

# LET THERE BE LIGHT SERMONS

## **LET THERE BE LIGHT Sermon 1: The Significance of Our Faith**

*by J.D. Davis*

**Scriptures:** 1 Peter 1:3-12

**Sermon Focus:** Listeners will be challenged to place their faith in Jesus. The insecurities of other types of faith will be contrasted by the consistency a faith in Jesus provides.

### **Introduction**

In LET THERE BE LIGHT, Sol Harkens has tragically lost his son to cancer and, lacking any faith, lashed out at his wife, whose faith couldn't save their son from his untimely death. Dealing with his grief alone, instead of with the support of any faith in God, Sol's life spirals down into sin and hopelessness. The film shows what happens when the seas of life become stormy, and people unequally yoked (in their faith,) each turn in different directions.

There is a large audience of believers who are married to or related to unbelievers. This film is the outreach to bring non-believing friends or relatives to. That should be a message in these materials, to use this film as a way to grow the church body, in general, but specifically to minister to those loved-ones who are lost.

What have you put your faith in? How important is it to have faith? Where do we find a faith strong enough to make it through our own storms of life? Peter knows how important faith is and he gives us a great picture of faith, a faith that we can anchor deep with, and a faith which will hold us during the storms.

When Peter wrote his letter, things were changing. In the beginning of the first century church, the government remained unconcerned about this new religious sect. As the church grew, the constrictions of the government increased. Peter is writing to a people who are finding it increasingly difficult to live their faith.

Even today it is not easy being a Christian, but we must find a way to live our faith without compromise.

Peter helps us gain some insight into how to live an authentic Christ centered faith in the midst of some difficult times.

## **I. Timeless faith - 1 Peter 1:4-5**

The question is not if we have faith, every one has faith. The atheist has faith that his rational reasoning has removed the possibility of God. He has faith in his intellectual ability. Others have faith in their abilities, skills, connections, friends, family and themselves. Everyone has faith. The question will become whether or not the anchor of faith will hold.

Sooner or later the storms of life will begin to blow and the question will become whether or not the anchor faith will hold.

Peter gives us three reasons that it is important to anchor our faith in Christ.

### **A. Faith in Christ is imperishable**

How can that be? Well look where faith in Christ is kept, in Heaven. Jesus says that we are to put up treasures in heaven where moth and rust cannot destroy or the thief steal. My wife has bought me several garment bags for my suits. She puts cedar in them. She does this because she knows that the suits are the most valuable clothes I have, and that they are mostly wool. Moths could destroy the suits in a short time, but she tries to make them imperishable. Not too long ago I left one of my sweaters out of its bag. I did not think it would hurt to leave it out. I found it about four weeks ago with little holes all over it. The moths had destroyed it.

If our faith is set upon the things of this world, then our faith will perish. Countless kingdoms have come and fallen, economies have been built and destroyed, and nations have been established and vanished. All that is left of some of those kingdoms are the ruins you can see in a museum. Only the kingdom of God has remained constant in the past two thousand years. Our faith is to be set in heaven, and not on the things of this world. That is the only way that we know our faith is imperishable.

### **B. Our faith will be uncorrupted**

You have no doubt heard the phrase, absolute power corrupts absolutely. It is a statement which indicates our sinful nature. History is full of leaders who started off with the best intentions but pride, ego, or other flaws got in the way. If we place our faith in a leader, it is but a matter of time before the corruptible nature of the individual is revealed.

But Christ has no sin, and our faith is in the power of God. God has absolute power, but it is uncorrupted. There is no pride or ego in the power of Christ. In the scope of eternity, Jesus is the only person who has absolute power, but not only that, He is also the only person for whom absolute power has not corrupted, even a little bit. Our faith can only be incorruptible, when it is placed in Christ.

### **C. Our faith in Christ is unfading**

I know of lots of people who are fad people. They jump on the latest trend or idea, and about six months or a year down the road, they jump on something new. Do you need a great example? Pull out your year books. Look at the hair styles, the clothes you wore, and the tone of the culture. How much have things changed in the last 20 or 30 years?

Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And the faith we have now will see us through the Last Days.

## **II. Tested faith - 1 Peter 1:6-8**

Our faith must be anchored in the timeless nature of Christ, but I can hear the question. How do you know that a faith in Christ will hold up during the storms of life? Why should I trust Christ? Because, this is no ordinary faith, it is a tested faith. Countless people have placed their faith in Christ and found the anchor holds. Peter survived some incredible storms of life, and he says here is what I found the faith of Christ to be when it is put to the test.

Peter found a tested faith is valuable, revealing, and centered on love.

### **A. It is valuable (1:7)**

Peter here plays upon a great image, the goldsmith. A goldsmith would melt the metal down until it became a liquid. All the impurities would come to the surface and the goldsmith would scrape them off and allow the metal to cool. He would then come back and repeat the process over and over. His goal was pure gold. How did he know when he had pure gold? When no impurities came to the surface or when he could see his reflection in the melted gold.

Peter says that our faith is like gold, as it is tested, it will begin to bring the impurities to the surface. When the impurities are removed our faith becomes more valuable. (1:7) Gold is the standard by which we define value. We say things like, “worth it’s weight in gold”, “the golden boy”, and “the golden age”. Our jewelry is made of gold and we trade with it. In Peter’s world and in ours, gold was considered one of the most valuable things a person could have.

While gold is valuable, it is secondary to our faith. Gold can perish, but our faith will endure. A faith in Jesus Christ will carry us through this life and even into the world to come. A faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of God’s only Son is far more valuable than gold. Our faith is in something eternal, not in something that can be destroyed.

## **B. It is revealing (1:7)**

The goldsmith knew that he has pure gold when he can see his reflection in the metal. Our faith should reflect Jesus and reveal Him to a world. As we grow in Christ, we learn more about Him and His love. It is only through a life given to Christ, will we begin to see Him as He really is.

When I got married, I had spent more than two years dating my wife. However, dating, is not being married. There is a deeper stage of learning about each other in marriage. We begin to see each other in a new light. As our faith grows, more about the deeper nature of Christ is revealed to us. The end result of a Christ centered faith is that our lives are shaped and molded by Him.

Our faith begins to reflect that deeper knowledge of Jesus, our lives will begin to change. When you and I live differently, because our faith is growing, those around us will see the difference. Quite literally, your life begins to reflect the image of Christ. Just as the goldsmith knew he had pure gold, when he looked into the metal and could see his reflection, Jesus desires His reflection in our lives. That can only happen in a refined faith that has been tested.

## **C. It is centered on our love for Christ (1:8)**

Peter talks about how we love Christ even though we have not seen Him. In Hebrews we have the definition of faith, “Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1). The essence of faith is that it does not require our sight or proof. But notice that faith is “reality”. Just because something is not seen does not negate its existence. If it did all of us would be brainless, for I doubt that you have seen your own brain. But we know we have a brain. Peter says that real faith is loving a Christ, you have never seen, but still know exists.

## **III. True faith - 1:10-12**

In our postmodern world, we often hear the statement that what works for you may not work for me. So Peter had a faith in Christ that was timeless. His faith was valuable, revealing, and full of love. But how does that mean, what worked for Peter will work for me? Almost as if Peter anticipated your question, he writes about the faith of others.

The prophets of the Old Testament found their faith in God to hold. (1:10) God spoke to the prophets and told them that the Messiah was coming. He gave them a hope that the One who could deliver them was on the way. The message of the prophets can be summarized as, “Hang on. God is working and the Messiah is coming. Get ready, your deliverer is coming.” Doesn’t that sound like a message for people at the end of their rope, for people who don’t know where to turn? It is a message of hope and encouragement. It is a promise. How many people do you know that need to be encouraged not to give up. How many people in this room need to be told that there is help on it’s way. Maybe you need to hear that God’s promises are for you. That is the message of the Old Testament prophets.



Peter points out that the true faith is not only tied to the prophets, but also the fulfillment of those prophecies. There is a faith in the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus. (1:11)

I have recently been taking some classes on preaching. A couple of weeks ago, in one of the lectures, a teacher said an astounding thing. He said that Christianity is the only religion which cannot reinvent itself. All other religions are based upon a philosophical basis. Other religions have been created out of a human mind. The teacher went on to state that if all religions were wiped from the face of the earth, someone could come along, have the same thoughts and ideas, and recreate any of the religions.

But not so with Christianity. Our faith is built upon the prophecies of the Old Testament, prophecies which said a Messiah is coming. Our faith is built upon Jesus. We believe that he is the Messiah, the embodiment of the Old Testament prophecies. We believe that He died on a cross for our sins and that he rose again. We believe that he is coming back.

If all of Christianity were to be destroyed, how could we recreate it in our minds? We could not. Our faith is not built upon philosophy, intellect, or creative speculations. Our faith is built upon the historical fact that Jesus, God's only Son, died on a Roman cross, in Jerusalem, on a hill called Golgatha, in 30 AD. Our faith cannot be recreated, but thank God it is a faith which has stood the test of time, proven itself faithful when tested, and is the only true faith which holds in the storms of life.

Peter then talks of how the faith of the Old Testament and the Gospels is for these present days. (1:12)

Peter literally says, "Angels desire to look into these things." Can you imagine what that must be like? Angels are leaning over the rim of heaven and looking down. They have seen what God did with the prophets. They have seen how Jesus fulfilled the prophecies with His birth, life, death and resurrection. The angels have seen Lucifer kicked out of heaven, the resurrection of Christ, the dead raised, the Red Sea parted, and demons exorcised. But what they desire to see, is what God is going to do now. The angels are watching you and me, and they want to see what the next chapter will be like. How will our faith and God's great actions meet? As Mordecai said to Esther, who knows but that you have come into the kingdom for such a time as this? Our time to live our faith is now.

### **Conclusion**

All of us have faith, but will your anchor of faith hold in the storms of life? Is your anchor of faith a true anchor? Is your faith built upon the truth of scripture. Is your faith tested? Do you know how valuable, revealing and full of love, a faith in Christ is? Is your faith timeless, or will the newest fad or the latest philosophy cause you to tie to a new anchor? Only a faith in Christ is true, tested, and timeless.

It is not a question of if you have a faith. It is not a question of if the storms of life will come. It is the question, will your anchor of faith, hold through the storms? The time to anchor your hope and faith to Christ is now, before the storms show up.

*Dr. J.D. Davis is pastor of First Baptist Church, Sparta, Tennessee. He holds degrees from Belmont University, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Trinity Seminary.*

## **LET THERE BE LIGHT Sermon 2: The Reason for Our Hope**

*by Phil B. Davis*

**Key Scriptures:** John 16:33 and 1 Peter 3:15

**Sermon Focus:** Jesus told us in this life we will experience difficulties but to have hope because he has overcome the world. We will look at the areas in our life where Christ's promises give us reason to have hope, in spite of our circumstances.

It can be easy to lose hope when we experience difficult times in life. And hope is perhaps the most precious thing we could lose, because it is the foundation for faith (Col. 1:5, 23). Becoming a follower of Christ doesn't exempt us from trials. Yet as believers, we have a very real reason to hope, even though we face heartache and loss.

In the movie, LET THERE BE LIGHT, Sol Harkens tragically loses his son to cancer. He also loses hope and without hope, he is unable to deal with his grief and anger at God. Even though on the outside he appears to be a huge success, on the inside he is spiraling out of control. His marriage ends and his relationship with his remaining two sons becomes strained. Contrast that with his ex-wife, Katy, whose faith, rooted in hope, has held her steady through the loss of her son and marriage. How is it that Katy was able to maintain hope when Sol gave up? How are you able to maintain hope when you feel overwhelmed by life?

Jesus makes it clear in John 16:33 that Christians don't get a pass on pain and heartache. But, thankfully, he doesn't stop there. He tells us to "take heart"! In other words, have hope. Why? Because his truth, his power, and his promises transcend the this life. When you put your trust and faith in Christ, you can know that whatever difficulties you're going through, hope remains. Those difficulties are not the end of you, because they do not have the final say about you.

If we want to live our lives with the kind of hope Katy displays in the movie, it helps to be mindful of the what gives rise to that kind of hope. Let's take a look at the promises God made to give us hope in the midst of darkness, in the face of suffering, and that this world is not the end.

### **I. Hope... in the midst of darkness**

- Isaiah 9:1-3
- Lamentations 3:22-24
- Isaiah 60:20

### **II. Hope ... in the face of suffering**

- Jeremiah 31:12-14
- 2 Corinthians 1:6-8
- Romans 8:22-24

### **III. Hope... that this world is not the end**

- 1 Thessalonians 4:12-14

