



Challenging Circumstances

John 11

Big Idea: How to Get Absolute Confidence God is with You.

Bottom Line: God uses challenging circumstances to grow your faith.

Review:

In this Big Faith series, we are discovering the five things God uses to grow our faith:

1. Practical Teaching
2. Wholesome Relationships
3. Personal Disciplines
4. Servant Ministry
5. Challenging Circumstances

Introduction:

Every faith story involves challenging circumstances viewed as pivotal life events.

Something happens to reengage your faith in God.

Sometimes, it's a positive thing like the birth of a child or answered prayer, but usually times of peace and prosperity and health do not create a sense of need.

Most of the time, negative, painful events point us to God.

“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”
- The Problem of Pain by C. S. Lewis

The Bible teaches us and illustrates how challenging circumstances test, strengthen, and ultimately launch faith.

James 1:2-4, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

Trial → Test of Faith → Perseverance → Stronger Faith

Truth

Read John 11.

The thing you can't miss about this story is the relationship between this tumultuous event and great, big, gigantic faith. It is not a connection we have to make—Jesus and John make sure we can't miss it.

Jesus didn't just leverage a challenging circumstance to build faith. He went out of his way to create one.

Challenging circumstances:

Make us reconsider what we have put our faith in.

Make us reconsider who is in control.

Create a healthy sense of dependence.

The right response leaves us open to receive God's grace.

The wrong response forces us to face life without God.

“The only thing worse than disappointment with God is disappointment without God.”
- Phillip Yancey

WARNING:

When you interrupt your feelings and say God is doing something **TO** you, you tend to lose faith.

When you interrupt your feelings and say God is doing something **IN** you, you tend to get bigger faith.

SUGGESTION: Ask for God to show his hand. When you spot God in it, something happens to your faith.

*“Instead of asking God to get you out of the storm,
ask God what you can get out of it.”*
- Warren Wiersbe

Series Conclusion:

God is most honored by our faith—our confidence in him.

The point of trust is where things were broken.

The point of trust is where they will be put back together.

For the rest of your life, these five things will intersect with your faith.

- Stay in an environment of Practical Teaching.
- Be intentional and available relationally in Wholesome Relationships.
- Stay involved in spiritual disciplines: pray, read your Bible daily, and give - (Personal Disciplines).
- Step out and serve in Servant Ministry.
- Look for God in the Challenging Circumstances of life.

Application & Next Steps

- Memorize John 11:25
- Remember Back and Look for God in Previous Challenging Circumstances.
- Look for God Now in Challenging Circumstances.