

Depth of Belief

Jesus said for his disciples to drop their nets and follow him. They did just that.

But so many want to stay in the in-between, and never really follow Jesus. They stand there, holding their nets, in paralyzing indecision, and often don't even see the difference between being a believer and a citizen of the world.

Jesus calls us to follow him completely. We follow him in the time we have left on earth.

Jesus calls us to deny ourselves and follow him. We say that we are fine, and just stand there.

Jesus says if we are lukewarm he will cast us away. So we stay somewhere between ice cold and boiling hot, and make him an afterthought.

This is the problem of today's church. We serve and worship as long as we are happy. We show up occasionally, fitting worship in with all of the activities of world and family, and then wonder why things don't turn out just super in the faith department,

Walt Disney said that "when you believe in a thing, believe in it all the way, implicitly and unquestionably. This quite ordinary cartoonist who became world famous for his imagination did just that, and has changed the way billions of people think about life. Not just with films and movies, or theme parks or television shows, but with belief which changes everything.

If I had one prayer granted in all my years of ministry, it would be that everyone, from young adult with so many challenges and a world filled with frenetic activity, to middle age with concerns about life's challenges and business concerns, to older adult with aches and pains and faith which may not be what they had hoped it would be, it would be this: that they see the depth of faith which can take them to the highest heights.

When faith in God becomes the most important thing, and everything is aligned in that direction, a new world opens. The world cannot destroy, for it is in

the background. People cannot hurt, for we do not depend on human approval. We stop moving from place to place and rejoice in the family we have found.

Deep faith meets difficult times head on, and expects victory. God's holy presence in our lives can give us vision beyond the moment.

Richard Bach writes that "the mark of your ignorance is the depth of your belief in injustice and tragedy. What the caterpillar calls the end of the world, the Master calls the butterfly."

When dark clouds head our way, we must look up to the one who created the sunshine, and is in charge of all kinds of weather, from temperatures to human situations we may encounter.

Even comedians know to look up. I used to play Frisbee golf, and many times would get the Frisbee stuck where ladder or another Frisbee were the only solutions. George Carlin said that "Frisbeetarianism is the belief that when you die, your soul goes up on the roof and gets stuck."

Of course, far from being stuck, our souls go to heaven where eternal blessings abound. To find deep faith, we must look where no one else would look, and seek what many will never find. We find the eternal God, who walks and talks with us, and makes salvation a daily experience.

Finding depth of faith like Joan of Arc, who refused to deny her faith and her life on earth ended for it, sometimes takes going through storms and finding God can part the waters of the Dead Sea with our enemy fast approaching.

"One life," she wrote, "is all we have and we live it as we believe in living it. But to sacrifice what you are and to live without belief, that is a fate more terrible than dying."

Don't waste the time God has allotted you with things which will pass away soon. Make time for holy things, for church, study of God, helping others, and walking in the ways Jesus has called you. Know how to drop the nets of worry, materialism, or busyness to find oceans of faith, and blessings only God can supply for you and your family.

One of my favorite images of deep faith is when Jesus and his disciples were

on small boat in the middle of a storm. Despite the dangerous winds and towering waves, Peter stepped out of the boat and walked on top of the water to Jesus.

Beneath the surface of waters are crocodiles of worry, sharks of unbelief. There are whirlpools of death, and a lack of oxygen for humans which can lead to death.

But Jesus, the master of the winds and waves, can save us. Not only can he save us, he can make depths full of wonder and love, because he can do anything.

Please, Dear Reader, do not delay from moving from the surface to the depths of faith, where angels dwell and heaven steps forth. It is so much more than you ever thought it could be!