

# SUNDAY ARTICLE

ST DAVID'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ♦ 17 MAY 2020



## Sometimes the Life of Faith Is Just Walking, Not Fainting

*Trevin Wax*

As the days in quarantine continue for most of us, I am hearing similar words from friends and colleagues across the country: *drained, down, Zoom-ed out, weary, exhausted, sad, struggling.*

The psychological toll of the lockdown hasn't received the same coverage as the physical toll of the disease on the people affected (and understandably so), but both are real, and both matter for those of us who desire to walk by faith and not by sight.

### Suffering, Not Knowing the End

Three years ago this month, our family was thrown into a whirlwind of suffering. Just a few years after my father-in-law died of cancer, my mother-in-law, who still lived in Romania, was diagnosed with terminal cancer. In the weeks and months that followed, our family went through the trial separated, with my wife

spending two extended periods of time overseas as her mother's primary caregiver.

The hardest part of a trial is not knowing how long it will last. That was what made summer 2017 so excruciating for our family. I remember the parking garage in London where I held Corina and said goodbye a second time, at the end of July, as she prepared to fly again to Romania, not knowing how long it would be before we would be reunited. It was the *not knowing* that hurt. I remember thinking, *If only we knew when the trial would end, we would endure it more easily!*

Looking back, I'm not sure that's true. Had I known that Corina's second stay in Romania (and my second stint as "single dad") would last into late September, the pressure at the beginning would have been unbearable. As much as we would have liked to have known the outcome and just how far the trial would extend, it was better to take things one week at a time, relying on the Lord for *daily* bread, not monthly plans.

Faith isn't a leap, but a series of steps.

### What Faith Is

Right now, many of us are struggling, trying not to stumble over our steps. The days are a blur; our vision is foggy; we feel our faith faltering. In times like these we must look beyond the moment of trial and entrust ourselves to the God who has brought us here.

*Faith isn't a leap, but a series of steps.*

In *My Utmost for His Highest*, Oswald Chambers reminds us that faith is less about knowing the destination and more about knowing the One taking us there:

Faith never knows where it is being led, but it loves and knows the One Who is leading. It is a life of faith, not of intellect and reason, but a life of knowing Who makes us “go.”

I want to know where I'm going. I want to know the details. But, like a child of Abraham – the patriarch who left his home for an undisclosed destination, I am called to follow daily the One who has called me, even when He hasn't given me the full picture of what lies ahead. The life of faith is about following the *Who* not figuring out the *whats*. And it's better that way. The *whats* may scare you. Chambers writes:

The root of faith is the knowledge of a Person, and one of the biggest snares is the idea that God is sure to lead us to success.

### The Shepherd Is With Us

God does not promise us success according to our standards or definitions. The *whats* may include loss, suffering, and failure. We may experience spiritual mountaintops, but we may also be led through the darkest valleys. Even though I walk through those valleys, the psalmist reminds us, He is with me. The Lord who is our Shepherd has a rod and a staff to comfort me. The *whats* may change, but the *Who* remains present.

Chambers steadies us during tumultuous times by reaffirming the purpose of suffering in the life of faith:

The final stage in the life of faith is attainment of character. There are many passing transfigurations of character; when we pray we feel the blessing of God enwrapping us and for the time being we are changed, then we get back to the ordinary days and ways and the glory vanishes.

The life of faith is not a life of mounting up with wings, but a life of walking and not fainting.

You may not feel like you're mounting up with wings like eagles right now, and that's okay. The life of faith isn't always a mountaintop. Sometimes, your faith is demonstrated in the fact that you keep walking, and you don't faint. One foot before the other, step by step, trusting in the One who has gone ahead.



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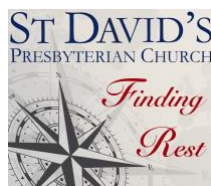
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