Bethel South Sermon Notes – *"Faith That Won't Quit"*

Speaker: Ps Mike Gowans
Series: Standalone Sermon [no series]
Scripture: Luke 18:1–8, Matthew 14:22–33, Romans 10:17, Hebrews 11:1

Main Idea:

God doesn't just want us to live without fear; He wants us to live **full of faith**. Faith is trust—trusting what God has said, who He is, and what He has promised even when our circumstances tell a different story. A life of faith **hears God, believes God, acts on His Word, and refuses to quit.**

Faith Is Trust

Whenever we hear the word **faith**, we should think about **trust**.

In Luke 18:8, Jesus asks:

"When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

Jesus isn't asking whether He will find impressive buildings, successful programs, or large crowds.

He is looking for people who **trust Him**.

Will He find people who believe His promises? Will He find people who trust His character when they don't understand their circumstances? Will He find people who continue leaning into Him when what they see doesn't match what He has said?

Faith is more than believing that God exists.

Faith is putting our total trust in Him.

Four Marks of Faith

Peter walking on the water in Matthew 14 gives us a picture of what genuine faith looks like.

1. Faith *Hears* God

Romans 10:17 tells us:

"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."

Faith begins with hearing what God has said.

Faith is not positive thinking. It is also not **presumption**—coming up with our own plans and expecting God to bless them.

Peter didn't see Jesus walking on the water and decide, "I think I'll try that too."

He waited for Jesus to say:

"Come."

Then Peter responded.

Faith responds to what God has spoken.

If we want stronger faith, we need to pay attention to what we are feeding ourselves. If our minds are constantly filled with fear, negativity, and bad news, we shouldn't be surprised when fear becomes louder than faith.

Feed on God's Word.

The more we know His voice, His character, and His promises, the more confidently we can trust Him.

2. Faith *Believes* God

Hebrews 11:1 describes faith as confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

Faith lives in the uncomfortable space between **what God said and what we see.**

When Jesus told Peter to come, the storm didn't stop.

The wind was still blowing.
The waves were still crashing.
The circumstances were still intimidating.

But Peter had a word from Jesus.

Faith does not require everything around us to calm down before we trust God.

And faith isn't necessarily certainty about a particular outcome.

Faith is confidence in a Person—and that Person is Jesus.

We may not know exactly what God is going to do, but we can know who He is.

3. Faith *Acts*

We often remember that Peter eventually sank, but before Peter sank, **Peter walked on water.**

Eleven disciples stayed in the boat.

Peter got out.

There comes a point when faith has to move beyond what we say we believe and become something we actually do.

Faith without action is dead.

Sometimes we can spend so much time waiting to understand the entire plan that we never take the step God has already put in front of us.

You don't need to know the next ten steps. You need to obey the next one.

Faith also changes the way we speak.

Fear looks at the storm and declares that it will destroy us.

Faith looks at the same storm and declares that **God is faithful and all things are possible with Him.**

Our words should reflect the One we trust.

4. Faith Doesn't *Quit*

In Luke 18:1, Jesus teaches His disciples that they should **always pray and never give up.**

Faith perseveres.

There will be moments when circumstances seem completely opposed to what we are praying and believing for. There may be seasons when answers don't come quickly.

Faith keeps praying.

Faith keeps standing.

Faith keeps trusting.

Faith refuses to allow difficult circumstances to have the final word.

Faith that won't quit keeps trusting God even when the storm lasts longer than expected.

Faith Lives Between the Word and the Reality

Faith doesn't deny reality.

Peter didn't pretend there wasn't a storm. The wind and waves were real.

Faith simply refuses to make the circumstances **greater than the One who spoke.**

There will always be tension between what God has said and what we currently see.

That tension is where faith grows.

We don't have to ignore reality to have faith. We acknowledge what is happening while choosing to place our confidence in Jesus above it.

Faith says, "This is what I see, but I still trust what God has said."

Take the Next Step

Walking by faith doesn't mean God gives us the entire map.

Often, He simply gives us the **next step**.

For one person, that step may be forgiving someone who deeply hurt them.

For someone else, it may be inviting a coworker to church, offering to pray for a stranger, or choosing to be baptized.

And sometimes, faith looks like Peter when he began to sink.

His next step wasn't walking farther.

It was crying out:

"Lord, save me!"

Even that is faith.

Faith isn't pretending we never struggle. It is knowing **who to reach for when we do.**

Final Challenge

What is the Holy Spirit asking you to do?

Don't wait until you understand the entire journey before you obey.

Hear what God is saying.
Believe Him.
Act on what He has spoken.
And refuse to quit.

Take the next step He has placed in front of you.

If you feel like you are sinking, reach for Jesus. If you know He has told you to move, get out of the boat.

Put your total trust in Jesus, say yes to Him, and keep walking by faith.

Discussion Questions

1. If faith means **trust**, what area of your life is currently the hardest for you to fully trust God with?
2. What is the difference between genuine faith and presumption? How can we make sure our faith is responding to what God has said rather than simply asking Him to bless what we want?
3. Faith often lives in the tension between **what God has said and what we currently see**. Where are you experiencing that tension right now?
4. Peter had to actually step out of the boat. What is one specific "next step" you sense God asking you to take that you may have been hesitant to act on?
5. What helps you continue praying and trusting God when circumstances don't change as quickly as you hoped?