

Diving Deeper into Discipleship for January 2, 2022

Pastor Pete Fowler | *Open Invitation: Unsteady Faith*

Sermon Reflection Questions:

- When you have experienced a moment/season of unsteady faith, how have you responded? Do you multiply your struggle by condemning your own lack of faith stability?
- Are you struggling with your faith in Jesus right now, or do you know someone who is? Bring that struggle to Jesus and encourage others to do the same!
- Seek out a story about the good God is doing in the world right now. Talk to a friend, read a book, or find an account online. Allow the evidence of God's powerful presence in the lives of others to encourage your own deeper trust in Christ.

Devotional Reading and Reflection

- **Psalm 13:1-6** | What similarities do you see between David's thoughts in this Psalm (while he is alone in a cave) and John the Baptist's prison situation?
- **Matthew 14:13-36** | In this short passage, how many likely ups and downs can you see with Peter's faith?
- **Acts 16:16-34** | What parallels can you find between John's prison story and this one about Paul and Silas? How do you think these two men were able to "pray and sing" despite being in chains and in the dark?

Weekly Spiritual Practice

January Practice: Simplicity | Materialism

(from *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster, pg. 79-80)

- The Christian discipline of simplicity is an inward reality that results in an outward lifestyle. Both the inward and the outward aspects of simplicity are essential. We deceive ourselves if we believe we can possess the inward reality without it having a profound effect on how we live. To attempt to arrange an outward lifestyle of simplicity without the inward reality leads to deadly legalism.
- Experiencing the inward reality liberates us outwardly. Speech becomes truthful and honest. The lust for status and position is gone because we no longer need status and position. We cease from showy extravagance not on the grounds of being unable to afford it, but on the grounds of principle. Our goods become available to others.
- We have an abundance of things/materials. Many of us love to spend money and acquire new items. Many of us deeply treasure items we already own that add no significant value to our lives. For some reason, we keep adding to our lives with "things" and not removing any of the old stuff. Our lives become cluttered with materials and when that happens, our whole self feels cluttered. This week, think of at least one item you can give away/throw away. As you do it, allow yourself to feel the release of letting go and clearing up space in your life.