



# THE GIFT



## THE GIFT OF FAITH





**FAITH:**

:: confidence or trust in  
a person or thing

:: belief that is not based on proof

**Hebrews 11:1-2,6a** [NIRV]

<sup>1</sup> Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being sure of what we do not see. <sup>2</sup> That is what the people of long ago were praised for.

<sup>6</sup> Without faith it is impossible to please God.

### Luke 1:26-38

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

<sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

<sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

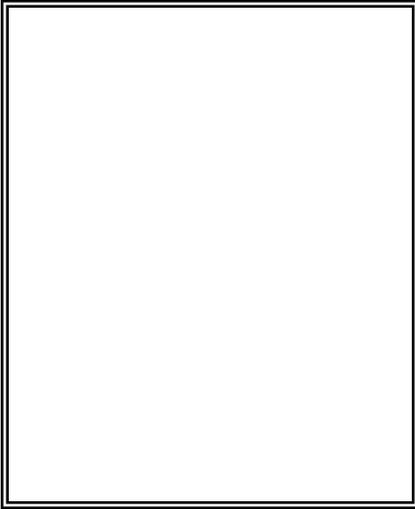
<sup>34</sup> "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

<sup>35</sup> The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month.

<sup>37</sup> For no word from God will ever fail."

<sup>38</sup> "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Faith is rooted in our **WHO**,  
not our **WHAT**.



**Genesis 15:6 (NLT)**

*And Abram believed the Lord,  
and the Lord counted him as righteous  
because of his faith.*

**Hebrews 11:39-40 [MSG]**

<sup>39-40</sup> *Not one of these people, even  
though their lives of faith were  
exemplary, got their hands on what was  
promised. God had a better plan for us:  
that their faith and our faith would come  
together to make one completed whole,  
their lives of faith not complete  
apart from ours.*

Faith follows **BELIEF**,  
but it precedes **PROOF**.

**Hebrews 11:6 [NIRV]**

*Without faith it is  
impossible to please  
God. Those who come to  
God must believe that he  
exists. And they must  
believe that he rewards  
those who look to him.*

## SO WHAT?

1) Faith is the fitting response to  
a **FAITHFUL** God.

**2 Corinthians 5:7 (NIV)**

*For we live by faith,  
not by sight.*

2) Faith expands our perspective of  
what is **POSSIBLE**.

**Mark 9:23a (NIV)**

*"Everything is possible for  
one who believes."*

# NOTES:

*When God  
chooses Mary as the instrument,  
when God wants to enter this world  
in the manger in Bethlehem,  
this is not an idyllic family occasion,  
but rather the beginning  
of a complete reversal,  
a new ordering of all things on this earth.*  
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

*"Faith never knows where it is being lead,  
but it loves and knows the One who is leading."*  
- Oswald Chambers



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## How to start a relationship with God:

- 1) Admitting that you, like everyone else, are in need of rescue.
- 2) Asking God to forgive your sins.
- 3) Saying YES to God by trusting Jesus as Savior & Lord.

You can do that right now by simply talking to God in a prayer like this:

**Dear Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. Today, I recognize you as my Savior; and I put my faith in you as my LORD. Help me to faithfully follow you all the days of my life. In Your name, Amen.**



## For Further Reflection:

:: Reread Luke 1:26-38

- :: What initially stands out to you in this passage? Why?
- :: What allowed/enabled Mary to be entrusted with this task?
- :: What circumstances in her life would've caused her to have to reach "deep" to live by faith in this process?
- :: Discuss the ways Mary demonstrated faith.
- :: What do you think made that easy or hard for her?

:: Discuss the Biblical definition of faith. [ref. Hebrews 11:1-2]

- :: What do you find most helpful/challenging about that definition?
- :: What are practical ways we demonstrate having faith like that?
- :: Share a time you struggled to embrace faith. Why? What happened?

:: Pastor Shawn said, "Faith is rooted in our WHO, not our WHAT."

- :: Discuss who/what people tend to put their faith in.
- :: As you reflect on your life, where have you tended to most frequently placed faith and trust?
- :: What current situations are you most tempted to focus on "what" rather than God as "who"?

:: What is one thing you need/can do this week to more fully live by faith?

:: Identify 1 person you can invite to pray for you as you step into doing that.



Unless otherwise noted, today's Scripture is from the New International Version [NIV].  
Shawn Cossin (@shawncossin) – December 8 & 9, 2018

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