

Increase Our Faith

"And the Apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith." – Luke 17:5

Summary:

The Apostles' prayer acknowledges Christ as the source of grace and highlights that true disciples remain imperfect. Faith doesn't cease at conversion; it evolves and sometimes demands immediate growth. As faith underpins humility, love, patience, and obedience, strengthening faith enables believers to forgive, confess Christ, sacrifice cherished possessions, trust God in dark times, endure suffering, and confront death with courage and purpose.

Outline:

1. Christ is the source of faith

- The Apostles address the Lord as the giver of grace and proper object of worship.

2. True disciples remain imperfect

- Believers recognise their deficiencies and desire freedom from them.

3. Faith can and should increase

- Faith admits of degrees, and greater measures are both attainable and necessary.

4. Growing faith strengthens obedience

- Faith enables forgiveness, confession, sacrifice, and trust when obedience is costly.

5. Faith prepares believers to die well

- Only God-given faith can sustain courage, testimony, and hope at life's final hour.

Text

Considering these words in relation to the Being addressed—"The Lord"—they reveal that He is the source of grace and the focus of worship. When referring to the persons who spoke to Him—"The Apostles"—they show that even His disciples have imperfections, but they are aware of them and strive to be free from them. Regarding the topic—"our faith"—they indicate that faith develops over time; it is not complete instantly, and higher levels can be achieved. Concerning the context—our Saviour's previous command—they point out that increasing faith is always good, and sometimes essential.

Observe what he was advocating: "Take heed to yourselves: if your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day and seven times returns to you, saying, I repent, you must forgive him." The Apostles then asked Jesus, "Increase our faith"—so we can do this.

But why focus specifically on faith? Why not emphasize increasing humility, love, or patience? The reason is that faith is the foundation from which these virtues develop, and as faith grows, they will also thrive. For all things become possible to those who believe.

Forgiveness might seem hard at first, but active faith makes it easier. Just as we believe that withholding forgiveness prevents us from being forgiven, we can trust that God has already forgiven us for Christ's sake. If we've been forgiven a debt of ten thousand talents, why would we threaten a fellow servant who owes only a hundred pence? Many similar situations will challenge us to have greater faith, inspiring us to pray for it.

Did the Saviour say he will deny those who feel ashamed of him and his words? Does he call us to openly acknowledge and confess him before others? Could doing so offend our relatives or friends and lead to persecution and shame? Faith makes this possible and easier as it grows. Peter and John said, "We must obey God rather than men." "We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." They rejoiced to be worthy to suffer shame for His name.

"By faith Moses feared not the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing him who is invisible."

Are you called to give up something that nature will forcefully take away? "By faith, Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac." Are you asked to trust God during great struggles and hardships—when His providence seems to oppose His promises, when resources run out, and no escape appears possible—when He says, "Come, follow me through this dark experience. You are uncertain; but I know the way. Here is my arm; feel it; lean on it."

He says, "Your sorrow will become your salvation; your tests will lead to your triumph. In the end, it will reveal that I am compassionate and merciful, making you realize, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.'" But all this relies on faith—without it, what is the meaning? "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

How serious was God's command to Moses: "Go up and die, and be gathered to thy people!" Through age, infirmities, and sickness, God is summoning you to the same destiny. The living are aware that they will die. But what does it truly mean to die? We have no direct experience of

death ourselves or from others.

Yet, amid all this, we prepare to leave every earthly scene behind, surrounded by grieving friends whose presence we cannot avoid or bear. We endure sinking spirits and bodies full of pain, perhaps feeling our unworthiness and sin more than ever before. We contemplate entering an untested and eternal realm, awaiting the moment to stand before Purity itself. With resignation and willingness, we face the departure, knowing it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to do well what can never be repeated. Our aim is to glorify God, encourage others, serve as examples until the very end, and above all, pray—"Lord—Lord! increase our faith."

"Count us worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of thy goodness, and the work of faith with power."

This sermon is taken from William Jay's devotional, *Morning and Evening Exercises* (January 7, Evening), first published in 1854.