

Experiencing God

#7 - The Crisis of Belief

5/17/20

Hello se family. We're so glad that you joined us this morning from wherever you may be in this great world of ours. Welcome. We hope you're blessed this morning by what you experience and as we jump into our series here, we're on week seven of experiencing God. We're going to talk about some really great stuff today, but before we get there, there's a few things that we need to talk about. First of all, I want you to think back all the way back to Tuesday. Most of you, at least some of you, should have gotten an email that had a link to a survey for us and that survey is really important to us trying to gather information about what it looks like for us to reopen services. Now we know we have a bit of an idea about what our governmental guidelines are going to be and what we're up against from that side, but we want to know kind of where our people are at. Like, how do you feel about coming back to churches? Is it not fast enough? Is it too fast? What's going on in your mind? There's a lot of different questions in that survey for you to help us with. Here's what we know, for many of the people that watch our service: A couple of things. Number one, we don't have your email at all. Or number two, our email goes to your junk mail and that's just by virtue of security settings and that's all well and good. And so here's what we did. If you didn't get an email this week and you're interested in doing that survey and I'm begging you please, if you're connected to the Southeast family, please fill it out. It's helpful for us. But you can jump on our web page, Southeastcc.org and it'll be on our front page. There'll be a link there and it should be on our app as well.

So if you've downloaded our app Southeast in Parker, Colorado, then it should be on there, available for, you to jump on and take the survey. It takes three or four minutes for you. It's not long, but everybody's input is actually really, really important for us. And so this will help us to know how to not only move forward, but to move forward in a way that is safe and effective and helps people feel good about coming to worship the Lord again. So that's there on our webpage. Please check it out if you didn't already fill out your survey. Number two thing -- coming up on Monday, May 25th, which is Memorial day, at 7:00 PM we are going to broadcast a documentary called Ethan's Reach. Now, here's the thing. Let me tell you about this. We had planned to do a big premier event at our building with lots of people and different kinds of things going on in the lobby. We had planned on doing that and we were super stoked about it, but obviously we're not going to be able to do that. So, we want to find an alternative way to do this. So we're going to broadcast the event. The event will have the speakers that were planning on speaking at that event. Now, let me talk to you a little bit about the documentary. There's some real sensitive topics mentioned in this documentary. Specifically, this is about the reality of a guy who went to war, came back, suffered from PTSD, and ultimately wound up committing suicide and his family's journey to pick up the pieces with that, and this is going to be profound for the people that watch it. I'm not, I wouldn't say excited is the right word, but I'm really motivated to watch this and here's why. Because as a church, one of the things that we're committed to is to have real conversations about the real issues that are going on in our community and this is one of them. And so what we want to do is be real intentional about not pointing things out and walking away, but pointing things out and saying, Hey, it doesn't have to be this way. There's resources, there's help. We can do that. That will be available on our live stream. May 25th at 7:00 PM that whole event and the documentary will be available on our livestream. There'll be information on our social media and on our website, but we want you to plug that into your calendar May 25th at 7:00 PM so that you can plan on watching that premiere with us. It's going to be a great time.

So, we're going to jump into our series and we're talking about what we call the crisis of belief. Now let me talk a little bit about where we've been so that we can get to where we need to get today. And we got a mountain of scripture to cover today because the Bible says a lot about this topic. So we've been talking about how the journey of knowing where God is and where he's moving and how he's speaking in my life doesn't just happen. It's not just one of those things that you wake up one day and you're good at it. There are some things that need to be in place in order for us to consistently be able to hear God speaking in our life. And probably the biggest one we go all the way back to the beginning is, if Jesus isn't your boss of your life, then he isn't going to, like, you're going to have trouble consistently hearing him. He'll be speaking around you, but you won't be dialed in enough to hear. Like the primary foundation for us as followers of Jesus is that we would actually let him be the boss because he's better at it than I am. Not just because he's right or because he's more powerful than me, but Jesus needs to be the boss because his ideas for my life are better than anything else I can come up with on my own. And so that's kind of the beginning sets. And then we talked about what does it mean for God to speak to us. We talked about the fact that he does speak, but he's not just having a conversation. He's revealing himself, his purposes I and his ways and when he speaks, we know it's God and we know what he said. Then, last week we talked about seven kind of languages that God uses to speak to us.

This primary dialect is the Bible and everything that we hear from God has to be filtered through the Bible. Then we have three P's – people, prompting and pain and then three D's, -- doors, desires and dreams. These are kind of seven languages that God uses to speak to us and so we talked about that last week.

This week we're going to keep working through this progression and we're going to operate from the assumption today that I've heard God say something. So, I've heard God speak and now I've got to figure out what next looks like. Here's what I want to do to set the groundwork for this. When you hear God speak in your life, what you can be very, very certain of is that you will not be able to stay where you are and do what he's asking you to do. God is going to come to you and offer you an opportunity to partner with him, to restore what sin broken the world. And in order to do that, you're going to have to move off center. We don't have a choice. This is the fundamental reality of God speaking in our life. When God speaks, we will face a crisis of belief. Do we trust God enough to follow him to where he's leading us or are we going to bail out on it? This will happen every time we hear God speak. There will, and this is the thing about walking in faith and we're gonna talk a lot about what that means today, if you've been walking with the Lord for 50 years, it doesn't matter. Every step of faith that God invites you into will still be a step of faith. No matter how many steps you've been through in your past. If God has brought you through so many wonderful things and he comes to you again and he's like, okay, we're going to go to the next one. If that happens, we have to understand that every step of faith still is going to take faith. It's still going to have a little bit of a risk factor involved in it and we're still going to have to wrestle with. But God, you gave me this whatever...this life, this blessing, this thing that's going on in my world. You gave me this. Am I willing to let it go in order to take hold of this next thing that I believe you're leading me to? When God speaks to us, there's going to be something that we are going to have to do as a result of God coming and speaking to us. That's not a works righteousness that's following God in obedience. Like maybe it's God laid it on my heart that I need to share something and I got to go risk to share it or God's laying it on my heart to do something in the world and I got to let go of some things and create space to be able to do that thing or God's asking me to get over some, some things, some hurt or some habit in my life and I got to readjust everything. I have to do something in order to follow God in faith. Every time that God speaks, I will face a crisis of belief. I'm going to have to decide what I

believe about God. So, where we're headed today is to talk about this reality, that in that moment when God is speaking to me, what I do next shows what I really believe about God.

I want to begin in Hebrews 11 today and Hebrews 11 is a great passage. It's called the hall of faith. It's a great testimony chapter of different people who please God. I want to begin in verse 1 and we're going to go through a chunk of scripture here. It says, "now faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen. For by it, the people of old received their commendation. By faith, we understand that the universe was created by the word of God so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. By faith, Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain through which he was commended as righteous. God commending him by accepting his gifts and through his faith though he died, he still speaks. By faith, Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death and he was not found because God had taken him. Now before he was taken, he was commended as having pleased God." So to just build on that idea for just a second, what was it about Enoch that pleased God so much? Well, it was that he chose to live in faith and without faith it's impossible to please him. "For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him that to believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. By faith, Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen." By the way, if you read the scriptures carefully, when Noah builds the boat and says that the world is going to flood, it had never rained on earth, and for 120 years, Noah builds an Ark and everybody makes fun of him and he unwaveringly believes that what God has led him to do, God will fulfill -- for 120 years. "In reverent fear, constructed an Ark for the saving of his household, and by this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes from faith. By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance, he went out not knowing where he was going," which seems crazy to me. Like God says, Hey Abraham, I want you to go to a land I'll show you. And Abraham's like, where is it? And he's like, I'll show you, but here's what I can tell you if you follow me, what I'm going to give you is going to be this incredible thing that will change your life and it will change the legacy of your family going forward for generations and generations. And we still to this day are receiving the blessing of God's covenant with Abraham. "By faith, he went to live in the land of promise as in a foreign land living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise, for he was looking forward to the city that has foundations whose designer and builder is God. By faith, herself received power to conceive even when she was past the age." She wasn't just a little bit past the age, right, like she was 99 when she got pregnant, 90 so that's a thing -- "since she considered him faithful who had promised therefore from one man and him as good as dead were born descendants as many as the stars of the heaven." Sarah and Abraham are way past the point of thinking about having children and yet because God was faithful, he was pleased with their faith. He showed up and they conceived and had a kid and he had descendants as many as innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. These all died in faith not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak, thus make it clear that they are seeking a Homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had the opportunity to return, but as it is, they desire a better country that is a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God for he has prepared for them a city." These people were willing to take God at his word, not seeing the whole picture and they stepped out and followed God into these crazy adventures like building a boat because God was going to flood the earth and Oh by the way, all the animals you're going to have two of the unclean animals and seven of the clean animals. You're going to have them all in there, all of them, and it's going to be great. It's going to be great. You're going to be in there for 40 days and 40 nights while it rains and then another extended period of time or the water recedes. Like all of this is going to be awesome and don't worry about it. I know it's

never rained. I know you don't even really understand what flooding means and it's okay. Just take 120 years to build a really big boat. That sounds like a great idea, but here's the thing. While it may not logically sound like a great idea, what it does sound like is a God idea, and because Noah was faithful, we're still telling his story. Abraham follows God to a land he has no clue what it means, and he's way past the point of actually having heirs. He's about ready to lose his family, his nahala, his family's inheritance. He's about ready to lose it all and God comes to him and gives him a son who has twins and one of those has 12 sons, and those become the 12 tribes of Israel. And through that, the savior of the world comes, all because Abraham was willing to take God at his word without having to see the whole picture. And here's what I want to be clear about. When we hear God speak, you will not get the answer to every question you want answered. You won't get it. What you need to do is be faithful to step out into the things that you know God has already asked you to do and when he does, then he'll give you the next piece. Once we're faithful to what he's already asked us, he'll give us the next piece.

So, I want to go through the five kind of days of this study in experiencing God. We're back in the experiencing God workbook this week, and walk through kind of the major points of what black could be trying to communicate. I think it's really important because this stuff is so, so good. Okay, so number one is that when God speaks, I will face a crisis of belief. I'm going to have to decide what things are more important to me. God's never going to put me in a position where I can go, God, I can totally honor everything that you said and not change. That's never going to happen. Joshua chapter 6, this is what God says to Joshua. He says, "now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. They were scared. None went out. None came in. And the Lord said to Joshua, see, I've given Jericho into your hand with its King and mighty men of Valor. You shall March around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. And thus you shall do for six days. Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of ram horns before the ark. And on the seventh day you shall March around the city seven times and the priests shall blow the trumpets. And when they make the long blasts and with the Ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shout with a great shout and the wall, the city will fall down flat and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him. Okay, so let's talk about that strategy. The people of Israel are about to enter the promised land. They've been wandering around in the desert and they've learned their lessons. So they're ready to enter the promised land to get ahold of the blessing that God wants to give him. And he's like, the blessing is there. All you have to do is defeat Jericho. This is the first city that they come to (come with me to Israel and we'll go take a look at it from a distance because there's not really anything to see there up close.) We'll point it out where it's at while we're seeing something that's way cooler. But what happened in they, they come across and they're getting ready to go do battle and God's like, so here's your battle plan. Once you guys to all get in formation and then what you're going to do is you're going to march around the city and then you're going to go back to camp. Now the estimates on the city wall of Jericho is that it was two chariot widths thick, like two chariots could ride side by side across the top of the wall. Okay. This was a massive wall. And then, and so the question is how do you bring it down so that you can defeat the city? This is going to be a very long drawn out process. Guy's like, no, no, no, no. All you need to do is go out and formation march around the city and then go back to your camp. Joshua was like, cool. And then, and then what? God, I was like, okay, okay. Okay. So like on day two, what I want you to do is go around, go get in formation and then go march around the city and then go back to camp. And Joshua was like, sweet, we got this and then what? God's like, okay, so on day three what I need you to do is get in formation and then I want you to walk around the city and then go back to camp. Joshua was like, um, this battle plan is terrible. This doesn't work at all. Cause I bet on day four you're going to want us to get in formation, walk around the city and God's like, yep. And what about day five, God? You're going to want us to get in formation, march around the city and go back to camp.

Yeah. And then day six, what about day six? Get in formation, walk around the city. He's like, I have the mind of God or something. What about day seven we get in formation, walk around the city and then go back to camp. No, it's not. What I want you to do on day seven is get in formation and the march around the city seven times and then blow horns. That is what we're going to do, and Joshua was like, Oh, blow horns. The only thing from Joshua's perspective that this battle strategy can do is make him look foolish. It's the only thing that can happen, but, they do it and the walls fall down because God is in the details.

When you get a word from the Lord, when God speaks to you, you're going to have to do something with it and I guarantee you that if you just take the word for what it is, it's not going to make sense. But I also guarantee you that when you're faithful to what God says, what you're going to be able to be a part of is going to be pretty incredible. If you're willing to face down your crisis of belief. In Judges chapter 7, we have a story of a guy by the name of Gideon. Very famous story. This is Judges chapter 7, it says "in Jerubbaal, that is Gideon, and all the people who were with him, rose early and encamped beside the spring of Herod and the camp. And the camp of Midian was north of them by the Hill of Moreh, in the valley." Remember, Gideon's trying to pick an army to go against the Midianite army and the Midianite there was over a hundred thousand Midianite soldiers. "The Lord said to Gideon, the people with you are too many for me." Now, he already only had just a few thousand guys. He goes, "but this is too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand. Lest Israel boast over me saying, my own hand has saved me. Now, therefore proclaim in the ears of the people saying, whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return home and hurry away to the Mount of Gilead." So here's God's first cut on Gideon's army. Hey, if you're scared to fight, go ahead and go home. And so some people left, "22,000 of the people returned and 10,000 remained." So they just lost two thirds of their army. "And then the Lord said to Gideon, the people are still too many. I know the Midianite army, a hundred thousand people, too many 10,000. Take them down to the water and I will test them for you there. And anyone of whom I say to you, this one shall go with you, shall go with you. And anyone whom I say to you, this one shall not go with you, shall not go. So he brought the people down to the water and the Lord said to Gideon, everyone who laps the water with his tongue as a dog laps you shall set by himself, and likewise, everyone who kneels down to drink. And the number of those who lapped putting their hands to their mouths was 300 men." Now the question that a lot of people will ask about this passage at this moment is -- this is a little side trail off our sermon--, but they'll ask, okay, why is that? Why was that God's guy criteria? Now, I don't know for sure, but one speculation that is actually really like is this, that when a person reaches down and pulls the water up to their mouth with their hand, this is a person aware of the people around them. They care about everybody being able to drink at the same time. If a person bends over and puts their face in the water, they're not aware of anyone around them and God doesn't want that kind of people in his army, but it may be something else. It may just have been God flipped a coin. Like I don't know for sure, but that to me, that makes sense. And that would be consistent with the character of God too, to think that. But all the rest of the people kneel down to drink water. So Gideon started with 32,000 men and 22,000 of them were scared. He was left with 10,000 and God was like, no, no, no, no. We don't need 10,000 we don't need 10,000 because I don't want you guys to be able to say that you routed that army out of your own strength. So what we're going to do is reduce it down to 300. "And the Lord said to Gideon, with the 300 men who lapped, I will save you and give the Midianites into your hand and let all the others go every man to his home. So the people took provisions in their hands in their trumpets, and he sent all the rest of Israel, every man to his tent, but retained the 300 men. An the camp of Midian was below him in the valley. Then we know the story. They sneak up at night with lamps under bowls, and they break them all at once and start blowing trumpets. God's got a thing about blowing trumpets. If you ever need to have a God story, God story in a war, you don't need to have a sword. You need to have a trumpet -- like all you gotta do is blow a trumpet. And the Midianites get so consumed in

this fear that they actually start killing themselves. It's this incredible moment. It made no sense for Gideon to go against an army of a hundred thousand men in hand to hand combat with 300 men. That made no sense for him, but because he was willing to take God at his word, we're still telling his story. So, an encounter with God will always force you into a crisis of belief. Okay?

Number two, encounters with God require faith. 2 Corinthians 5:7 says this, "for we walk by faith, not by sight." We don't make decisions based on what we see alone. We make decisions based on faith. Where is God leading us? Where is God taking us? And that's one of the things that I hope, coming out of this series that we really wrestle with because we all want to bring plans to God -- and God, here's what I'm thinking. Here's my idea. Here's my dream, here's my hope, here's what I want, and we spend very little time saying, God, where are you? Just say, where is God and go there and it'll be crazy what you get to be a part of. God, where are you? I hope that that's part of our core coming out of this series.

Isaiah 7 says this "and the head of Ephraim is Samaria and the head of Samaria is a son of Remaliah. If you are not firm in faith, you will not be from at all". This, this whole idea, he's giving a lineage and talking about how the reason why Isaiah, what Isaiah is saying to the people is the reason why you're going to get restored is because you've chosen to restore your ability, your willingness to trust the Lord. And if you do, you're going to be delivered out of all this stuff that's going on, but if you're not firm in your faith and you're not going to be firm at all. Matthew 17 here's what Jesus said, "he said to them, because you are a little faith, truly, I say to you, if you have faith, the grain of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, move from here to there and it will move and nothing will be impossible for you."

You don't have to have a ton of faith, and I know that for all of us, we're like at some point in our life, sometimes we feel so close to God. Sometimes we don't feel close to God, and in those moments we have, we struggle with our faith. But look, you don't have to have a ton of faith. You just have to have a little bit of faith. What Jesus says is if you just have a little bit of faith, just do what God's asking you to do? If you're like, I don't even know what God's asking me to do next, okay, then be faithful to do what you know God already said for you to do. I don't know what God's told me to do. Where's my specific assignment? Read the Bible like it's, it's not complicated. God will probably take you to other places that are more specifically targeted to your world in time, but if you don't, like, God's never spoken to me. Read the Bible. You read one word out of the Bible. God spoke to you. Well, we got to figure out is what that means for our lives. So for example, when Jesus says, do unto others as you would have them do unto you, God spoke to you that message. That's a heavy influence on how we should treat people. Like you don't have to have a massive amount of faith or some great big assignment. You just have to have a little bit to do the things that he's already shown you. And as you're faithful in those things, he's going to show you more.

Number three, encounters with God are God-sized. So encounters with God are always going to face a crisis of belief. Number two, they require faith. And number three, they're God-sized. Here's what that means. When God comes to you and says, Hey, I want you to do this. You know what your first response is going to be. I can't. I can't. I can't do that. You know what God's response is going to be. I know, and come on, let's do it. Good news. You don't have to do it anyway. In Daniel 3, I love this story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, sad shack, my shack and to bed I go. That's what I used to call him when I was a kid. It's one of my favorite stories in the whole Bible because what I love about it is they made their decision, what they were going to do about their relationship with the Lord before God showed up, which is where we're going to be most of our lives. We're going to have to make a decision about what we believe about the Lord long before he shows up. It says, "Then Nebuchadnezzar in

furious rage," because Nebuchadnezzar builds this statue of himself and makes everybody bow down to it. Well, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego will not. They will not do it and they get ratted out by somebody else. And Nebuchadnezzar gets really, really mad. And so it says "Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the King and Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, is it true, oh, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up. Now, if you're ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music to fall down and worship the image that I've made well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast in the burning fiery furnace.

Here's one of those moments where as a follower of God, you have a line in the sand that you gotta decide what do you really believe about God? You can, you can say, I don't really believe that this is true, but I don't want to die. Or you can say my, the word of God says not to worship other gods. I will not do it. And then you're going to throw your life into somebody else's control. That's scary. And those are the kinds of decisions that were often called that make us followers of Jesus and culture tries to gray those areas for us too many times. And I think we find ourselves in a position, gosh, there was a King in the old Testament, I can't remember who is what his name is, but it says that he did evil in the eyes of the Lord and his heart was so hard that he didn't know that what he was doing was evil. I feel like that's a lot where we find ourselves because we don't take seriously the fact that when God says something, he means it. And then Nebuchadnezzar goes on to say, and who is the God who will deliver you out of my hands? Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego answered and said to the King, Oh, Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. Like they're like, we don't, there's no discussion about this. If this be so our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from that burning fiery furnace and he will deliver us out of your hand, oh, King, but if not, another translation says, but even if he doesn't be it known to you, oh, King, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you've set up. Like that's, that's their position before the miracle happened. That's their position. The only way out of this for them is if God shows up because they're just trying to honor what the Lord said and they're being put in a position where it could cost them their very lives and they're like, look, if God doesn't show up, even if he doesn't show up, we're not going to do the wrong thing. But we know he has the power to deliver us. Even if he doesn't though we're not going to do this because God said not to do it. And then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury and the expression of his face was changed again. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and he ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated because six times is just not enough. And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. And then these men were bound, their cloaks, their tunics and their hats. I don't know why we need to know that detail. They were bound, their cloaks, their tunics. And they left their hats on, which is incredibly thoughtful because nobody wants to die with hat head -- and their other garments and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace because the King's order was urgent and the furnace overheated and the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Now here's another one of those scenes in the Bible that I want to see when I get to heaven. This is one of those movies that I want to see played out. So the men were, they were bound. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were bound and the men are pushing them towards the furnace and it's so hot that the men that are pushing them towards the furnace die. Director's note: if I was the one in that scene of the movie, I would have stopped moving forward -- like, nobody's here to push me, so this is where all the other humans die, so I'll just stand here. They didn't do that. They actually continued walking of their own volition all the way in to the furnace, just to make a point about who their God is. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego fell bound into the burning fiery furnace. And then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste and he declared to his councilors, did we not cast three men bound into the fire?

They answered and said to the King, true, oh king. He answered and said, but I see four men unbound walking in the midst of the fire and they are not hurt. And the appearance of the fourth is like the son of the gods. So there's raging debate about who that form was. Was it an angel? Was it Jesus himself? It could have been either one of those things and then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace and he declared Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego servants of the most high God come out and come here. And then Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out from the fire. Here's a question. I wonder if when he came out, they shook hands and he was like, dude, your hands are clammy. Like it's one of my, that's how my brain thinks – like, how does that interaction look and are they, are they red in the face? I don't know. Probably not because it says the satraps, the prefects and the governors and the King's counselors gathered together, saw that the fire had not any power over the bodies of those men and the hair of their heads was not singed and their cloaks were not harmed and no smell of fire come upon them, which is a big deal cause you know how you smell when you've been around campfire. Like and this fire was a big campfire and they don't even smell like smoke.

I love their position and how God delivers them. Even in the midst of realizing that God had no obligation to honor the stand that they were taking, but they believed it was what God, that takes God. If God doesn't show up, they're dead. Encounters with God will always be God-sized. I think as a church and as individuals, we should have dreams so big for our life that if God doesn't show up it fails. Dreams where we think about, we get together and we talk about what we want to do and how we see God working and how we want to be a part of that and what that can mean for us. And we go, man, if we did that and God wasn't in it. Oh, whoa, I know, let's do it. That I think is the kind of encounters that God is looking to give to his people, but we gotta be willing to trust him.

Number four, what you do when God speaks shows what you really believe. No matter what words come out of your mouth. And I've seen a lot of people who've really intellectualized spiritual fear. And what I mean by that is, they study the word and study the word and study the word. And then they rationalize in their own mind all these excuses about how they don't have to actually do anything with it. And then anytime somebody challenges them with it, they know how to play the Christian game and throw a couple of verses out to get people off track. But here's the bottom line, what Blackaby says in the book, experiencing God is really, really true because God says it in his word. What he says is, listen, no matter what words come out of your mouth, what you do when God shows up and speaks to you, that shows what you really believe about God. Are you willing to hang in there when it gets tough because God asked you to endure or are you going to bail out? Are you willing to share and be generous when God asks you to be generous or are you going to hold on and make sure that you have enough? Are you willing to stand into the hard spaces that God's asking you to go into because he knows that on the other side of that you're going to have this incredible blessing that you're going to be a part of? Or are you going to bail out and go to the easy thing that you know? What we do too many times is we hold onto the things that we know and when our hand is full of things that we already know, there's no space for God to put anything in it that's new or better. 1 Samuel 17 super famous story again, but the reason why these stories are famous is because the action of the person that honored the Lord is so evident.

The fact that the person chose to let God be God is so obvious in these spaces. Here's what it says, and the Philistine moved towards a forward and came near to David. This is the story of David and Goliath -- with his shield bearer in front of him and when the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him -- do word study that were disdained four he was but a youth ready and handsome in appearance. Now other word there that's translated youth is closer to eight to 12 than it is 19 to 20. David is just a young kid and he comes down to the army lines come with me to Israel – we'll stand right where this story took place. He comes down to the battle lines and he's like, why is he making fun of our God? He's a kid and his older brothers are trying to chastise him and he's like, no, no, he's making fun of our God off. I'll

fight him. So he goes up to see Saul, who, by the way, Saul should have been down with his men leading the charge, but he wasn't. He was up the hill away from everything trying to play it safe and he says, Saul, I'll use my sling to kill him. What we don't understand in the story, below the story there, is that that's a huge slam to Saul because Saul is from the tribe of Benjamin. What Benjamin is most famous for is for slingers, like if there was anyone who should have been throwing a rock at Goliath, it was Saul. And David takes another stab at him. He goes, I might just be a little boy shepherd, but who's shepherding our people? So he goes down and he's like, no, we'll do it. I'll do it. And the Philistine said to David, am I a dog that you come to me with sticks. And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, come to me and I will give you your, I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the, and then David said to the Philistine, you come to me with a sword and a spirit with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel whom you have defiled in this day the Lord will deliver you into my hand and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And there's so much good symbolism there that's not important right now. It be important later -- and I will give you the dead bodies of the, of the hosts of the Philistines and this day, the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth and that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. David did what he did. He stepped into the fray. He took God at his word. Like when somebody says, if God doesn't show up, there's no way that a 10 year old kid defeats a giant warrior. There's no way. There's no way, and David is fearless so that the world will know that there is a God in Israel. I'll take the risk. I'll take the risk. I wonder, maybe just a discussion for your life group this week in your life. What are you doing that if God doesn't show up, you will fail? The whole thing would be catastrophic just so that the world will know that there is a God in Parker. What are we doing where we're putting ourselves in that kind of a position?

Number five, is that true faith requires action. Don't talk about what you believe. Live it out and then I'll know. I think in our, in our Western Greek minded culture, we try to convince people intellectually where we're at. The truth is you could look at somebody and know where they're at. You can look at them and know. James 2 says this: "What good is it my brothers if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, go in peace, be warmed and filled without giving them the things needed for the body. What good is that? That's the classic Christian move, right? Like the, I'm so sorry. I'll pray for you. I've got, do something about it. If God presents an opportunity for you to serve him through ministering to somebody else, don't go, I'll pray for you and then walk off and never pray for him. Do something about it and pray for them. Like for real. Pray for him. Don't just say it and then not do it. This is what he says. If you see somebody that's hungry or in need and go, Oh, be warmed them well fed but don't do anything. What good is it? So also faith by itself, if it doesn't have works is dead. But some of them will say, you have faith. I have works. Show me your faith apart from your works and I will show you my faith by my works. This is James's plea like, look, if you're going to, if you're going to hear God speak in your life consistently, you're going to have to be willing to do something with it. You can't stay where you are and go with God. You believe that God is one. You do well. Even the demons believe and shudder. And good news, if you can mentally ascend to the truth of God existing, good for you. Satan's there. Do you want to be shown you foolish person that faith apart from works is useless, was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar. You see, the faith was active along with his works and faith was completed by his works so that the scripture was fulfilled that says Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness. It doesn't say by the way that Abraham believed in God. It says Abraham believed God. It's a different level of investment and it was counted to him as righteousness. And then here's a phrase in James that I hope can be said of me and he was called a friend of God. I want that to be true in my life. You see that a person is justified by

works and not by faith alone and in the same way was not also Rahab, the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way. For as the body apart from the spirit is dead. So faith apart from works is dead. What he says is the spirit is what gives the body life. Your works is what gives your faith life. If you don't have them, you're not following God.

So I have all kinds of implications for this. I want to focus on four today. Number one is we cannot stay where we are and go with God. I'm going to keep pounding that we cannot stay where we are and go with God. We can't do it. Number two, we have to make changes in our lives to follow God. Okay?

God's call on us as we move, and plan for our life means that we're constantly going to have to be making adjustments to the things that we hold dear. Because this world is alluring. Whether that's power or status or nostalgia or relationships or jobs or security, anything that we try to get that isn't in consistent alignment with God's desire for us, we've gotta be willing to let that go. And until the day we die, I think we're going to be making those changes in our lives. God takes us in radically different directions. Sometimes you didn't that coming at all. The only thing I can promise you, having had that happen to me myself many times, the thing I can promise you is it's not easy. It was worth it. It is.

Number three, God is interested in partnering with people who will trust him before seeing the result.

And I know a lot of people who, again, spiritualize their fear by saying, well, wouldn't God want us to be prudent? No. God would want us to be obedient. Sometimes prudence is obedience, but too many times we leverage prudence to stay put and not have to actually risk at all. You cannot be in a faith relationship with God and not take risks. Can't do it. People want to talk about God is safe. I love in the book the lion, the witch, and the wardrobe. Um, when the kids are at the home of the beavers and they asked, they're talking about Aslan and they asked the beavers is Aslan safe? And I loved how they depicted it in the movie. Like there's this really sharp, no, is Aslan safe? No, but he's good. Such a beautiful statement about who God is. Is he safe? Depends on how you define that safe lesson. You don't ever have to take any risks. No. That's not who God is, but he's good and you can trust it. You can trust it in those risky places. It'll be worth it.

Number four, when God shows up, what we do next reveals what we really believe about him. Like say what you want to all day long about what you believe. When God shows up and speaks to you when he shows himself to you, what you do next shows what you really believe about him.

And I would again, as we move into our communion time, just ask us this question to wrestle with. Where are we in our life taking these steps of faith. Where is a place in your life where you're taking a step of faith that's so big that if God wasn't in it, it would catastrophically fail. Those are the places of biggest fear and biggest reward. I was commenting this morning, we were having a, by the way, it's Tuesday, we're recording this. Uh, I was having a meeting with our executive team and we were just talking about different things that we can celebrate and how thankful I am to be able to be here in this church with this staff, with this church, family in this community. How thankful I am to be a part of the world that God has invited us into here and, and how hard it was to have to let go of the things it took for me to get here. Like, we knew that God was calling us here. And the step of actually letting go of everything we had to let go of, like we had to move away from our kids, which was hard and we had to move into this new situation which was completely unknown and we didn't know where anything was going to go. Like, um, we just knew that this was the right move, that this was God's next steps for us. And what I can tell you is as hard as it was, and it was hard, there was a lot of tears, as hard as it was, it's

been a hundred fold worth it to be a part of what God wanted to bless in the beginning. And he invited us into, which has been such a gift for us. Where in your life has God been pushing you and nudging you to get out and take a step of faith and you just haven't, that crisis of belief, like you're losing the battle. You're not stepping in faith, you're stepping in safety. Let's think about that. And maybe take a minute to commit that to the Lord as we get ready to take communion together.

On the night Jesus was betrayed, he took bread, and he broke it. He said, this is my body which has given for you. So whenever you eat this bread, do it in remembrance of me.

And then after the dinner, he took a cup and he said this cup's the blood of the covenant, which is shed for you. So whenever you drink this cup, do it in remembrance of me.

God, we thank you for the crazy adventure that you invite us to. God, thank you for really forcing us into positions where we have to decide are you the most important thing? Or is some thing that we're holding on to that we believe helps us be safe. God, give us the courage to live in faith as we try to keep in step with you. We love you, Lord. Thank you for your grace. In your name. Amen.

Let's sing one more song together.

So as we come out of this message and get into our life group discussions this week -- man, I just really hope that we can begin this conversation about like, man, I thought, I mean God was leading me here and now that I've been going through all these things, I see it and I missed it. Or, I feel like God's nudging me right now and, and I'm scared to death. I don't know what to do with that. What? What do you guys want me to do? You think I should go with that? Or I don't know. I don't know if I've ever heard God speak to me and I don't know what to do with that. Like all those conversations are so good. But here's the thing. What I promise you is part of knowing when God is speaking to you is that it's bigger than anything you can do on your own. God's not interested in you doing something for him. He's interested in leading you to partner with him as he works in the world and you get to be a part of his work. And so may you be deeply and profoundly attentive to God's nudging in your heart this week. Thank you so much for tuning in. Have a great week.