

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 11/4/2022

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

Because it's the way by which we receive CHRIST'S blessings and forgiveness, faith is incredibly important to our relationship with GOD. The Bible says that we need no more than faith "the size of a mustard seed." Yet, making sure our faith is strong and growing should be an everyday goal of all Christians.

Asking for our faith to be stronger in prayer to GOD is an important step for doing that. We wouldn't be praying to GOD if we didn't have faith. But developing faith is more than just asking GOD for it and then waiting for GOD to fill us up. Most certainly, GOD could simply "zap" us and that would take care of it. Instead, though, GOD calls upon us to do those things that will help our faith to grow.

In the movie, "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade," the hero goes looking for the Holy Grail, supposedly the cup from which CHRIST drank at the Last Supper. To reach this cup, Jones must pass several challenges, the last of which he faces when he comes out of an opening in a cliff. Before him is a thousand-foot-deep chasm across to another cave in which sits the cup. But it is a hundred feet across this chasm to reach the other side. Legend says that one must follow the "path of faith" to reach that opening. It is much too far to jump. So, Indiana Jones must take a step of faith and trust that he will be safe. He must do something that requires tremendous faith. (I don't want to spoil the end if you haven't seen it, though.)

But there is a great lesson in this movie for all of us who wish to strengthen our faith. We have to take steps of faith. In the process of doing this, our faith will grow. It doesn't mean leaping off a cliff to see if GOD will catch us. That's what we call putting GOD to the test and we are clearly instructed in scripture not to do that. Instead, these steps of faith amount to pushing ourselves to go a bit further in doing something with which we just aren't comfortable, trusting that GOD will see us through. Perhaps it is praying for someone in need. Someone we don't know well. Right now. With them. Out loud. If the thought of doing that made you a bit uncomfortable, that may be a faith-growth-step for you. Telling another why you like going to church, may be your step. Or offering yourself in service to someone with whom you are not at ease.

Making the commitment to try to take a faith-growth-step each day will result in amazing changes for you. You will indeed find your faith getting stronger. You will find yourself feeling closer to GOD. And you may find yourself looking forward to discovering what new challenges GOD has for you—challenges that, in turn, will help your faith to grow. What's the step you will take today?

In CHRIST'S love,
Pastor Jeffrey