

Bay City Wesleyan Church  
July 9, 2017

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Sunday Morning 07-09-2017

Our Challenge for 2017 is to regularly ask Jesus, "Am I following you?"  
When was the last time you asked?

<http://bible.com/events/246422>

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[Image]

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[http://d1o2alqw72z1h8.cloudfront.net/5722009-1483223017441\\_152x152.jpg](http://d1o2alqw72z1h8.cloudfront.net/5722009-1483223017441_152x152.jpg)

Our theme for 2017 is Jesus' invitation, "Follow me."

These two simple words will transform every person that accepts the challenge. I pray that in the next few months all of us in this church, as well as those who join us, will see Jesus more clearly, love him more dearly, and follow him more nearly.

BIG FAITH believes Jesus is everything he claims to be and that he will do everything he says he will do.

BIG FAITH a BIG DEAL for Jesus because...

Trust was devastated in the Garden.

- + Dishonesty
- + Distrust
- + Disobedience

God has been working to restore trust ever since.

- + Truth
- + Trust
- + Transformation

How does Jesus build BIG FAITH?

The 5 things the Holy Spirit uses to grow BIG FAITH are:

1. Practical Teaching
2. Providential Relationships
3. Private Disciplines
4. Personal Ministry
5. Pivotal Circumstances

All these painful changes produced a list of questions in my heart. Why does Jesus allow these painful, pivotal events? Why doesn't he do something about them when I'd like? How does he expect me to trust him when this happens to me or to my loved ones?

Psalms 10:1 NLT

O Lord , why do you stand so far away? Why do you hide when I am in trouble?

<http://bible.com/116/psa.10.1.NLT>

Psalms 42:9-10 NLT

"O God my rock," I cry, "Why have you forgotten me? Why must I wander around in grief, oppressed by my enemies?" Their taunts break my bones. They scoff, "Where is this God of yours?"

<http://bible.com/116/psa.42.9-10.NLT>

Psalms 44:23-24 NLT

Wake up, O Lord! Why do you sleep? Get up! Do not reject us forever. Why do you look the other way? Why do you ignore our suffering and oppression?

<http://bible.com/116/psa.44.23-24.NLT>

Psalms 22:1-2 NIV

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish? My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest.

<http://bible.com/111/psa.22.1-2.NIV>

John 11:1-45 NIV

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light." After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up." His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Then Thomas (also known as Didymus ) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher

is here," she said, "and is asking for you." When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there. When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?" Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. "Take away the stone," he said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days." Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go." Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

<http://bible.com/111/jhn.11.1-45.NIV>

Sermon in a Sentence:

When your circumstances go south, Jesus wants to work IN you so later he can work THROUGH you.

If you've been thinking, "There's no hope for my faith. My life went south and my faith went with it."

I want you to listen for another voice. It might be a faint whisper. But filter out the noise of hopeless discouragement.

Listen for a quiet voice saying something like, "I called a dead man out of his tomb. I can heal your faith. I can repair your trust in me. I can refresh your confidence in me."

Ways to Cooperate with Jesus

Pray that Jesus opens your eyes to see his presence in your life.

Participate in a group of BIG FAITH Jesus-followers.

Memorize John 11:35-36 to reprogram your thinking about Jesus.

INVITATION:

Please, take a few minutes to think about the painful, pivotal circumstances in your life. Let the Holy Spirit help you determine what Jesus wants to do to heal and to build your trust in him.

Reflect on painful situations in your life and determine what Jesus wants to do while this song plays. Then I will pray for you.

Listen to this song again later

Karen Peck & New River -- Four Days Late

<https://youtu.be/se7yAkqu3Ek>