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TAKING THE INITIATIVE 50 Days of Faith

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Part 3 of 8

"God gives a fresh start to those ready to quit." Ps. 145:14 (Mes)

Regardless of your background

Past -> you can make a fresh start!
You've really messed up

HOW TO MAKE A FRESH START WITH FAITH Mark 10:46-52

1. SEIZE THE MOMENT.

"As Jesus ... left town, a great crowd was following. A blind beggar names Bartimaeus was sitting beside the road as Jesus was going by. When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was nearby, he began to shout, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'" Mark 10:46-47 (NLT)

All around you daily there are opportunities for a fresh start, but you don't take advantage of them. Why? One word: Procrastination.

Example: "I spent a fortune on a trampoline
A stationary bike, and a rowing machine.
Complete with gadgets to read my pulse
And gadgets to prove my progress results.
And others to show the miles I've charted
But they left off the gadget to get me started."
Anonymous

VERSES THAT SPEAK ABOUT PROCRASTINATION

Job 9:25 *"My days go quickly. More quickly than a rumor, they sprint away."*

Job 8:9 *"Our life is short. We pass like shadows across the earth."*

Prov. 27:1 *"Don't boast about tomorrow for you do not know what a day will bring forth."*

Ps. 90:12 *"Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are. Help us to spend them as we should."*

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Eph. 5:16 *"Make the most of every opportunity."*

Luke 9:62 *"No procrastination, no backward looks. You can't put off God's kingdom until tomorrow. Seize the day."*

2. TAME YOUR FEAR.

Fear has an incredible ability to paralyze our potential, to keep us from launching out, to keep us from having faith in our lives.

WHAT DOES FEAR DO TO US?

1. It makes us skeptical.
2. It makes us selfish.
3. It makes us short-sighted.

"Many of the people scolded him and told him to be quiet. But he shouted even more loudly. 'Have mercy on me!'" Mark 10:48 (GN)

Whose disapproval do you fear the most? Whoever that is, that person is your god.

"The fear of human opinion disables you: trusting in God protects you from that." Prov. 29:25 (Mes)

3. ANNOUNCE YOUR FAITH.

You need to tell everybody because a secret faith is a shallow faith.

"Jesus asked him [Bartimaeus] 'What do you want Me to do for you?' The blind man answered, 'Teacher, I want to see.'" Mark 10:51 (NCV)

Question: Why in the world did Jesus ask this?

By asking that question He allowed Bartimaeus to publicly announce his faith.

"You ought to say, 'if it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.'" James 4:15 (NIV)

"Your baptism in Christ was not just washing you up for a fresh start. It also involved dressing you in an adult faith wardrobe – Christ's life, the fulfillment of God's original promise." Gal. 3:27 (Mes)

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4. RECEIVE GOD'S GRACE.

"Jesus said to him, 'Go your way: your faith has made you whole.' And immediately he regained his sight..." Mark 10:52a (NAS)

"From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another." John 1:16 (NIV)

"That's why faith is the key! God's promise is given to us as a free gift." Rom 4:16a (NLT)

You can't become a person of faith without getting the promises of God in your life.

This week's promise: Phil. 4:13 *"I can do everything through Him who gives me strength."*

You can't be a person of faith unless God can bring verses to mind to:

- calm you when you're excited.
- help you when you're in conflict
- guide you when you are tempted.

Bartimaeus was blind. But he had enough vision to see that Jesus Christ could help him out. He had enough vision to see that he needed grace. Do you?

Grace isn't just for salvation. It's not just for you to get your sins forgiven and get you into heaven. Grace is for the daily mistakes of life. If you don't have grace in your life then you're going to be filled with regret. When you're filled with regret you get stuck in the past and if you're stuck in the past you can't make a fresh start.

5. TAKE THE NEXT STEP.

What **is** the next step? I don't know for you, because everyone of us in this room is at a different stage.

I don't know what step you need to take but I do know you need to take it.

Your step could be:

- to accept Jesus Christ into your life.
- to be baptized.
- to join WCC and enroll in C.L.A.S.S. 101, 201, 301
- to join or start a small group.

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- to start tithing and trusting God with your finances.
- to start or find a ministry to serve in.
- to share with a friend or family member and invite them to church.

God will never be finished in taking you deeper in faith. You will never just arrive. There is always, always a next step toward faith, toward love, toward joy, toward happiness.

Don't get stuck in a rut because the only difference between a grave and a rut is the length.

"...he regained his sight and began following Jesus on the road." Mark 10:52b (NAS)

"Bartimaeus was sitting beside the road as Jesus was going by." Mark 10:46 (NAS)

Bartimaeus was "sitting"

Then Jesus came and then he "began following Jesus on the road."

Question: Which of those two phrases describe your life?

Sitting or following?

Faith is more than believing – Faith is action!

"If people say they have faith, but do nothing, their faith is worth nothing ..."
James 2:14 (NCV)

"Everything that we have – right thinking, right living, a clean slate, and a fresh start – comes from God by way of Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 1:30 (Mes)

The reason you are sitting here right now is because God is giving you an unexpected opportunity for a fresh start. Don't blow it. Don't miss it. Don't let it pass you by.