

My faith was truly tested today as I gave birth to my breathless child Blakely. I never got to look into her eyes, hear her first cry or laugh and I never proved her first word was going to be mama or give her a bottle, changed her diapers or took her to kindergarten. I wondered about her personality and I'll never know. Everything I planned for the two of us to do together never happened. I felt my baby's kick this morning and now I'm being asked to plan her funeral.

My worse nightmare has become reality and it is by far the worst thing I've experienced yet. But my fears are relieved because I know my baby is in the arms of God.

Grace and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Tonight/today I continue on with the five point series Pastor Nelson mentioned on the Holy Spirit with number 2 the work of the Holy Spirit emphasized by Luther who "Calls us to Faith"/Stepping out in Faith, a faith we could not obtain ourselves.

We all have looked back on things we have done and we wonder “Did God really want me to do that? Did He really say Go or were we hearing things”? (Seminary decision). How do we know the Holy Spirit is “Calling us to Faith”? Or as some say, “Stepping out in Faith” or “Taking a leap of faith”? HOW STRONG IS OUR FAITH? YOUR FAITH, MY FAITH? HAS OUR FAITH BEEN TESTED LATELY?

Each of us have a unique path to live and we are the only ones who are able to live it. No one else – no one, only us. So we need the Holy Spirit to direct us, work through us and speak to our hearts. We need to learn how to ^{hear} ~~her~~ and listen for God’s voice so each of us can figure out or discern His will for each of us. Believe me, this is a lifelong process. We also need to choose to step out in faith meaning make that choice even if it is hard or the results will not be pleasant.

We must know when and how the Holy Spirit is “Calling us to faith” or we are walking in faith is so very challenging but

There will be not absence of issues

No flurry of positive open doors to direct us

No one saying this is the way

No negative events assuming it is not God's Will

SO WHAT DO WE DO? SO WHAT CAN WE DO? to realize the Holy Spirit could be, could be "Calling us to Faith" by Stepping out in Faith?

First – We feel a sense of urgency to obey that requires trust.

Are we sensing God is telling us to do something and it keeps coming into our minds and will not stop? If we follow through we would be doing something different than we thought would take place and happen. It's not typical or logical. Whatever we decide taking ~~a~~ this step of faith requires trusting God's promises because His ways are not our ways. When it does not make sense to us and we distrust the Holy Spirit's tug on our hearts, it is now more than ever (as the kids in VBS said) that we must trust and have faith in God's promises because they will carry us safely to shore.

Second – We sense God is asking us to surrender something to Him. This means let go of something, especially our pride, stubbornness, idols, self-determined plans etc. His ways are not our ways. Remember God is God/we are not. Remember trusting means surrender to God by laying down and surrendering everything. Can we do that? Do we have that kind of faith?

Third – The thing we feel led to do requires reliance on God, not ourselves. We must remember that the only way to keep going = Rely on God. (Philippians 4:13.) But God will not provide all we want but He will provide what we need which will shape and mold us through our process. (repeat). Grace is given when needed but without God feeding us there is no way we can face challenges ahead of us and try to do it on our own. We must rely on God and His ways (Jesus Rescue from VBS) because self-reliance is not stepping out or “Calling us to faith”.

Fourth – WE can see that God has equipped us to the hard things. Maybe we have been waiting on God for a long time. Maybe we prayed and prayed about something but nothing

changes or is happening. There are times when we poured our heart out to God with passionate prayer, tears and pleas for others to pray for you because God calls each of us to pray. He does work through prayer but we may need to do something new or different in addition to prayer by acting during our wait. But God might be waiting on us to do what He has already equipped us to do.

Fifth and last – God is asking us to believe in Him in new ways. When we are “Called to faith” and step out in faith we will experience God in so many new ways. And no matter what it is, God will always equip us. Do we see or have we seen God’s hand all over our tough times? That is the Holy Spirit working in and through us.

Do we know that for many Christians the reality that they are being “Called to faith” by the Holy Spirit is not even on their radar screen. And that “calling” is not just for people in ministry but for all of us! And we must also remember that we have, each of us, multiple callings of faith and these callings change throughout our lives.

God is at the controls of our lives (our co-pilot) or rather He wants to be at the controls. But He gives us the freedom to pilot ourselves if we wish. The problem is that we often crack up, much as we could expect to do if we took the controls of an airplane we had not been taught to fly.

What about all of us here tonight/today? Who or what is in control of our lives? Are we still holding on to the controls thinking we can do it all by ourselves better or have we allowed God to take control? It is really amazing what God can do through us if we let Him “Call us to Faith” or we step out in faith.

The late Rev. Billy Graham once said, “We can believe in the work of the Holy Spirit because we see what He does in people’s lives when they surrendered to Christ and possess His power.¹⁷ Called by faith we accept the fact that the Holy Spirit lives within us. He is there to give us special power to work for Christ. He is there to give us strength in the moment of temptation. He is there to produce supernatural fruit of the

spirit such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

God knows us, how we work and what is best for us. If we will only relinquish or surrender the controls to Him, He will see us safely home and we would be as the VBS kids said, "A lighthouse shining in the darkness".

GOD IS GOOD ALL THE TIME----ALL THE TIME GOD IS GOOD.

Amen.

