we've learned, God always creates the supply before He creates the need. So if you've got a need God already has the solution.

For example, which came first, air or lungs to breathe the air? Air. The provision was made before the need.

What came first, food or the stomach to eat the food? Food. Before God created man, He created all the things he would need to survive. God was establishing precedence. He always creates the provision before He allows the need to arise. The need is His way connecting you with what He's already created to supply the need.

Which came first, the first Adam or the last Adam? Be careful with those words. Who is the last Adam? Jesus. Who came first, Adam or Jesus? Jesus. What was Adam's great need after he ate out of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? A Savior—already slain from the foundation of the world! This is the way God works.

If you have to see in order to believe, you're sunk. That's not the way God works. But that's what the children of Israel were doing. They could only believe what they could see after God had done it. Therefore God puts the reality of something you cannot see into your heart so that you might believe Him, so that when He does it He is glorified and your faith is strengthened and the kingdom is advanced.

You must see that people creating programs and institutions do not advance the kingdom of God. The kingdom is advanced when the King's reign and influence is projected through His people by faith. "For whatever is not of faith is sin." "For without faith it's impossible to please God." You say, "But I do believe God," OK, let me ask you this: don't you walk mostly by sight rather than faith? Let me ask it a different way, Do you listen to the Holy Spirit for His leadership or do you do what you think you should do for God? Just because you don't transgress some commandment and actually live obedient lives does not mean you're exercising faith. You say, "Isn't that what faith does?" No.

You're not living by faith if you're simply not transgressing a command but doing what you think you ought to do in order to please God. That's not walking by faith, that's walking by flesh, by sight.

The Christian life isn't about sin management. It's not about doing less sinning and more keeping of the commandments. That's only a part of what God has come to do. The biggest part of the Christian life is learning to obey God as God leads—by the Spirit. This is what walking by the Spirit is about. If you think this is a little too spooky or a little too subjective for you, tell me how you read your Bibles? Paul made it very clear to the Galatians that if you walk in the Spirit you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. What does "walking in the Spirit" mean? It means to be governed and influenced by Him. Personally. He is a personal God who has personal interest in you because you belong to Him. "You've been bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and spirit which are both God's." They belong to Him.

I'm not out to get you to believe Him necessarily for physical things, although God will often use that to help your faith, but I'm talking about enjoying God's best.

If you're just managing your sin and getting up everyday and going through your routines, that's not walking by faith. God wants to lead you and to lead you He goes before you and when He goes before you He will not always lead in the same way. In fact, I guarantee you He will not lead you in the same way everyday. But what happens to us, especially here in America? We've been automated to go through every day the same way. Isn't it true? You get up at basically the same time and you do basically the same things at certain times of the day so that by the time you've ended your day, you've done what you normally do everyday and you didn't have to think much about it. You're automated, you know what to do, and you know how to do it. I'm telling you that is not walking by faith but by sight.

What pleases God is when you surrender yourself to walk with Him. "The just shall *live* by faith." It doesn't say, "the just get saved by faith" it says "the just *live by faith*." That means from the mo-

ment you get up to the moment you fall asleep at night, every moment is to be led by the Spirit in an ongoing personal conversation with God, desperately depending upon Him. He may lead you to do the exact same thing every day but one day He's going to test you, and you won't hear His voice if you're in automatic mode, and not consulting or acknowledging God. That's exactly where the Israelites were.

If a man or woman knows what to do and does it in his or her own strength without looking to God for grace or help, then he or she is walking in the flesh and not in the Spirit. I cannot tell you how many times I've come to this pulpit and knew what to do, I knew what to say, and I did it—and God was not pleased because it wasn't done by faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Living your life, even a good, moral life, is not pleasing to Him if it's not by faith. And it can only be by faith, walking with Him, hearing Him as He goes before you and leads you.

Some of you are skeptical of this saying, "Wait a minute. I can recall times when I've exercised faith in God. I remember in great times of crisis I called upon the Lord and saw God's great power on my behalf." How often have those times been? Aren't they often rare and infrequent? What were you doing the rest of the time? Those moments don't prove you are walking by faith.

Here's what often happens in a Christian's life. God is working to get you to understand how to live by faith. Therefore, He'll bring a crisis into your life, something you cannot manage on your own, and something you can't think or manipulate your way out of it. He gets you into a crisis where no one can help you and you can't help yourself. When you finally resolve that this problem is out of your reach, you do the last thing you know to do—call out to God. You pray, seek God, maybe even fast, and finally you see God come through. It was miraculous! Then you think, "Ah, that proves I'm a man or woman of faith! I know how to trust God!" No, it doesn't. Unless you trust Him day by day and not just in a crisis, you're not walking by faith.

The Hebrews would cry out to God in the crisis, and then after they saw God deliver them they believed it was because of their faith. But as I have proved their faith was only believing what they could see and not faith in God. As soon as the crisis was over they continued to live by sight and not by faith.

We must not do the mundane things in life without faith in God, yet we do because we know how to do them and it takes no faith whatsoever to go through the motions. How much of your life is lived like that? Whatever the answer is, that's the amount of your life lived without faith and whatever is lived without faith is displeasing to the Lord. I don't say that to condemn you. I say that to wake us up as God is waking Karen and I up.

You think I'm reading your spiritual mail right now, but do you know how I'm able to preach so pointedly like this? Because I'm living this. God is doing this to me. He's put something in front of me and told me He's going to come through and now I've got to believe or not believe. If I'm to have faith in God that pleases Him, I've got to trust Him before I receive. There was a point in time just a few short years ago when I prayed, "Lord, if You just give me the money, then I can go

buy a house.” I thought that was being spiritual. I thought that’s how it worked. *I’ll believe You for the money and then I can go buy a house.* But I really wasn’t believing God for the money, therefore, what I was really saying is, “Lord, when I see the money, then I will be able to believe you for a house.” The problem with that kind of faith is that it’s waiting to receive before I believe—just the opposite of walking by faith. God has had to put me through this process and I’m telling you I haven’t always enjoyed what I’ve discovered about me. My faith hasn’t been as strong as I thought.

When I came here 21 years ago we were scheduled to preach a revival meeting. It was November 7, 1993. Three times that summer three different people from the pulpit committee had asked me to consider the church and I turned them down all three times. That November we were driving down Lydon Road—I can tell you the exact spot—when Karen turns to me and says, “You know this is where God wants us, don’t you?” I almost angrily said, “Yes, I know. I just don’t want to.” We saw God do great things that week but He had to prove to me He could do great things here. Between that time and two weeks later when I met with the pulpit committee, God did something in my soul so that I knew that I knew this is where I was supposed to be.

God convinced me so much that on the morning we came to candidate and two of the deacons on the pulpit committee came to me and said, “Brother Michael, we don’t think you’re going to get the vote today. We know there’s been a person campaigning against you and we think he’s got enough support to overthrow the percentage you need.” I didn’t bat an eye. It didn’t bother me a bit. I said, “Brothers, watch what God does today. God can take anybody who is going to vote ‘no’ and make they have an upset stomach so they can’t make it tonight. God’s told us we’re going to be here and so we’re going to be here. It’s already done.” Through a series of events I won’t go into, we got 91 percent of the vote. More than we needed. I had that kind of confidence. *I knew that I knew* because God had spoken it to me and it was sure. But I’m telling you, on some things He’s told me I’ve not been so sure. It’s been difficult and hard to maintain a faith position.

God is showing me that a lot of my life I live out of the routine, just going through the motions in this automated society. Do you know what I mean? In this automated, ritualistic life—there’s no faith because we don’t need to trust God for anything. We can get up and do our jobs and go back home and it’s done, and because we didn’t do anything bad—we even read our Bibles and prayed and did good things—we think we have walked by faith. God is showing us that’s not walking by faith, it’s walking by the flesh, it just happens to be manifested in a good way.

I want to talk about enjoying God’s best and I’m running out of time. God had led the Israelites not just to get them out of bondage but to give them a good life.

In Deuteronomy 12 we see Moses is going to die and will not get to go with them into the Promised Land. He rehearses the last 40 years and says to them in verse seven,

“And there you shall eat before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households, in which the Lord your God has blessed you. 8 “You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes— 9 for

as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the Lord your God is giving you.”
(Deuteronomy 12:7-9)

I want you to see a couple of things here.

What was God’s intention for them in the Promised Land? That they should eat before the Lord their God and rejoice. Beloved, entering the Promised Land is not about entering heaven. I know the hymnal has a lot of songs saying the Promised Land, Canaan, is heaven but that is hymnology not biblical theology. Canaan does not represent heaven in the Bible. Canaan represents the Christian life lived under the power of the Spirit through faith. In other words, a victorious life. Let me give you one reason why Canaan cannot represent heaven. When they went into the Canaan land, what did they have to do for the first few years? They had to fight, war, and battle to take the land. We are not going to have to lift one finger to get into heaven—Jesus has already done it. We don’t have to fight to get into heaven. We have to strive to enter the kingdom but we are in the kingdom. Those who are saved are already in! Canaan is representing the Christian life lived under the power of the Spirit through faith.

That means a good life. Does it mean a mansion and three or four cars and boats and exotic vacations and big bank accounts? No, not necessarily. In fact, it really doesn’t have anything to do with your material surroundings. It means that you’re able to enjoy Jesus for all He is for us. That’s better than mansions and exotic vacations and boats and cars. It’s better than anything this world offers you. If that doesn’t excite or attract you, then I have to ask if you’re really a Christian? You should ask yourself that. Christians should be saying, “I could care less about this world. What I want is to have all that God intends for me to have. I want to walk in faith and trust God to see His power manifested in my life. I’m tired of living a mundane, routine, ordinary life. I want to feed off Jesus.”

The Bible says in this land of Canaan they would go in and eat vineyards they had not planted, bread they had not sown, and live in houses they had not built. That is a picture of the Christian life. Jesus has paid it all! He has placed Himself as our substitute and He’s done all that righteousness requires of us so that we can eat off of Him.

This is what the people in John six couldn’t understand when they were wanting welfare, another free meal, “Show us the bread of heaven.” “I am the Bread of Heaven,” Jesus said. “I’m better than what Moses gave your forefathers. Eat My body and drink My blood.” And they looked at Him like He was crazy. “You don’t eat somebody’s flesh or drink their blood. He is crazy!” they said. But Jesus wasn’t meaning that at all. A person is physically sustained by what he ingests. Jesus was stating metaphorically that the way one is spiritually sustained is by feasting on nothing more than Jesus. He is your constant diet. You’re receiving from Him because He is the good shepherd, leading you out, speaking to you, directing you.

“Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:17)

*“Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.”
(Matthew 4:4)*

Friends, God is speaking to His people all the time but we're so dull of heart and not inclined to obey, therefore we cannot hear. If your Christian life seems to be boring and dull and mundane, it's not God's fault. He didn't call you into that. It's your fault because you're not trusting Him for better. Again, this has nothing to do with houses or health and wealth and prosperity, this is about being able to live victorious. This is about living a sanctified life, a life that enjoys the fruit that God has intended and already provided.

The second thing I want you to see is this:

“You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes—“ (Deuteronomy 12:8)

Moses pegs them: *Here's the problem. You're doing what you think is right.* How many times that has been true in my life, even in the ministry. Doing what I thought was right, doing what I was trained to do, doing what the books told me to do. That's doing what is right according to my own eyes. When you live your life according to what is right in your own eyes, even if it's good and moral, your faith will nosedive. It will weaken and shrivel. Let me explain why that's true.

Sin is conceived by imagination. Are you with me? Desire then, from that imagination, is enticed by demonic suggestion, we see that in James 1:14-15. Then desire will then turn to intent. You intend to do what you imagined and thought about and desired and intent turns into action and action creates a memory. When you begin to walk down the corridors of your mind there are memories hanging like pictures on a wall. You look at a picture and what does it do? It starts to suggest things and the next thing that happens is that desire is fomented and then you take action on the desire and now you have another picture on the wall. “As a man thinketh in his mind so is he.” As we think, we are. No wonder our lives are full of sin—it's because our minds are full of memories and that is where we think.

That's why pornography is so deadly. In the corridor of your mind is that memory, that picture, that moment, that excitement, and that lust, and that foments within a person's heart. It's not just men. I read the other day that 50 percent of women under the age of 30 have visited pornographic sites. Women are becoming addicted to this. This is not just a male issue anymore. Even though you know it's wrong and say you're not going to do it again, in your mind there is that memory and that memory creates suggestion and suggestion creates desire and then intent and then action and now you've got another memory and before long you're hooked and sin has its claws in your heart.

Your problem may not be pornography, it may simply be living your ordinary life doing your jobs and doing life the way you've always done it. You manage your sins. You're not a bad person. You've done all the things you're supposed to do according to what church tells you. Today, I'm telling

you that is just like that pornographic material, it's creating a suggestion that creates action, which creates more memories. You've got to break the cycle. How do you do that? The cycle is broken when you finally realize that you're not living according to faith but according to what is right in your own eyes.

To enjoy God's best there has to be a turning point. May God give you the suggestion today that will turn intent into action and action into a good memory of faith. Turn to Him today, saying, "God, from this moment on I want to walk by faith. I don't know how to do it but I'm going to trust You, the Author and Finisher of my faith, to teach me."

If you're not a Christian, I hope you heard what I just said. All God is requiring of you today is simply to trust Him. He's not asking you to do great things. He simply says, "Trust Me and I will lead you in a way that is more exciting than any sin you've ever experienced." Sin has pleasure but only for a season and it's always short. But the pleasures of God are forever! "In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore." God will lead you on an exciting adventure. We are excited about what God is doing in our lives and the life of this church, I just can't wait for tomorrow. Every day I wake up I can't wait to see what the day holds. "What are You going to do today? What do You want me to do today? Where are You leading? Where are You directing?" I'm not looking for the routine. If that's what He wants, fine, but then I know I've done it in the power of the Spirit through faith according to His Word.

I want to encourage the saint who has heard all of this and is struggling. Let me tell you, God doesn't get you there instantaneously. He grows faith. He's already given you faith and now He grows it by exercising it. I want to encourage all of us not to be afraid to fail in the walk of faith. Don't be afraid to fail. This has been one of my problems. I hate failure. I'm fearful of it. I want to succeed, I always want to do my best, and it has kept me from God's best. God will often lead you to fail because you need to learn that what's right in your eyes is still not right to Him. He loves you enough to let you fail. Don't be discouraged over your failures; God is building your life with Him.

I don't know what's going on in your hearts; I don't know what God is challenging you with. I know where our challenges are, I know what I need to trust God for, but I want to ask you again what are you trusting God for? What are the things you're trusting God for that unless He comes through you'll fail? Start with one thing. You must not pick something and say, "Okay, God, I'm going to believe You for that." No, you get before God and quit making prayer a prayer list. Quit making Bible reading a duty and get your Bible and pray saying, "Lord, talk to me! Lead me! You're the Good Shepherd—go before me. I want to know You!" This is not about you being a good Christian and doing your prayerful, biblical duty it's about relationship!

Get to know your God! When you know your God you'll know His voice. The children of Israel knew the acts of God but Moses knew God's ways because He knew God. You're not going to know how a person is going to respond unless you know the person. Get to know God and God will begin to put things in your life, He'll begin to speak into your life to teach you Him and His

ways. He will one day speak and you'll think, "That can't be You, Lord," and then He'll respond, "You asked Me to speak to you and show you My will, didn't you?" It will be at that point the fight of faith begins. We'll talk some other time about how to fight that fight and what happens then, but just trust God. Get out of the boat, don't be afraid to sink, He'll pick you up if you do. He did it for Peter; He'll do you. Amen.