

IRONMAN FAITH

Welcome to FAITH STUDENTS!!

Last week started our new series “Just do it” about the Book of James written by Jesus brother named.... James!

Last week we learned all about the fact that as Christians we are called to be “Built Different” As Christians we are called to be set apart and act differently than how people in the world act. This is a theme throughout the entire book of James. Christians aren’t called to live and be just like the world, we are called to live in a new way.

Tonight I want to talk about having Faith and endurance so that no matter what comes our way as Christians we can succeed and push forward as long as we keep our Faith in Jesus and trust Him.

If you're taking notes tonight the title of my message is “Ironman Faith.”

ILLUSTRATION // Who in the room knows what I am talking about when I say Ironman Faith? No I am not talking about having faith like Ironman the superhero. I am talking about an “Ironman” Which is a Triathlon.

Who here knows what a Triathlon is? A triathlon is a long distance race that consists of 3 parts: Swimming, Biking, and Running. The Ironman more specifically is one of the biggest and most well known Triathlons that exist. It’s like the Super Bowl of Triathlons. It consists of a 2.4 mile swim, a 112 mile bike ride, and a Marathon (26.2 miles) all completed in that order for a grand total of 140.6 miles. Can you believe that?

Tie in: Running a race like that would take a lot of preparation, dedication and discipline to train your body to endure such a strenuous task. Just like the athletes that train and do these races, God wants us to train and have the endurance through our faith and trust in Him to combat anything that comes our way.

Let’s read about this Faith and endurance. Turn your bibles to James 1:2

SCRIPTURE // James 1:2-8

2 Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. 3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

5 If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. 6 But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. 7 Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.

MAIN POINT//

When we have Faith in God, every trial becomes a testimony.

-When we believe in Jesus and have faith in Him we do not have to fear when trouble comes or when we face hard things Because God is on our side. The Bible says that whatever the enemy meant for evil, God will turn it for our good. This means that every hard thing that we go through in this life can and will be used to show you His faithfulness, to show you that He is always near, to show you that He still works miracles and that you can trust Him in every situation because He controls it all.

POINT 1 // EVERY TEST PREPARES YOU FOR THE NEXT ONE.

ILLUSTRATION // How many of you love taking tests? Ya me either. I was always a horrible test taker. (Tell a story here about taking a test where you struggled but learned something).

But throughout school we all realize something. That every test we take wether we do good or bad, prepares us for the next one. If I am taking a history exam and have no idea who Abraham Lincoln is and what he accomplished how many you think that I would learn from not knowing that and probably study up on Abraham Lincoln so that the next time he came up on a test I would know exactly how to answer those questions.

It is the same thing in life and with our Faith. When we face a test in life (something that challenges us) it helps us to learn something. It helps us realize that the next time I'm in that type of situation I am going to treat it differently because of what I learned. When hard things happen in our life we need to know that God is working all things out for our benefit. So if you are facing a hard test in your life, remember **Romans 8:28 God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose.**

Key// Every test we face in life can become apart of our testimony.

James 1:12-17

12 God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. 13 And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, “God is tempting me.” God is never tempted to do wrong,^[c] and he never tempts anyone else. 14 Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. 15 These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

16 So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. 17 Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens.

POINT 2 // Laziness produces temptation, Endurance produces Faith

If you are lazy and compliant this can makes us think that “we got this, I can get through life on my own by just avoiding hard things” or you may think “I just want to live my life, get through school, get through work, avoid hard things and just get to the weekend so I can have a break and do whatever I want.” This is complacency. And this type of attitude

leads us to temptation, this lack of discipline makes it easy for us to make mistakes, for us to do what everyone else is doing instead of what God has called you to do.

Endurance is something that comes from training, it comes from setting goals, it comes from pursuing things that help us grow, it comes from being comfortable with the uncomfortable in our lives because we know that with everything that we Endure we can learn and grow and we can lean on our Faith in Jesus.

Key// Remember that when your Faith is tested it produces Endurance.

Illustration//

Competing in a race like the Ironman requires a whole lot of endurance. It requires months if not years of training.

The fastest Ironman (2.4 mile swim, a 112 mile bike ride, and a Marathon (26.2 miles 140.6 miles total) finisher of all time was a man named Kristian Blummenfelt. He finished the entire race (a 140 plus mile race) in 7 hours and 12 minutes. His time is over twice as fast as most Ironman finishers.

Now do you think Kristian gained this much endurance by just sitting around? No! It took hard work and dedication day in and day out. It took lots and lots of training. He had to sacrifice many thing including sleep, eating certain things, special events and many other things. This is because he realized that if he wants to become one of the best Ironmen of all time he is going to have to sacrifice a whole lot and work very hard.

This is the same thing with our relationship with the Lord. It is not easy to constantly study the Bible and pray and worship. If it was naturally apart of our human nature we would all being doing it at all times, but we aren't because we are human and we are inherently selfish beings. It takes WORK! It takes SACRIFICE. It takes DEDICATION.

God has called us to a higher standard, He needs us to be ready for any storm that comes our way. Don't forget **James 1:12 God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.**

The Lord blesses those who are patient and who instead of complaining when hard things come, they pray, they seek the Lord and this grows their faith and

builds their spiritual endurance. God blesses these type of people with the ultimate gift: eternity with Him in heaven.

Key// Blessings come to those who wait.

Some of you might be in a tough situation in your life and you don't know how to face it. Maybe you've even tried calling out to God, you've tried praying and reading your bible and worshipping but the situation hasn't changed. Can I tell you something... God's got this and He has not given up on you and He sees what you're going through. Have patience and know that sometimes He allows things to happen in order for our faith to grow. God's timing is perfect and He is always faithful to answer His children when they call on Him. But, it is in His timing a timing that we may not understand and that is okay because He is God and we are not.

Close// Share a brief story of your testimony or going through something difficult and having the faith to keep praying and seeking the Lord for the breakthrough that eventually came. (I am going to share the story of how as a senior in High school I was lost and far from the Lord but because I had a mother who had faith and prayed for me every single day I was called by God and am where I am at today because of the Faith of my praying mother.)

ALTAR

- Call leaders to the front for prayer

- Give call for salvation!
- A call for Students who are facing something hard and don't see how they can get out of it or how things will ever change
- Pray for students who feel like they have been complacent or lazy with their faith
- Worship