



Faith when you
Cannot See the Way

NorthRidge Church

Dr. M. David Myers

September 20, 2026

The good hand of our God was on us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy and from ambushes by the way. – Ezra 8:31 ESV

As we reflect upon Ezra 7, Ezra had prepared his **heart**. He had also prepared his **mind**. He had further prepared his **life** to live out God's Word and to model for others how to do that. In Ezra 8, God has now prepared an **opportunity**. How would Ezra now respond? How do we respond when God opens a door; especially when there are uncertainties?

Faith for the Journey ...

If you can map it out, it is just a plan, not _____ ... for _____ begins where your own understanding and ability ends.
Cp. Hebrews 11:1, 6; 2 Cor. 5:7; James 2:17

- I. Faith Prepares for the _____ (Ezra 8:1-20)
Cp. Prov. 21:5; Luke 14:28; 1 Cor. 14:40; 2 Tim. 2:21
- II. Faith _____ Upon God for the Journey (Ezra 8:21-23)
Cp. Ps. 20:7; 121:1-2; Prov. 3:5-6; 2 Cor. 1:9
- III. Faith _____ on the Journey (Ezra 8:24-30)
Cp. Luke 12:48; 1 Cor. 4:2; 1 Peter 4:10
- IV. Faith Will _____ God's Faithfulness Along the Way (Ezra 8:31-36)
Cp. Lam. 3:22-23; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Tim 2:13; Deut. 7:9

So What ...

- Don't confuse _____ with _____.
- Don't let _____ make your Decisions for you.
- Don't put your _____ in the Resources God provides.
- God will likely _____ you from things you never see.
- What God puts in your hands, He expects you to _____.
- Faithfulness is often simply taking the _____.

Appointment with God – Prayer Focus

How do you handle deep and personal prayer needs? Possibly a loved one who is a drug addict, an estranged adult child, or ongoing financial issues. God gives us two powerful strategies.

STRATEGY 1: Pray for God to change hearts. The deepest prayer needs are often caused by ignoring principles and relationship laws set forth by God. Changes in our behavior CAN be made by willpower and effort. However, the behaviors that heal relationship distress are only maintainable if there has been a HEART change. If we don't love the priorities God sets for our relationships, we don't maintain them. Pray that we HEAR the Lord's voice and turn to Him. Pray He blesses us by turning us away from our iniquities. [Acts 3:19-26] Pray for a new heart and a new spirit. [Ez. 36:26]

STRATEGY 2: Fight and contend for faith when your hope falters. [1 Tim. 6:12, Jude 3] Contend for your faith by meditating on the works of the Lord. Meditating on God's works brings our focus to God's POWER, His LOVE, His FAITHFULNESS! [Is. 46:9, Ps. 143:5]

A Story That Illustrates Both Strategies...

Years ago, a NorthRidge family was fully active in the life of the church. Their lives appeared to be picture-perfect until the adult son was arrested for drugs and other charges. The parents met the devastating news with grief, and with faith and prayer. They did all they could, including paying for several rehab treatments. Their son continued to self-destruct, going down the path of drug use, theft, and other offenses. Rehab, jail, family interventions provided no changes. Church and God didn't interest him. The parents made the tough-love decision to tell their son that he could no longer come home.

Several years later, the father died. The son couldn't attend the funeral because he was in jail. Time passed. The son asked to come home. "I have changed, Mom." Initially, the mom told him no but later opened the door for his homecoming. The son sat in his dad's recliner reading the Bible and crying for nine months. He started going to the church that wasn't good enough for him earlier and started teaching the SS class for elderly men. He loved the men and they loved him. This was the Lord's doing! His life had TRULY turned around. What a powerful testimony of God's love!

1. It is THE LORD who changes hearts and draws us close to Him.
2. Remembering what God has done strengthens our faith for today!

CHALLENGE: Examine YOUR Hard Thing.

- What is it that only God can do? How is He leading you to pray?
- What stories and testimonies can strengthen your faith and endurance to pray and not give up hope while God works?



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Faith for the Journey ...

If you can map it out, it is just a plan, not **Faith** ... for **Faith** begins where your own understanding and ability ends.
Cp. Hebrews 11:1, 6; 2 Cor. 5:7; James 2:17

- I. Faith Prepares for the **Journey** (Ezra 8:1-20)
Cp. Prov. 21:5; Luke 14:28; 1 Cor. 14:40; 2 Tim. 2:21
- II. Faith **Depends** Upon God for the Journey (Ezra 8:21-23)
Cp. Ps. 20:7; 121:1-2; Prov. 3:5-6; 2 Cor. 1:9
- III. Faith **Steps Out** on the Journey (Ezra 8:24-30)
Cp. Luke 12:48; 1 Cor. 4:2; 1 Peter 4:10
- IV. Faith Will **Discover** God's Faithfulness Along the Way (Ezra 8:31-36)
Cp. Lam. 3:22-23; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Tim 2:13; Deut. 7:9

So What ...

- Don't confuse **Preparation** with **Obedience**.
- Don't let **Fear** make your Decisions for you.
- Don't put your **Confidence** in the Resources God provides.
- God will likely **Protect** you from things you never see.
- What God puts in your hands, He expects you to **Steward Faithfully**.
- Faithfulness is often simply taking the **Next Step**.

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