

## Testing of our Faith, Part 2



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**SUMMARY:** If you know someone going through fiery trials, or if you are, you can really benefit from this message. WHY do God's children have so many tests of their faith? How do we defeat doubt, worry and anxiety? What are the biggest reasons for testing our faith? How do we come to a perfect peace in the storm? Are we sure we even have true faith? All this and more in this part 2 message. Please be sure to listen to part 1 first.

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**Shabbat shalom to all of you again.** Several of you called or emailed recently and I can't tell you just how much I appreciate hearing from some of you.

Our focus on this site is having a strong relationship with our Father and our Savior – and one another. The testing of our faith certainly drives us to God and creates a bond with one another as well.

**Be sure to check out the BLOGS on this site as well.** The most recent one I posted – about Psalm 22:6 when Christ prophetically is feeling like --“For I am a worm and no man...” This blog is one of my favorites. You'll appreciate this special worm – and your Savior – so much more after reading it.

This message today is **PART 2, THE TESTING** of our FAITH; to be sure it's the genuine article. **Please, please hear the first message first, then this one.** And I recommend you hear the audio as well as have the notes before you. This has been a year of testing!

The sermon is geared especially for people suffering through tests and trials for years and years. I know people who are deaf – or blind or have extreme poverty.

But we're all going to be severely tested – and it's for our good. It's not punishment or a spiritual spanking so much as it's a refining process, to prove our mettle, to purge out the dross and make us stronger. So for that, we thank God and learn to look UP in our trials instead of looking around. Testing can be tough if you're not ready for it.

(Story of when I took my first licensing test... but my study had been months before and I'd forgotten much of it.... Then the exam. I was asked...“Problems with the questions?”  
“No, the questions are great. It's the answers I'm having a problem with.”)

But this message is really for us all – as the **time of worst trouble** is about to hit us. And just before that, Satan is cast down from heaven – and he comes after the CHURCH (Revelation 12) with severe persecution and testing. We HAVE to be getting ready for that.

Sometimes God protects us from harm and danger – as in Psalm 91 – and sometimes he lets his people be persecuted, beaten and beheaded – as we read in Revelation 13 and Daniel 7:18-27. And either way Yah ends up dealing with us has to be OK with us. And yes, it can go either way.

One reason we have to go through so much testing is we're being prepared for true greatness. Even people getting ready for the Olympics or a prize match have to go through rigorous testing until they can almost break. New airplanes are tested. To be a Navy Seal you go through rigorous training and testing. To be a co-ruler with Christ will be far more testing than any of these.

Yeshua **saves** us by grace, but we're **rewarded** by what we do. Too many take one side or the other instead of realizing these are 2 different issues. We're eternally saved by what Yeshua (Jesus) did. But we're going to be rewarded by what we do with God's gifts. Salvation and forgiveness are free gifts. Rewards are based on merit. Some will have 10 cities, and others will have one or five. That's reward by our works. But all will be saved who repent and call on the name of Yeshua. That's salvation by grace.

So you will be worked hard on your faith. Be ready to pass with high marks.

***This part 2 sermon is going to kick it all up a notch. Last time we mentioned: 1 Peter 1:3-9 promises us the genuineness of our faith will be tested in the fire to remove the dross, and our genuine faith will be worth far more than gold that perishes.***

And Folks, your work and faith WILL be tested. We will all, sooner or later, have fiery trials we have to go through to test our mettle – to filter out the dross out of our lives.

**1 Corinthians 3:9-15**

“For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 ***each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.*** 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, *he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*”

If you're going through prolonged testing and still trusting in God like JOB did, my hat's off to you. **God must deeply love you and know you to have you go through so much.** Please write that down! He loves you and will walk in your fiery trials with you.

We also mentioned how a goal of true faith is to be like Paul who had *learned to be content* no matter what he was going through (Phil. 4:11-13), and that “though our outward man is perishing, the inward man is being renewed day by day and our LIGHT affliction is but for a moment, working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” -- and reminds us to look at the things not seen, not the things seen (2 Cor. 4:16-18). Then he says God

also taught him to BOAST in his infirmities, as Christ said, “MY strength is made perfect in weakness” so Paul concluded, “For when I am weak, then I am strong” – 2 Cor. 12:8-10. *We are tested to bring out GOD’S power in us and minimize our own.*

Going thru trials takes out the dross and strengthens our faith. It also **helps us not be so enamored with the pleasures of sin for the moment.**

***“He who has suffered in the body is DONE with sin” – it’s a great result (1 Peter 4:1-2).*** And now we live for the will of God.

- The main goal of the test is to help us come to the point where we **come to know him because of the testing**; and therefore we trust our Father and Savior, no matter what. This is what JOB came to. This is what Paul longed for – “that I may know him” (Phil 3:8-11). The end goal: TRUST HIM. Trust him! Trust him. Trust him even when He lets the pain and trial go on and on and on.
- **We also covered last time that we have GOT to quit thinking that severe trials are always because of sin, and that God is spanking us.**

That IS sometimes true. There are simply too many verses where God brought on calamity as punishment for sin: Herod eaten up by worms, Nebuchadnezzar’s 7 years as a wild animal, the wars and plagues on Israel when they departed from God, the punishments on David for his sin with Bathsheba and numbering Israel, etc. etc. **1 Cor 11:27-30** even says some of the sickness in the church is because we’re not esteeming the body of Christ enough – loving one another!

**But it’s NOT always the case that trials are because of sin. The man born blind (John 9) was NOT because of his or his parents’ sin. Job’s trials were not because of his sins. Paul’s thorn in the flesh was not because of sin. But in all cases – they were to help people come to see and know God. The blind man came to see and meet the Messiah. God’s greater desire is for people to see and meet Christ in our trials – rather than just to deliver us from our own trials.**

### **Some GOOD FAITH Essentials**

Let’s start with a few faith essentials – that might be an eye-opener for some of you:

- **How many of us have even just a tiny amount of REAL faith? From the definition Yeshua gives, maybe not that many do!** Yeshua says that if we had just a teensy-weensy tiny amount (like a mustard seed) of TRUE faith – and not just hope – that we could order a mountain to fall into the sea and it would! The faith the size of a mustard seed –... even to cast out demons. We must not DOUBT. We must bring all our doubts into captivity of Jesus Christ.

**REAL FAITH is not mixed with doubt, wavering, or unbelief.** Real faith looks UP – not around. Real faith is the evidence of things NOT yet seen. We’re not looking at what we can see – the illness, the lump, the pink slip, not even the death of a loved one... but we’re looking UP.

#### **Matthew 17:20-21**

So Jesus said to them, "**Because of your unbelief**; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from

here to there,' and it will move; and **nothing will be impossible for you.** 21 However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

**Matthew 21:21-22**

**So** Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, **if you have faith and do not doubt**, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. 22 **And whatever you ask in prayer, BELIEVING, you will receive."**

**Mark 9:23**

"Jesus said to him, **'If you can believe, ALL things are possible to him who believes.'**"

- **But too many of you give up too soon.** You start making excuses for why God didn't work it out for you. Jesus told Martha – EVEN NOW, if you believe, you will see the glory of GOD! Lazarus was DEAD 4 days... EVEN NOW.

Having said that, I want to remind us all that if we had someone who could order mountains to fall into the sea, we'd all be very impressed. But something even greater than great faith – is what? Let's read it. This is just to get the balance on the subject.

**1 Corinthians 13:2-3**

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, **and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing**".

- **Many people do not have faith at all – but a strong HOPE. Hope is good, but hope is not faith.** It may be similar – but not the same. Faith is ASSURANCE of what you can't see. HOPE is keeping your desire alive, wanting something to work out. Faith knows - not just wishes – that GOD is good, and he's good all the time, and he's "Got this" trial and is working something very good out, even though we may first have to pass through some pain.
  - **HOPE is GREAT.** It keeps us going. But good hope should LEAD to believing. Abraham, "who contrary to hope, IN HOPE BELIEVED" and became the father of many nations (**Romans 4:18**). He "did not waiver in unbelief, but **was strengthened in FAITH**, giving glory to God", knowing He could perform what He had promised (verses 19-22)
  - **So don't mix hope** – which is still good to have, with Faith. Make your hope lead you to FAITH.
- **True faith does not have to know the details of HOW God is working things out – or when, or what will happen, or WHY this is happening.** I know, we all want to know why. But true faith does not focus on what, how, where, when or why. **It just focuses on WHO is walking with us through our trials. WHO – that's God.** That's ALL we need to know. Sometimes that's all HE will let us know – that He's there. Period. End of story. Have faith. Stop and rest – in him. So I say again: **true faith just needs to know WHO**

– not the details of why, when, where, what or HOW things will work out.

- In our testing of our faith, James 1:13-15 tells us that God will never TEMPT you with evil. NEVER. There's a word in Greek that can be translated either "tempt" or "test" or "try/trial" – and depending on the context, and based on what James says – now look at 1 Cor. 10:13, which I'll read from the NET –as it has it as "trial" instead of temptation. James says we're TEMPTED when we let our own lusts and nature get out of control. Review James 1:13-15 if needed.

**1 Corinthians 10:13 NET**

"No TRIAL [God does not tempt us] has overtaken you that is not faced by others. And God is faithful: **He will not let you be tried beyond what you are able to bear**, but with the trial will also provide a way out so that you may be able to endure it."

**THANKING HIM IN THE TRIAL AND FOR THE TRIAL**

So let's shift gears a bit with that foundation – of real faith looking up, not around; knowing we'll never be tested beyond what we're able to endure. And always trusting what Father is doing, and WHEN he is acting or seemingly not acting.

Where Abba needs his children arriving at is this: we trust Him so much, that no matter the pain – we TRUST that He's working something out for good (Romans 8:28) – and then even beyond that: prove that trust by thanking him IN and FOR each trial. If you're not doing that, you're missing the advanced levels of deep peace you should have.

IN the testing, our father wants us to learn the secret to peace: even while the fire of testing rages all around us, we learn to say – in faith – "Thank you" – thank you FOR this trial, name it. Then you thank him IN the trial. That is SO hard to do. It's a SACRIFICE, frankly, to give praise and thanksgiving when you're hurting so much, when the object of your suffering has been so costly, so dear – like the death of a loved one, or the rejection by someone you love so much (which hurts like a death). But we are to offer this sacrifice anyway.

In Hebrews 13:10-14 we're told how Yeshua suffered outside the city walls, outside the gate, in reproach, shame and abandonment as He sanctified humankind who will receive him. And we are told in verse 13 to be willing to go to Him, OUTSIDE of this world's acceptance and seek him even in his reproach. It's not easy. Praising in these circumstances of hurting – is a sacrifice, when your carnal side wants to mope, cry, bewail your despair... but you praise God instead IN and for the trial.

**Hebrews 13:15**

Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, **giving thanks** to His name."

Remember the context was suffering and abandonment.

**When our son David died** – I knelt beside my bed where my son had lain moments before, blue and very stiff -- and said "Thank you dear Father, for letting us have David for as long as we did. Children are an heritage, a gift, from you. And now thank you

for taking him from us". Then I started crying. It was tough, but it brought a peace as well. Then I thanked him for being with us IN our trial. That was how it started. Many peaks and valleys over the next few weeks, even years. But that is what our Father wants from us: total faith. No matter what. A faith so strong we **thank** him- FOR the trial, and IN the trial.

When we can do that, it proves our faith in him. Thanking God FOR a horrendous trial is the ultimate expression of faith. And it brings a profound peace. And it puts everything in perspective. Life is not about this life – “for here we have no continuing city” - but what God is preparing IN us for eternity. Lest you think I’ve gone nuts, let me read the scriptures on this:

**EPHESIANS 5:20**—“giving thanks always **FOR ALL THINGS** to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

**Philippians 4:6-7**

**“Be anxious for NOTHING**, but **IN EVERYTHING** by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, *let your requests be made known to God*; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard (“keep” KJV) your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (KJV – “be careful for nothing” – i.e., “full of care”; concern)

**1 Thessalonians 5:18 KJV and NKJV identical**

**“IN EVERYTHING give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”**

This is VERY hard to do. SO this is not kindergarten Christianity – but graduate class level. Let’s just start doing it.

**Job did this:** when he lost ALL his children, ALL his servants – hundreds of them, all his thousands of livestock –He praised God. Let’s pick up at the end of chapter 1 – after in 4 succeeding news, bam-bam-bam-bam—he was told what had just happened.

**Job 1:20-22**

Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and **he fell to the ground and worshiped.** 21 And he said:

"Naked I came from my mother's womb,

And naked shall I return there.

YHVH gave, and YHVH has taken away;

**Blessed be the name of YHVH."**

22 In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.”

Wow! He worshiped. He said Bless God! Job’s wife had some trouble with this. *But let’s not be so harsh on her. She had, after all, lost ALL her family, ALL her hundreds of servants, ALL her wealth and livestock, buildings – and now JOB was in misery and serious pain. She had gone through hell. How would you have done? There does come a point when you question where GOD IS... and then I hope we can get back on solid footing.*

**Do you and I do that? Literally – do we GIVE THANKS for the job crisis? For the health crisis? For the new health diagnosis? That’s what we’re TOLD to do. Thank him for it. Thank GOD IN and FOR the bad, bad news we’re getting. Insane? NO. We can thank**

God because he's THERE. He's got this. He knows the end from the beginning. He has your best purpose in mind – even though it's painful as can be.

OK, so we learn that... and we think we understand that... and then the horrendous trial comes and our faith is TESTED. It's much easier to teach this than to do it. Paul taught it.

**So how did Paul do - - after teaching that?** Paul was a case study in how to handle tests of faith. It's all there for our learning and so when our time comes, we'll handle it more like he did, like Christ did, like Shedrach and friends did. And we all will face serious testing in the years ahead, if not already. When Christ called Paul to be the apostle, he was told "the many things he must SUFFER for my name's sake" (Acts 9:15-16).

Well, this is the same **Paul who sang praises in jail in Philippi with Silas** – after being beaten with rods. As blood, swelling, infection oozed from their torn bodies, they were singing. Read the whole story in **Acts 16:22-35** if you're unfamiliar with it.

**Acts 16:22-25**

"Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. 23 And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. 24 Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

**25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God,** and the prisoners were listening to them.

What was the result? The jailer and his family were given salvation. The other prisoners had a wonderful, peaceful, amazing testimony from Paul and Silas' amazing faith. What witness, what testimony, do we leave as we go through a severe trial? Be aware – people are watching you, and either getting inspired or depressed by the way we handle it.

And there's **Peter** – talk about anxious for nothing – the night before he was to be beheaded – is **sound asleep! Acts 12.** CAN WE get to that point? We MUST.

**Acts 12:5-10 summarize**

Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. 6 And when Herod was about to bring him out, that **night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison.** 7 Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off his hands. 8 Then the angel said to him, "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals"; and so he did. And he said to him, "Put on your garment and follow me." 9 So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, **but thought he was seeing a vision.** 10 When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him.

He went to the house where the local brethren were praying – but even THEY, when faced with their answered prayer – at first could not believe it! But God is merciful, thank HIM, when our faith doubts. They thought Rhoda was crazy or had seen an angel!

And yet, both Peter and Paul were brutally martyred in the end. So was John the Baptist. So was the Son of God. *So will many of us* – if you believe Daniel and Revelation.

**Do you know what “Martyr” originally meant?** We know it as being killed for a cause. The original word comes from Greek ***martus*** meaning **“to witness”**. Many died for witnessing to Christ. Martyr originally meant speaking out for Christ. Sometimes it resulted in their death. I’ll write a blog on it to make it clearer. *It would be an HONOR, frankly, to be a witness for the name of Christ – even if it ends in death.*

*Be sure to hear my sermon on “**Praising God FOR ANSWERING even BEFORE we see the answers!** Lazarus’ resurrection. The multiplying of the loaves and fish. Believe you have received the answer before you can see it. Then praise him as if it’s already answered. That’s such a deeper level of faith if you would do it without doubting.*

***FEAR AND DEPRESSION are NORMAL FIRST REACTIONS...  
but we must not stay there***

Fear and doubt are not faith. OK, we know that. But when God is “taking too long” to take care of the problems – fear is very real. Let’s read about the great men and women of faith and that they feared – but how they came through it. It’s NORMAL to have fear at first. Don’t berate yourself for that in a serious trial. But don’t STAY there. Do what others did. Turn to God – anyway. Especially, in times of fear.

I go through yo-yo peaks and valleys in severe trials. One moment – “Thank you Father even in and for this trial” – and next moment: “WHERE ARE YOU!??” and panic sets in. I’m there too, and learning all this too. But let’s be growing in the right response.

Even Paul suffered through fears at first. So did David. So do most humans. Yes, of course, even I do. It is this suffering that matures us, refines us, makes us more serious, and makes us DEEPER people. Paul even had to fight with wild beasts in Ephesus (**1 Cor. 15:32**). I’ve seen that arena and imagined what it must have been like for Paul. Would that be fearful?

**2 Corinthians 1:8-11**

“For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, **so that we despaired even of life**. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us...”

**2 Corinthians 7:5-6**

“For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, **inside were fears**. Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus....”

**Psalms 56:3-4**

**“Whenever I am afraid**, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?”

**Psalms 56:8**

“You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book?”



He goes on to say he knows “God is FOR me...In God I put my trust, I will not be afraid” (v. 9-11). There you have it!

**2 Chronicles 20:3-4**

**“And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek YHVH, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. 4 So Judah gathered together to ask help from YHVH; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek YHVH.”**

So don't feel ashamed to ever admit you are AFRAID – as you're being told you have just been laid off, or that your father could die from that stroke, or that you have stage 4 cancer, or that your child was in a horrible accident and is in the hospital! It's not a lack of faith. It's just human. We have to come THROUGH that fear and come to FAITH... but it's OK to admit being human.

Did you realize even Yeshua (Jesus) was so sorrowful that he could have died? Here are his own words in the Garden.

**Matthew 26:36-41**

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." 37 And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. 38 Then He said to them, "**My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death.** Stay here and watch with Me."

39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, **and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."**

40 Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? 41 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. **The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.**"

**Do you think Yeshua understands when you're afraid?**

**Hebrews 5:7-9**

“who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, **with vehement cries and tears to Him** who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of **His godly fear**, **8 though He was a Son, yet [even] He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.** 9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him...”

**AND NOW – IN YOUR TESTING, THINK OF OTHERS**

**Besides all that, Yeshua set us the example of yet another deeper level of faith: Thinking of others in your trial helps you grow through your faith...**

It was AFTER this fierce battle in the Garden that his calm and peace overcame everything else. Now he starts to think of others even stronger than before – even in the midst of his horrible final evening.

- He called Judas “friend” when Judah came up to kiss up. Matthew 26:50
- He healed the man whose ear had been cut off by Peter; a man who was a part of the party that had come out to illegally arrest the son of God. Luke 22:51
- **He thought of his mom – to be sure she was OK too. John 19:25-27**

So even on the cross Yeshua could THINK OF HIS MOTHER –and made sure John would look after her. Basically he said – Mom – John’s YOUR son now. John, My mom is now your mom.” And John beautifully took Yeshua’s grieving mom back home so she wouldn’t torture herself any longer with what she was watching.

Yeshua...Jesus the Christ.... What a perfect example. And he says he will strengthen us too in our fears if we turn to him. Paul also thought of the brethren – all throughout his epistles while he was in chains. **He looked to the bright side in his trials** – such as “All this has served to further gospel, even to the palace guard” – and even to Caesar’s household (**Philippians 1:12-14; 4:22**)

**In Faith we must also TRUST GOD’S TMING**

Now we’re kicking it up yet another notch. We’re called to have peace and trust – even when God appears to be LATE by our reckoning. Faith comes by hearing the word – so let’s review some of God’s word AND stories of faith.

- Abel – God shows up after he was killed. But Abel’s in the list of faith heroes.
- Shedrach and friends – were thrown in.
- Daniel – was thrown in the lion’s den
- ABRAHAM – had to wait, and wait, and wait for the promised child and God waited until it was impossible to bear children (Romans 4:16-24). But they were healed so completely, that even after Isaac, and after Sarah died – Abraham had SIX more children through Keturah (Gen 25:1-2).
- David – anointed king as a teenager. Then years later kills Goliath in profound faith. Then was hunted down like a criminal for Years BEFORE God’s promises came true. God tested him with opportunities to end Saul’s life – in the cave while Saul relieved himself (1 Samuel 24), and one time God sent a deep sleep on Saul’s entire camp. (Exciting story in 1 Samuel 26).
- AND SOMETIMES we have to wait until the resurrection to see what transpired even after we died. That’s OK too. The faith chapter ends, remember, with “These all did not receive the promises....” They all died. And that’s OK too.

**WE OFTEN GIVE UP TOO SOON and  
lean on the escape hatch of “whatever God’s will is”**

Which of us has the faith of Peter and John in Acts 3 to tell a lifelong cripple to get up and walk? Why don’t we? All the miracles of Paul: we don’t see him him-hawing about what might happen. He just announces something or boldly steps in – and the miracles happen.

- Thorn in the flesh – he asked God 3x and only stopped when he got a definite answer

We pray for healing, for miracles, for God’s intervention – but without solid confidence. At the resurrection of Lazarus – even Martha showed awesome faith. Her brother had been dead and buried 4 days already. Now read what Martha says:

**John 11:21-22**

Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. **22 But EVEN NOW I KNOW that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.**" (this was said after he had died 4 days previously!)

**John 11:40-42**

Jesus said to her (Martha) "**Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?**" 41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.

Don't give up on God – even when humanly it all seems too late now. IF God decides to give us a "NO" answer or "not yet" answer – then we handle that one day at a time. But we don't JUMP to that possibility until it is obviously that. We want to confidently believe in the best as long as possible – all while admitting God's will may be different from our wants.

At THAT point....

- **True great faith is NOT just confidently proclaiming and expecting the answer WE want and hope for. True faith is praising God for whatever answer HE decides to give us** – even ones that seem like no answer or unanswered prayer – or even worse: sore trial even after we prayed. I just love Daniel's 3 friends' answer when they were given a chance to worship Nebuchadnezzar's gold idol or be thrown alive into a very hot furnace:

**Daniel 3:16-18**

"Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 17 If that is the case, **our God whom we serve is able to deliver us** from the burning fiery furnace, **and He WILL deliver us from your hand,** O king. 18 **BUT IF NOT**, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, **nor will we worship the gold image** which you have set up."

But don't let the "if not" become your cop-out either!

The next few verses in Daniel 3 show a good reason for the hell fire of testing we are put into: **Christ came and walked in their fire with them.** How beautiful, how wonderful, how amazing: In our personal hellish trial of fire, we find a closer walk with YESHUA! Praise the LORD! And this is WHY we have to go into the fires of the testing of our faith: *ultimately to find a close walk with our Maker, our SAVIOR, who will never ever leave us or forsake us, but walks in the fire with us!* (Hebrews 13:5)

SO DON'T decide God has decided your outcome a certain way unless an angel has spoken to you.

We have this PEACE because we KNOW God is working in us. At least in our mind's eye we know and SEE the Son of God walking in the FIRE with us. And we KNOW He had his own fiery trial and He understands, so we're going to get through all this trial we have as well.

The ones who were NOT delivered with great answers of deliverance are listed in the same Heroes of Faith Chapter (Hebrews 11) as the ones who were delivered.

**Hebrews 11:35-40**

35 Women received their dead raised to life again. *Others were tortured*, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, and were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented — 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.  
39 ***And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,*** 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not *be made perfect* apart from us.

So if several of you are anointed and prayed over for healing, and 1-2 are healed but you're not healed, *it's not necessarily because you lacked faith*. It could be that, but not necessarily. (**Story – Feast in 2013** – 7 prayed for, 2 dramatically healed. But more than those 2 could have had great faith as well, but God said “no” or “not yet”)

So we expect, hope for and have faith in powerful answers to our prayers. But true FAITH, in the end, remains faithful to God even when he says “no” to our requests, as he did also to Yeshua in the end. Remember – the cup, and Hebrews 5:7-9?

I hope this encourages you.

***APPRECIATE the tests God puts us through. It shows God knows you, loves you, and is refining you. He's working with you. And that is exciting!*** And this testing bonds us to HIM and to one another. In battle, those fighting the common enemy (Satan) together, end up with a bond forever. We must stop fighting ourselves. It makes no sense.

### **PEACE OF MIND VS WORRY AND FRETTING**

So how do we get to that point when everything seems to be wrong, going nowhere, the pain isn't leaving, the health is not getting better, our job picture and income picture aren't getting any better, and the cancer isn't going away... how do we handle that?

Yeshua said: don't ever fret. Don't ever worry (read **Matthew 6:24-34**). Why? Because you're making the source of worry bigger than God, which breaks the first commandment. **Worry and stewing, fretting, sleepless nights – are all signs of a LACK of faith.**

So how do we handle it all? I'd certainly suggest some basic things as well such as – *get your sleep. Fatigue makes cowards out of us all*. Lack of rest and sleep will keep you from thinking straight. So get some good sleep.

Talk to others about what's going on. Hopefully you have friends who are good listeners. And folks –sometimes we have to let people VENT their depressions, their fears – without us having to preach back. I do that too... but sometimes we should just LISTEN. We already read Philippians 4:6—“Be anxious for NOTHING...”

#### **Isaiah 26:3-4**

***“You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.***

Trust in YHVH forever, For in Yah, YAHWEH, is everlasting strength.”

Isaiah 26:4 also tells us the GOAL of our lives after we are re-begotten in Christ: to TRUST in Him. No matter what. ***So God has to test and try that faith to see if it has reached the pure gold standard yet.***

**Story – with grandsons:** often tell them that around us and above us and around our home are angels guarding over them and us.

**Psalms 16:8-9**

“I have **set** YHVH always before me; ***Because*** He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. [now look at the result of that] 9 ***Therefore*** my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also ***will rest in hope.***”

**Romans 8:15-18**

“For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, *if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together*

**18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared** with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

I hope this has helped. I hope we can understand we WILL go through severe testing – but it’s all good, if God is in it. He’s working with you, refining you, preparing you for a fabulous future – so in the pain, we can thank him and praise him FOR the tests, and IN the trials. We keep our eyes glued to Yeshua and God our father. We can have peace in the storm and sleep, like Peter – even knowing we’re going to be beheaded in the morning if God doesn’t intervene.

After all, it’s not about this life anyway. We endure, so after we’ve suffered a while, we can receive the promises. And through all of this: we come to KNOW God and therefore trust Him – no matter what.

And we like Christ on the cross – are learning to reach out to others in our pain. We think of THEM more than us. In fact, IN your trial – if you want a greater shot at being delivered – pray for others who are also suffering.

- God started a work in you – and will finish it. Believe that.

And when the last trumpet sounds, and Christ returns as the conquering King of kings, his Bride will be with him. ***The holy ones with him will be the called, chosen and faithful. (Revelation 17:14). FAITHFUL.*** After all, He who sits on the throne is known for being FAITHFUL. And his people, his bride, also MUST be.

That’s what it’s all about. Until next time, as your brother in Messiah let’s ask Yahweh to smile on you, to bless you with every blessing, especially an extra dosage of godly faith!