

Faith That Hears • Faith That Reaches • Faith That Returns

A Sermon in Four Movements

Sunday Morning • September 13, 2026

Faith begins with hearing. It grows through trusting. It reaches forward in desperation. And it returns, even after failure.

Four portraits from Scripture. Four faces of faith. One Savior who meets every one of them.

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I. Faith That Hears (John 4:46-53)

The Nobleman — Faith Born From Hearing

Picture this man. A father. A desperate father.

His son is dying in Capernaum. He has tried everything. He has watched the boy's

breathing grow shallow. He has listened to the servants whisper in the hallway. He has felt the helplessness that only a parent knows.

Then he hears — Jesus is in Galilee.

Just hears. No guarantee. No promise. No proof.

But hearing is enough to move him.

He walks nearly twenty miles from Capernaum to Cana. Not a stroll. Not a casual visit. A father's urgent march — dust on his sandals, fear in his chest, hope flickering like a candle in the wind. At first, Jesus rebukes the man in verse 48: "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe." The man did not turn and leave, and Jesus recognized it was strong enough to respond to the man's faith and request, as Jesus says, "Go; your boy lives."

This is faith in its earliest form: faith born from testimony.

Faith That Trusts the Word

He reaches Jesus and pleads for his son's life.

Jesus looks at him and says one sentence: "Go; your son lives."

No touch. No journey back with him. No dramatic moment.

Just a word.

| *"The man believed the word that Jesus spoke unto him, and he went*
| *his way."* John 4:50

He believed without seeing. He walked home with nothing but a promise. He trusted Christ's word before seeing Christ's work.

This is faith that hears — faith that begins with testimony and grows into trust.

II. Faith That Reaches (Mark 5:25–34)

The Woman — Faith Born From Desperation

Now picture another scene.

A woman who has suffered twelve years. Twelve years of bleeding. Twelve years of doctors. Twelve years of disappointment. Twelve years of being told, “There’s nothing more we can do.”

She is exhausted. She is isolated. She is financially ruined. She is emotionally drained.

But she hears Jesus is passing through.

And she says within herself:

| *“If I may touch but His garment, I shall be whole.”* Mark 5:28

That is not quiet faith. That is not polite faith. That is *desperate* faith.

Faith That Makes Contact

She pushes through the crowd — weak, trembling, determined. People bump her. People shove her. But she keeps reaching.

Her hand slips through the mass of bodies... and touches the hem of His garment.

Immediately she feels strength return. Immediately she knows something has changed.

Jesus stops. He turns. He says:

| *“Your faith has healed you.”* Mark 5:34

And Scripture adds: “Jesus perceived that power had gone out from Him.”

Not because He lost something — but because her faith made real contact with Him.

Many brushed against Jesus that day. Only one drew from Him.

This is faith that reaches — faith that acts, faith that stretches, faith that refuses to stay passive.

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III. Faith That Returns (2 Samuel 12)

David — Faith Born From Conviction

Now picture a king.

David — a man after God's own heart — but a man who fell deeply.

After Bathsheba, David lived nearly a year in spiritual silence.

Psalm 32 gives us the inside view:

- "My bones wasted away."
- "Your hand was heavy upon me."
- "My strength was dried up."

He still believed in God, but he could not feel God. He still belonged to God, but he could not hear God.

Sin does not destroy faith — it suffocates it.

Faith Awakened Through Confrontation

Then Nathan comes.

He doesn't shout. He doesn't accuse. He simply tells a story... and then says: "You are the man."

And suddenly the fog lifts. The silence breaks. Conviction pierces the heart.

Conviction is not the enemy of faith. Conviction is the *doorway back into* faith.

David repents. David returns. David is restored.

Faith That Sees Beyond This Life

After the child dies, David says something astonishing:

| *“He cannot come to me, but I can go to him.”* 2 Samuel 12:23

This is resurrection faith. This is afterlife hope. This is a man who knows forgiveness is real.

This is faith that returns — faith reborn through repentance, faith strengthened through mercy.

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IV. Faith That Misses the Blessing (John 20:24–29)

Thomas — Faith That Needed Sight

And now we come to Thomas.

Thomas loved Jesus. Thomas followed Jesus. Thomas was loyal.

But Thomas said he would not believe unless he saw the nail prints. Unless he touched the wounds. Unless he had physical proof.

Jesus meets him in mercy — He always meets honest doubt with mercy.

But Jesus also speaks a blessing Thomas could not yet receive:

| *“Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.”* John
| 20:29

The nobleman believed without seeing. The woman believed without seeing. David believed without seeing. Thomas believed only after seeing.

And Jesus says there is a deeper blessing for those who trust His word before they see His hand.

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Conclusion

Oh, blessed are those who believe without seeing. If only Thomas could have had

such faith.

But that blessing is not lost. It is offered to us — right now, today.

Faith begins with hearing. Faith grows into trusting. Faith reaches for Christ.

Faith returns after failure.

And in every stage, Jesus meets us personally.

May we be counted among those who believe without seeing.

"Blessed are they who have not seen,

and yet have believed."

John 20:29