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Faith over Feelings: trusting God when Life does not make sense

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READINGS
OT Jer. 29:10-14; Psalm 37:23-40; Epistle Heb. 11:17-31; Gospel Mark 4:35-41

Youth Sunday

Key Verse –

“Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?” - Mark 4:40

Youth is one of the most exciting seasons of life, but it can also be one of the most confusing. Young people stand at the threshold of many possibilities. There are decisions about education, career, relationships, marriage, ministry, finances, friendships, and the future. There are dreams to pursue and expectations to fulfil. At the same time, there are disappointments, unanswered prayers, failures, rejection, anxiety, loneliness, and questions about the future. Sometimes life simply does not make sense. A young person may study hard but not get the expected result. Someone may pray for a particular opportunity, but the door remains closed. A relationship that seemed promising may suddenly end. A family may experience financial difficulties. A person may ask, “God, why is this happening to me?” We may pray, but heaven seems silent. We may believe, but our circumstances seem to contradict what we believe.

It is at such moments that we discover the difference between faith and feelings. Feelings are real, and Christianity does not ask us to pretend that we have no emotions. Jesus Himself wept. The psalmists expressed fear, sorrow, anger, disappointment, and hope. Faith does not mean denying what we feel. Faith means refusing to allow our changing feelings to become the final authority over our lives. Feelings change. Circumstances change. People change. Opportunities change. Our understanding changes. But God does not change. The four passages before us speak directly to this reality. Jeremiah tells people living in uncertainty to trust God’s promise. Psalm 37 teaches us to trust God’s direction even when we cannot see the whole road. Hebrews 11 introduces us to people who acted by faith when circumstances made little sense. And Mark 4 brings us into a storm where even the disciples wondered whether Jesus cared. The message for us today, especially for young people, is simple but profound: When life does not make sense, trust God even when your feelings are telling you to give up.

1. Trust God’s Promise Even When You Cannot See the Future (Jer. 29:10-14)

The first reading comes from Jeremiah 29. The people of Israel were in exile in Babylon. They were far from their homeland, far from the life they had known, and uncertain about their future. Imagine what the young people among the exiles must have felt. Their dreams had been interrupted. Their familiar surroundings had disappeared. Their future seemed uncertain. Yet God gave them a promise through Jeremiah: “I will come to you and fulfil my good promise to bring you back to this place.” Then comes one of the most familiar promises in Scripture: “For I know the plans I have for you,”

declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Notice something important. God says, “I know the plans.” He does not say, “You know the plans.” There are seasons when we do not know what God is doing. We cannot see the whole picture. We may see only today’s difficulty while God sees the whole journey. Consider a person looking at the back of a beautiful tapestry. From the back, there are threads crossing in apparently random directions. Some threads seem to go nowhere. Some colours appear disconnected. If that were all we could see, we might conclude that the work was meaningless. But when the tapestry is turned around, we see the picture. Our lives can sometimes look like the back of a tapestry. We see confusion. God sees the whole picture.

This is particularly important for young people. You may not know what your career will be. You may not know where you will live. You may not know whom you will marry. You may not know what ministry God has prepared for you. You may not understand why one opportunity closed while another opened. But you can know the One who knows your future. Faith does not mean knowing everything about tomorrow. Faith means trusting the God who holds tomorrow. Jeremiah also says, “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” The promise is not merely that God will give us a successful future. The greater promise is that we will find God Himself. Sometimes we ask God to reveal His plan, while God is inviting us to deepen our relationship with Him. The Christian life is therefore not primarily about discovering every detail of our future. It is about walking faithfully with God today.

2. Trust God’s Guidance Even When the Road Is Difficult (Psalm 37:23-40)

Psalm 37 gives us another important principle: “The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him.” The psalm does not say that the person who trusts God will never stumble. In fact, it acknowledges that people may fall: “Though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand.” This is wonderful news for young people. Many young people are afraid of making mistakes. They think, “If I make one wrong decision, my whole life is finished.” But the Bible gives us a different picture. You may stumble, but God can uphold you. You may make a mistake, but God can teach you. You may experience failure, but failure does not have to define your identity. You may take a wrong turn, but God’s grace can redirect your steps. Faith does not mean that we will never make mistakes. Faith means that God is able to work even through our mistakes when we return to Him.

Psalm 37 also says: “Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this.” There are three movements here: trust, commit, and wait. Trust God. Commit your way to Him. Wait for Him. The modern world teaches us to demand immediate results. Young people are constantly exposed to instant communication, instant entertainment, instant information, and sometimes the expectation of instant success. But God’s work often happens gradually. A seed does not become a tree overnight. A student does not become an expert in one day. A relationship of trust does not develop instantly. Spiritual maturity does not come without time. God often works through processes.

Therefore, do not despise the season in which you are growing. You may be saying, “Nothing is happening in my life.” But perhaps God is developing something within you that you cannot yet see. A tree spends a long time developing roots before its growth becomes visible above the ground. The roots are invisible, but they are essential. There may be seasons in your life when your spiritual roots

are growing quietly. Prayer may seem ordinary. Bible reading may seem routine. Faithfulness may seem unnoticed. But God may be preparing you for something you cannot yet see. Faith trusts God's process even when feelings demand immediate results.

3. Trust God When Obedience Does Not Make Sense (Hebrews 11:17-31)

Hebrews 11 is often called the "Faith Chapter." It gives us a gallery of people who trusted God even when they could not understand everything. Abraham is one of the most remarkable examples. "By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice." This was extraordinarily difficult. Isaac was the child of promise. God had promised Abraham descendants through him. Yet Abraham was asked to do something that seemed to contradict the very promise God had made. How could Abraham trust God when the command seemed impossible to understand? The answer is faith. Hebrews tells us that Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead. Abraham did not understand everything. But he trusted God's character. This distinction is crucial. Faith is not confidence that I understand God's plan. Faith is confidence that God is trustworthy even when I do not understand His plan.

The chapter goes on to mention Moses, who chose to identify himself with God's people rather than enjoy the privileges of Pharaoh's household. He left Egypt, crossed the Red Sea, and moved forward by faith. Think about the young people mentioned in Hebrews 11. They did not possess a complete map of their future. They possessed a relationship with God. Faith repeatedly asks: "God, I don't understand everything, but I trust You." "Lord, I cannot see the whole road, but I will take the next faithful step." "Lord, I don't know how this will end, but I know that You are with me."

There is an important lesson here for youth. Do not build your life only around what feels comfortable.

Feelings may say, "Take the easy path."

Faith may say, "Take the right path."

Feelings may say, "Everyone else is doing it."

Faith may say, "I belong to Christ."

Feelings may say, "Give up."

Faith may say, "Continue."

Feelings may say, "Protect yourself at any cost."

Faith may say, "Obey God."

This does not mean that feelings are bad. God created us with emotions. But feelings are poor masters. Feelings can inform us, but they should not govern us. Faith must be grounded in God's Word, God's character, and God's promises.

4. Trust Jesus in the Storm (Mark 4:35-41)

The Gospel passage brings us to one of the most powerful stories in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus and His disciples are crossing the Sea of Galilee. Suddenly a violent storm arises. Waves break over the boat. The disciples become frightened. But Jesus is asleep. Finally they wake Him and cry: "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" That question is more than a question about the storm. It is a

question about God’s presence. “Jesus, don’t You care?” Many of us have asked the same question. “Lord, don’t You care about my family?” “Don’t You care about my future?” “Don’t You care about my studies?” “Don’t You care about my health?” “Don’t You care about my loneliness?” “Don’t You care about what I am going through?” Sometimes the greatest crisis is not the storm around us but the feeling that God does not care.

Jesus gets up, rebukes the wind, and says to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” The wind dies down. Then Jesus asks His disciples: “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?” This is our key verse. Notice that Jesus does not say, “You should never feel afraid.” He asks, “Why are you so afraid?” Fear is a feeling. Faith is a response to that feeling. The disciples looked at the storm and concluded that they were going to die. Jesus saw the same storm but knew that the Father was still in control.

Here is an important lesson: The presence of a storm does not mean the absence of God. Sometimes young people think, “If God is with me, I should not have problems.” But the disciples were in the storm precisely because they were following Jesus. Being in God’s will does not mean being protected from every storm. You can be faithful and still face difficulties. You can pray and still face uncertainty. You can follow Christ and still experience disappointment. The question is not whether storms will come. The question is: Who is in the boat with you? That changes everything. A small child travelling through a dark place may be afraid. But if the child’s father is holding his hand, the darkness has not necessarily disappeared; what has changed is the child’s awareness that he is not alone. The Christian’s confidence is not, “I can control every storm.” It is, “Jesus is with me in the storm.” Sometimes Jesus calms the storm. Sometimes He calms the person in the storm. And sometimes He gives us strength to continue through the storm until it passes. But in every circumstance, He remains Lord.

Conclusion

Youth is a journey filled with questions. “What should I study?” “What career should I choose?” “Where should I go?” “Whom should I marry?” “What is God’s purpose for my life?” “Why did this opportunity fail?” “Why did God allow this disappointment?” “Why is my prayer unanswered?” There may be many questions for which we do not immediately receive answers. But Christianity does not promise that we will understand everything. It gives us something deeper. It gives us someone to trust. Jeremiah tells us: Trust God’s promise when you cannot see the future. Psalm 37 tells us: Trust God’s guidance when the road is difficult. Hebrews 11 tells us: Trust God’s character when obedience does not make sense. Mark 4 tells us: Trust Jesus when you are in the storm.

Therefore, faith over feelings does not mean ignoring our emotions. It means bringing our emotions to God and refusing to let fear, disappointment, anxiety, or uncertainty have the final word. When you feel afraid, pray. When you feel confused, seek God’s Word. When you feel rejected, remember your identity in Christ. When you fail, get up again. When you cannot see the future, take the next faithful step. When the storm becomes overwhelming, remember who is in the boat. Young people, your life does not have to make complete sense today for God to be working in it. You may not understand the road, but God knows the destination. You may not understand the delay, but God is not absent. You may not understand the closed door, but God is still guiding. You may not understand the storm, but Jesus is still in the boat.

Therefore, do not allow your feelings to become greater than your faith. Feelings say, “I cannot.” Faith says, “God can.” Feelings say, “I don’t know what will happen.” Faith says, “God knows.” Feelings say, “I am alone.” Faith says, “Christ is with me.” Feelings say, “This is the end.” Faith

says, “God is still writing my story.” And when life does not make sense, may we hear again the question of Jesus: “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?” Let us therefore place our future, our dreams, our disappointments, our relationships, our studies, our careers, our families, and our entire lives into the hands of the God who knows us, loves us, guides us, and never abandons us. Faith is not knowing exactly what tomorrow will bring. Faith is knowing who holds tomorrow. May our generation of young people become a generation that does not merely follow its feelings, but walks by faith; a generation that does not surrender when life becomes difficult, but trusts God; a generation that does not need to understand everything before obeying, but is willing to take the next faithful step with Christ. For when the wind rises, when the waves become high, and when life does not make sense, Jesus is still in the boat.

Amen.