

Forged in Fire

Increasing Faith through Trials

One of the few shows I'll watch on TV is a show called "Forged in Fire." It is a competition show where craftsmen are tasked to forge various weapons from numerous types of metals and are judged on how well each perform during various trials. The winner is dubbed "Forged in Fire Champion" and receives a check for \$10,000 dollars. It's entertaining and one of the few things to watch that isn't shoving an alphabet pervert or woke agenda in your face.

I can see a remote parallel between the steel being forged and a Christian in their walk toward God's Kingdom. Both are tempered and formed through fire if you will for the purpose of being used by the Master. I know that steel is inanimate and has no feeling but I can only imagine being heated to white hot and then beaten with a hammer, formed and then ground and refined to its final form for use. The final billet must be "quenched" or hardened to ensure its performance. Sometimes the trials we endure can weaken our edge and we can weaken or lose our faith.

While we may not be heated to white hot or beaten with a hammer (maybe sometimes we should be) we too are being formed to be wielded by Our Master Craftsman, Jesus Christ.

In reading the prayer requests each day I receive from CGG and CBCG, I take note of those who seemingly reach out half-heartedly in their requests. It is quite apparent that some of those requests are made by members of genuine faith. Their requests are humble and not limited to a drastic emergency but an appeal to the brethren to seek God's intervention on their behalf for any given situation. They come from a pure heart and a contrite spirit.

One of the prayer requests this week, stuck out more than others. In the original request, a family member had been taken to the hospital on July 4th for a blockage in his chest. He had to be intubated and the doctors told his wife to contact his children and decide whether or not to resuscitate him. A second request came in on July 5th, that the doctors told the wife to prepare the family as the husband may die soon and the decision was made not to resuscitate him. Wow!

When I read this second request, I must admit I was a bit incensed at the lack of faith on behalf of the wife and family members. Believe me, I know there are times *perhaps* when all hope is gone and it may be time to let someone go to their rest. However, are we walking in the faith God expects us to have? I know in cases of brain death and the life support given may be the only apparent hope for anyone

suffering from such a condition. But for a moment, I paused and thought about the story of Lazarus.

John 11:1-7- “Now there was a certain man who was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, which was the town of Mary and her sister Martha. And it was Mary who later anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. Therefore, the sisters sent to Him, saying, “Lord, take notice: the one whom You love is sick.” But after hearing this, Jesus said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.” Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. But when He heard that he was sick, He deliberately remained in the same place two days. And after this, He said to the disciples, “Let us go into Judea again.”

Why did Jesus delay?

John 11:11-15- “These things He said; and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going so that I may awaken him.” Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will get well.” Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of the rest of sleep. For this reason, Jesus then said to them plainly, “Lazarus has died. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, in order that you may believe. But let us go to him.”

It was Jesus' plan all along that God may be glorified.

John 11:32-44- “Then Mary, when she came where Jesus was and saw Him, fell at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.” As a result, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in spirit and was Himself inwardly moved. And He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.” Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, “See how much He loved him!” But some of them said, “Could not this Man, Who had the power to open the eyes of the blind, also have caused this one not to die?” Because of this, Jesus again groaned within Himself as He came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was laid over the opening. Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of him who had died, said to Him, “Lord, he already stinks, for it has been four days.” Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you will believe, you shall see the glory of God?” Then they removed the stone from the tomb where the dead man had been laid. And Jesus lifted His eyes upward and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You hear Me always; but because of the people who stand around I say this, so that they may believe that You did send Me.” And after He had spoken these things, He cried with a loud voice, “**Lazarus, come forth.**” And he

who had been dead came forth, his feet and hands bound with grave clothes, and his face bound up with a napkin. Jesus said to them, “Loose him and let him go.”

After thinking on Lazarus, I prayed for the man’s healing, asking God to be glorified. It is always God’s will that is done and we have this confidence in knowing that at the onset. For times such as these and strengthening our faith for what is yet to come, we need to love and trust God first and with all of our hearts, minds and strength. We need to stand on His Word and His Word alone, not mans’. After all, this man was still alive and Lazarus was dead for 4 days.

On July 7th, a third prayer request came in. It was the wife with an update. “Please let everyone know that he has made a turn around. After we took out all the tubes and wires, he woke up about 11:00 yesterday worried that he hadn’t paid his bills. By 1:00, he had sent me to the bank and he was sitting up with the daughter paying bills. He wanted to know why he couldn’t get out just long enough to run to the bank! On Tuesday we were calling everyone in to say “goodbye,” and Wednesday he was paying bills. Who says God doesn’t have a sense of humor? So much thanks for all those prayers. They were answered!” I’ve withheld the names but the quote is in its entirety. Now I’m certainly not boasting in any way, but I must believe that as these prayer lists go worldwide, I’m confident there were numerous

other brothers and sisters of the faith crying out to a Sovereign God for His intervention. God heard. God responded. I'm sure the doctors who were getting ready to bury the man hadn't counted on a Living God.

What if Jesus told Martha, "Sorry Lazarus is already dead." Jesus told us we will do greater works than these. **John 14:12**- "Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me shall also do the works that I do; and greater works than these shall he do because I am going to the Father." If Jesus said, I believe it. God cannot lie (**Titus 1:2, Hebrews 6:18**).

How much are we seeking God in our lives?

2 Corinthians 10:15-18- "We are not boasting in things beyond *our* measure, *such as* other men's labors; but we have hope *that when* your faith is increased, *we will* be abundantly enriched by you according to our rule *of faith*, In order to preach the gospel to the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in things *made* ready in another man's territory. But the one who is boasting, let him boast in *the* Lord. For the *one who is* approved is not the one who commends himself, but the one whom the Lord commends."

We tend to limit an outcome of a situation by minimizing God and/or His intervention. **Psalm 78:40-42**- "How often did they provoke Him in the wilderness and grieve Him in the desert! And still again they tempted God, and limited the

Holy One of Israel. They did not remember His hand, nor the day when He delivered them from the enemy;” We tend to doubt His hearing our prayers and sometimes we may look foolish asking for such things as a healing. Is this due to a lack of faith? A lack of trust? Or a lack of loving God with all that we are?

One of the hurdles I see and seem to encounter as well is apparently the lack of faith. **Matt. 17:20-** “And Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief. For truly I say to you, if you have faith as a *tiny* mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, ‘Remove from here,’ and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you.” This can be slight or huge depending on the situation but none the less it manifests itself in many ways. Sometimes it’s almost as if we accept defeat before the battle begins even though the war has already been won. **Mark 4:40-** “And He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? Why do you not have faith?”

When you pray, do you pray in earnest? From your heart with all of your being? Do you have faith God is hearing your prayers? **Matthew 21:21-** “Then Jesus answered *and* said to them, “Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only shall you do the *miracle* of the fig tree, but even if you shall say to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ it shall come to pass.”

All too often, we tend to limit our prayers because we don't think God will answer or it may be too much to ask. We settle for something less than what we think God is capable of or would grant.

When you pray, do you talk *to* God or talk *at* God? Are you sharing your heart with Him or giving Him your shopping list? Is it repetitious mumblings or a sincere conversation with your Heavenly Father who loves hearing from you? "Oh God, please grant me patience and hurry...blah blah blah... I need this and that..."

2 Timothy 2:16- "But avoid profane and vain babblings because they will *only* give rise to more ungodliness,"

Jesus taught us how to pray in **Matt. 6:9**. We should remember to approach God in right standing. **James 5:16-** "Confess your faults to one another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (KJV). Asking the right things in the right manner and we know that if it is in His Will it will come to pass. This may be an area where we tend to limit God again. We will throw that caveat in "according to Your Will" but we forget the first part of our responsibilities regarding the right way and manner. God certainly knows all of our needs, our wants and desires. We should have no concerns regarding anything. It is always God's will anyway. It's like talking with

someone who prefaces a sentence with, “well you know...” Setting up an excuse at the onset.

Luke 12:24-31- “Consider the ravens; for they do not sow, nor reap; neither have they a storehouse or granary; but God feeds them. Of how much greater value are you than the birds? And which one of you, by taking careful thought, has the power to add one cubit to his stature? Therefore, if you do not have the power to do even the least, why are you anxious about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow; they do not labor, nor do they spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory was adorned like one of these. But if God so adorns the grass that today is in the field, and tomorrow is cast into an oven, how much more shall He clothe you, O you of little faith? Then do not be seeking what you shall eat or what you shall drink, and do not be anxious. For all the nations of the world seek after these things; and your Father knows that you have need of these things. But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.”

Faith is the key to moving mountains. **Hebrews 11:1-13-** “Now faith is *the* substance of *things* hoped for, and *the* conviction of things not seen. For by this *kind of faith* the elders obtained a good report. By faith we understand that the worlds were created by *the* word of God, so that the things that are seen were made

from *things* that are invisible. By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it, though he died, *he* is yet speaking. By faith Enoch was transported so that he would not look upon death, and was not found because God had transported him; for before his departure it was testified of him that he pleased God. Now without faith *it is* impossible to please *God*. For it is mandatory *for* the one who comes to God to believe *that* He exists, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. By faith Noah, after being divinely instructed by God about the things *he could* not yet see, was moved with fear *and* prepared an ark for *the* salvation of his house; through which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. By faith Abraham, being called *of God* to go out into the place which he would later receive for an inheritance, obeyed and went, not knowing where he was going. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, like a foreigner, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the joint heirs of the same promise; For he was waiting for the city with *the* foundations of which God is *the* Architect and Builder. By faith also Sarah herself received power to conceive seed, and gave birth *when* she was *well* beyond the childbearing age because she esteemed Him faithful Who had personally promised *her a son*. Because of this *faith*, there came into being from one *man*—and moreover, *one* who was *reproductively* dead— *descendants* as

numerous as the stars in the heavens, and as countless as the sand on the sea shore.

All these died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them from afar, and having been persuaded of *them*, and having embraced *them*, and having confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth.”

We have discussed faith numerous times in our studies. We tend to have weak faith if we do not keep in mind just how special we are to Him. **Matthew 24:12-13-**

“And because lawlessness shall be multiplied, the love of many shall grow cold.

But the one who endures to *the* end, that one shall be saved.” How do we keep our love from going cold? We must go to the source to replenish it. Where is that

source? Where does real love come from? The answer is found in **1 John 4:19:**

"We love Him because He loved us first."

A sign of our weak or lack of faith in His love is how we respond to trials. If we believe in how much He loves us, then we know the trial is for our good. This is quite difficult to keep in mind when in the middle of the storm. But because of His love, we should know that a trial is not just a random act without rhyme or reason.

Because He is God and He loves us, it cannot be an accidental circumstance happening without His awareness or concern. God doesn't try to make our lives more difficult for the "fun of it." I know there are so many in the world and even in God's Church who blame God for their misfortunes. Never considering they had forty or fifty years of folly to bring about their current situations. The "woe is me"

and “life just isn’t fair” mentality. God is there but we must always be obedient and do our part.

Another thought for looking at our faith is do we feel more love for ourselves than God loves us? When we fall into this attitude, we begin to take things into our own hands because we lose our trust in God. We doubt His love for us and we feel the need to “help” God with our problem. Doubting God’s love and limit His power is to deny the very essence of Who He is.

Wikipedia defines faith as confidence or *trust* in a person or being. In this case, it would be trust in God. So many of us develop a lack of trust for God. Some never had it to begin with. Keep in mind that Our Creator spoke the Universe into existence (**Gen. 1:3**). We tend to forget this when we pray. We forget His power and forget who we are in Him. We immediately limit the effect of our prayer by imparting doubt. We saw what happened to Peter when he stepped out of the boat to walk on the water to Jesus and he took his eyes off The Lord (**Matt. 14:29-31**).

Hebrews 10:35-39- “For this *very* reason, do not cast away your confidence, which is bringing a great reward. For you need to have endurance, so that, after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise. For *it is* but a short time *until* He Who is coming will come, and will not delay. Now *it is written*, “The

just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul does not delight in him.”

But we are not of *those* who draw back unto destruction; rather, we are of faith unto *the saving of the soul*.”

Eliminating doubt in our prayer life and our faith is a beginning to becoming an effective prayer warrior (**1 Tim. 2:8**). We have previously discussed the levels of faith in prior studies. One of the levels of faith development is the “enlightened stage.” The “enlightened stage” is faith without worries and doubt. I’m sure the whispers of the enemy are hard at work here to derail anything we send skyward.

Psalm 64:1- “Hear my voice, O God, in my complaint; preserve my life from fear of the enemy.”

“Oh, God won’t hear that...” or “You can’t pray for that; people will think you’re crazy...” **1 Cor. 4:10-** “We are fools for the sake of Christ, but you *are* wise in Christ; we *are* weak, but you *are* strong; you *are* glorious, but we *are* without honor.”

1 Cor. 2:5- “So that your faith might not be in *the* wisdom of men, but in *the* power of God.”

Eph. 3:11-12- “According to *His* eternal purpose, which He has wrought in Christ Jesus our Lord, In Whom we have boldness and *direct* access with confidence through His *very* own faith.”

Phil.1:20- “According to my earnest expectation and hope, that in no way shall I be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, Christ shall also be magnified now in my body, whether by life or by death.”

Planting the seed of doubt and a little fear of ridicule will lead to halfhearted prayers. We become more concerned with what others may think of us rather than focus on just Who we are praying to. We must approach the throne room of God with confidence and faith in Him, His Word and who we are in Him.

Notice I said confidence and not cockiness. We have the Word of God and Jesus Christ as our intercessor and we may come boldly before the throne of grace.

Heb. 4:16- “Therefore, we should come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Great faith will yield great results. **Matthew 9:29-** “Then He touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith be it to you.”

We have been given numerous examples of faith throughout God’s Word. It is faith in His Word that sets the example of the faith we should seek.

Matt. 8:5-13- “Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, beseeching Him, And saying, “Lord, my servant is lying in the house paralyzed and grievously tormented.” And Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.” But the centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come

under the roof *of my house*; but speak *the* word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this *one*, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another *one*, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does *it*.” Now when Jesus heard these words, He was amazed; and He said to those who were following, “Truly I say to you, nowhere in Israel have I found such great faith. But I say to you, many shall come from *the* east and *the* west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go, and ***as you have believed, so be it done to you.***” And his servant was healed in that hour.”

The Centurion accepted and believed in Jesus’ authority. He accepted the Word of Jesus and required nothing else. We too have the Word of God.

Rom. 10:17- “So then, faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing through *the* Word of God.”

Do we need anything else? The Word of God is sufficient. Perseverance through a trial will strengthen your faith. **Matthew 9:20-22-** “And behold, a woman who had been *afflicted* with a flow of blood *for* twelve years, after coming behind *Him*, touched the hem of His garment. For she said within herself, “If only I shall touch

His garment, I shall be healed.” But Jesus turned; and seeing the woman, He said to her, “Be of good courage, daughter; ***your faith has made you whole.***” And from that hour the woman was healed.” (Mark 5:25-34)

The woman had suffered with illness for many years and wasted her time and money on man’s cures and was only getting worse. Hearing of Jesus and knowing of Him, she knew that if she could just press through the crowd and touch the hem of His garment, such a small act would heal her. She knew, she *pressed through* her fears and *did not doubt*. The healing was immediate and confirmed by Jesus when He asked “Who touched me?” The woman was *earnestly* seeking God.

Matthew 14:35-36- “And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent to all the country around; and they brought to Him all those who were sick. And *they* besought Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment; and as many as touched *it* were healed.”

Do we press through when we are confronted with crisis or do we throw the towel in, shrug our shoulders and say “that’s just the way it is” and accept defeat? Go ahead and call the family together and do not resuscitate...

Mark 11:24- “For this reason I say to you, all the things that you ask when you are praying, believe that you will receive them, and they shall be given to you.”

2 Corinthians 5:7- "For we walk by faith, not by sight."

So then, how important is faith?

Hebrews 11:6- "Now without faith *it is* impossible to please *God*. For it is mandatory *for* the one who comes to God to believe *that* He exists, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

Abraham is the "Father of the Faithful." As Abraham raised the knife to sacrifice his son, the only evidence he had was God's promise to him. Abraham could believe God and take Him at His word, or believe all the evidence he could see that even if his son were to be sacrificed, God would fulfill His promise. Even though Abraham couldn't see how God was going to fulfill His promise, He believed and trusted in God to keep His Word. I doubt any of us have faced such a trial and test of our faith as this.

God did not know for sure what was in Abraham's heart until Abraham made the decision to trust God rather than all the physical evidence around him. Abraham's actions proved he would walk by faith and not by sight. To walk is an action. So even the phrase "walk by faith" demonstrates that our living faith requires action on our part. God's Word is our promises and our faith is demonstrated in our actions. With all of God's promises, He does not promise *when* He will answer. The timing of those answers is in His hands and His timing is always perfect.

Just as Abraham had to choose between believing God and believing the circumstances he could see; God also has to put us into precisely the same position.

He must find out what is the true intent of our hearts and the level of our faith. God wants to know that we trust Him, no matter what, before He commits to an eternal relationship in His Kingdom.

The faith of our fellowship is also important to the strengthening of our members. When one is weak, they have a family that can lift them up. An example of faith of friends is found in **Mark 2:3-12**- “Then they came to Him, bringing a paraplegic borne by four *men*. And since they were not able to come near to Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was; and after breaking *it* open, they let down the stretcher on which the paraplegic was lying. Now when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paraplegic, “Child, your sins have been forgiven you.” But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, “Why does this *man* speak such blasphemies? Who has the power to forgive sins, except one, *and that is* God?” And Jesus immediately knew in His spirit what they were reasoning within themselves, *and* said to them, “Why are you reasoning these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paraplegic, ‘*Your* sins have been forgiven you’? or to say, ‘Arise, and take up your stretcher and walk’? But in order that you may understand that the Son of man has authority on the earth to forgive sins,” He said to the paraplegic, “I say to you, arise and pick up your stretcher, and go to your house.” And immediately he arose and, after picking up

his stretcher, went out in the presence of them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We have never seen the like!” The paraplegic’s friends were determined to press through on his behalf. Their faith resulted in the healing of their friend.

Our faith is not something we can buy or earn. **Ephesians 2:8**- “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God,”

This gift is a miracle from God Himself. The importance in our faith along our journey is that not only we now understand God’s Word, but we *believe* it in its entirety. When we began to live by God’s Word our faith began to grow. The power of God’s Holy Spirit within us makes this possible. Our actions were evidence of our faith in Sabbath keeping, keeping His Holy Days, tithing and keeping all of His Commandments (**1 John 5:3**).

The whole purpose in God testing our faith through trials is to bring us to a point of making or forcing a change in us; something that is not of His Character nor in the image of His Son Jesus Christ. In these times of trials and tests, God can see by our actions what is truly in our hearts. Will we trust Him fully or will we Throw in the towel and accept the fate someone hands to us? Will we believe our eyes or the

faith in our hearts? Through faith, we see beyond the circumstances and we see God. Faith is simply believing and acting on what God says without doubt or diluting it with man's influences. This applies not only to the major trials of life, but even more so to the little decisions we make each day.

Luke 16:10- "The one who is faithful in the things that are least is also faithful in much; and the one who is unrighteous in the things that are least is also unrighteous in much."

When the trials come, or the doctors tell you it's over remember on Whom we have believed. We can prove to be faithless by discounting the words of God, compromising, and making them of no effect. **Mark 7:13-** "Nullifying the authority of the Word of God by your tradition which you have passed down; and you practice many *traditions* such as this." And after calling all the multitude to *Him*, He said to them, "Hear Me, all of you, and understand."

Singing after a beating? The story of Paul and Silas in the Book of Acts always amazed me. How many of us could endure what these men went through and had the faith to sing praises to God immediately afterward in prison?

Acts 16:19-32- "And when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they laid hold of Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the magistrates. And they brought them to the captains, saying, "These men, who are

Jews, are greatly troubling our city, And are preaching customs that are not lawful for us, as Romans, to receive or to practice.” Then a multitude rose up against them, and the captains tore off their garments, and commanded that they be beaten with rods. And after laying many stripes on them, they cast them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them safely. After receiving this command, he threw them into the inner prison and secured their feet with stocks. But about midnight, ***Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God***, and the prisoners were listening to them; And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so great that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors opened, and the bonds of all were loosed. When the jailer awoke from his sleep and saw the doors of the prison open, he drew a sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped, But Paul called out with a loud voice, saying, “Do not harm yourself; for we are all here.” And after asking for lights, he rushed in and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And when he had brought them out, he said, “Sirs, what must I do, that I may be saved?” Then they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, you and your household.” And they spoke the Word of the Lord to him, and to all those in his house.” That kind of faith will definitely knock down walls!

The Bible is replete with examples, in both the Old and New Testaments, of God's servants who had their faith tested and tried. We'll close with one more example; Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego whose faith was literally tried by fire.

Daniel 3:17-26- "If that *is the case*, our God Whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods nor worship the golden image which you have set up." Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they should heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. And he commanded mighty men in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and to throw *them* into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were tied up in their cloaks, their tunics, and their robes, and their *other* clothes, and were thrown into the middle of the burning fiery furnace. Then because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego *to throw them in*. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was amazed. And he rose up in haste and spoke and said to his advisers, "Did

we not throw three men bound into the middle of the fire?” They answered and said to the king, “True, O king.” He answered and said, “Behold! I see four men loose, walking in the middle of the fire, and there is no harm done to them. And the form of the fourth is like a son of *the* gods.” Then Nebuchadnezzar came near the opening of the burning fiery furnace. He answered and said, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out and come here.” Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came out of the middle of the fire.” Talk about forged in fire!

How many more character examples of faith can you think of? The greatest of all is of course our Savior Jesus Christ. His faith endured His death on the cross, fulfilling the will of The Father. His resurrection and Kingdom to come are the promises He made to us, His faithful called and chosen.

Romans 5:1-5- “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in the hope of *the* glory of God.

And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations, realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance, And endurance *brings forth* character, and character *brings forth* hope. And the hope *of God* never makes us ashamed because the love of God has

been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us.” Will our faith ever move mountains? We’ll never know unless we love God, trust God and believe and live by His Word.

We know God is intimately involved in our lives from our studies. We must remember this in our prayer life as well. We have God’s Word He will finish what He started (**Phil. 1:6**) and He will never forsake us (**Heb. 13:5**). We ourselves must do our part to grow in our faith and trust in God, that our prayers are effective weapons against the forces of darkness and they are heard on high (**1 Kings 8:49, 1 Kings 9:3, 2 Chron. 6:39, 1 Peter 4:7**).

Amen!

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