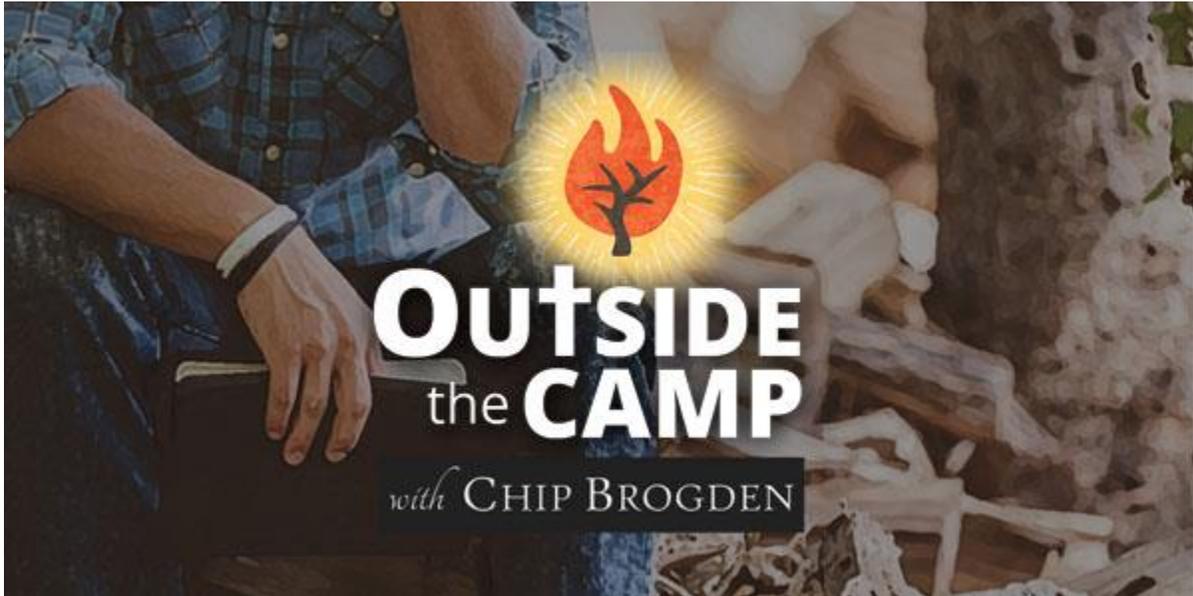


TRANSCRIPT

OUTSIDE THE CAMP WITH CHIP BROGDEN



EPISODE 14: How to Go From Faith to Fearlessness

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ANNOUNCER: Welcome to this edition of Outside the Camp with author and teacher Chip Brogden. Helping you discover the freedom and joy of a Christ-centered faith that is based on relationship, not religion. And now, with today's message, here's Chip Brogden.

CHIP: Do you think that it is possible to find a place in your walk with God that takes you *beyond* faith? Now, I know the Scripture that talks about faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love.¹ That's not what I'm talking about. I'm saying, is there a

¹ 1 Cor. 13:13.

place of extreme faith, the kind of faith that moves mountains, compared to an ordinary faith? Faith is definitely important. Faith is obviously a first step in your spiritual walk. The Scriptures say that it's impossible to please God without faith, because before you can come to God, you have to believe in God.² Right? That makes sense.

I define faith as trust. To have faith in God means to trust God, and that requires a relationship with God, or at least, the willingness to explore a relationship with God. That's the very unique and wonderful thing about the Christian faith: that we believe you can have a personal relationship with God. Well, every good relationship is based on trust, and if the relationship is poor, then there is usually a trust issue. So, trust is just another way of saying faith and belief. Not the kind of belief in a doctrine, not the kind of belief along the lines of what you think about certain teachings – I mean belief in terms of having faith, trust, and assurance in some other person. So don't make a religious thing out of it, because it is very simple. A Christ-centered faith is not a list of things we agree or don't agree with; a Christ-centered faith is a trusting, loving, relationship with Jesus that brings us deeper into the full-knowledge of God. Faith. Trust. Assurance. Confidence. In what? That God IS Who He says He is, and that God will DO what He says He will do.

I used that word "confidence" with intention. I believe when we have absolute trust and faith in a person – that this person, whether a friend or family member or someone you barely know – if we trust them completely, then we have confidence that they are who they say they are and they will do what they say they will do. So faith makes us very confident. Sometimes that confidence can come across to others as arrogance, or pride. It's easy for others to make that accusation, isn't it? But really, they are threatened by your confidence. They have weak faith. They have little confidence. They want to play it

² Heb. 11:6.

safe. They haven't seen and heard what you have seen and heard. They don't understand it, so they don't understand you. They don't understand how you can be so confident.

Let me explain something to you. Paul said, "We rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh."³ In other words, our confidence – our faith and trust and assurance – is not in ourselves; our confidence is in Christ Jesus. Now, explain to me how it is possible for a person to have absolute, 100% faith, assurance and confidence in the goodness and greatness of God, 100% confidence in Christ Jesus that He is More than Enough, More than Sufficient, and yet be weak, timid, unsure, tip-toeing around, afraid to offend, always giving out warnings and being cautious about not going so far, not being so utter, keeping everything nice and tidy and safe and conservative. That's how unconfident people behave and think. They believe their mission in life is to keep you humble, warn against pride, and cloak themselves in this false spirituality. Really, that's not great humility, that's great *timidity*. Do you know the difference between humility and timidity?

Well, for one thing, humility is not something that has to be forced or faked or even thought about. The moment you start thinking about yourself, trying to look and sound and act humble, you just violated the number one principle of humility. Humility is not thinking less of yourself; humility is not thinking of yourself at all. The most annoying thing in the world is people trying to act humble. Well, I take that back – the most annoying thing in the world is people trying to make sure everyone else stays humble. To accuse someone else of pride is, in itself, an act of pride. To make that judgment you have to look at yourself and determine that you are humble enough to judge someone else's pride. So you just revealed yourself as someone who thinks they are superior. But now, you're pretending to be humble enough to point out someone else's arrogance, and

³ Phl. 3:3.

that pretending makes you into something else: a hypocrite. So now you're a hypocrite operating in false humility! See how deceptive it is?

So humility is just not looking at yourself at all. Timidity is just good old-fashioned fear. Fear of what others may think. Fear of failure. Fear of success! Fear of what we don't understand. Fear of what we don't know. Fear of the future. Fear of the past. Fear of stepping out. Fear of stepping up. Fear of not measuring up. And, to cover up that fear and timidity, we cloak it with false humility so it looks like a virtue instead of a vice. Very subtle.

Well, let me say something about timidity and fear. It doesn't come from God! Scripture says that, "God has not given us the spirit of fear, but power, love and a sound mind."⁴ So there you have it. Fear and timidity are not coming from God. It's not you being humble. It's not you be careful. It's not you stepping lightly so as not to offend. It's not, "Well, let me pray about it another 300 times and makes sure this is really and truly what God wants me to do..." No, it's just plain old fear and timidity that holds you back.

So God has not given us the spirit of fear. But let me tell you something that *has* been given to us. Scripture says, "The righteous are as bold as a lion."⁵ It also says, "The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"⁶ The Scripture says, "Be bold, be strong, for the Lord your God is with you everywhere that you go."⁷ I could go on and on but the point is that false humility is often a cover-up for fear. Fear doesn't come from God. On the contrary, when you put no confidence in the flesh, or in yourself, but you put all your confidence in Christ Jesus, you will be *bold*. Bold, bold, bold. Bold to speak the truth. Bold to tell it

⁴ 2 Tim. 1:7.

⁵ Pro. 28:1.

⁶ Ps. 27:1.

⁷ Jos. 1:9.

like it is. Bold to face down the enemy. Bold to stand for something instead of falling for everything. Boldness!

Some say, “But that’s just not my personality.” I’m not talking about being loud or obnoxious – you can be bold without saying a word or barely lifting your voice. And I don’t want you to confuse boldness for arrogance – boldness doesn’t mean nobody can tell you anything because you are so stubborn and unteachable. But I’m talking about boldness as the spiritual character of great faith, assurance, trust, belief, and confidence in God and in Christ Jesus. “We rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.” In the context of that passage, Paul lists all the things that he used to put his confidence in. That he was a Jew, a Pharisee, instructed in the Law – you know, some of the same things religious people put their confidence in, even today. We all start out that way, putting our confidence in things like names, titles, places, positions, organizations, credentials, degrees, and the like. But eventually all of that stuff proves to be untrustworthy. It won’t get you to heaven. It won’t deepen your relationship with God. It won’t even cast a devil out of a person. It won’t give you peace and joy. Nothing creates the kind of rejoicing a person experiences as when they stop putting confidence in the flesh and put all their confidence in Christ. And once that happens, there is boldness. It’s not about self-confidence, but Christ-confidence. It’s not about self-esteem, but Christ-esteem.

Now, that brings me back around to the discussion we started around this frustrated Hebrew prophet named Habakkuk. Previously we discussed how he started out frustrated because it seemed God was not doing things correctly; the righteous suffered and the wicked seemed to be getting away with murder. Habakkuk had a very strong sense of right and wrong, good and evil, justice and injustice, and he was disturbed enough to go to God there in the watchtower and pray and wait for an answer. Then, Habakkuk got the answers he was looking for in the form of two very huge revelations

that made all the praying and seeking and waiting worthwhile. We discussed all that in the previous episode.

So Habakkuk got his answer. In Act One of this play, he was frustrated. In Act Two of this play, he found faith. But, as I said, this is a three act play. Act Three is Habakkuk's response to God: a prayer, followed by praise. It's the last part of Habakkuk 3 – the praise part – that I want to focus on. And I'd like to read it to you.

But first, to set the stage... Habakkuk has just had a vision of how things are going to turn out. In the end, he says, "The knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."⁸ Powerful, powerful promise. But, see, in the interim, in the meantime, there is judgment that is coming. It's going to be tough. It's going to be hard. It's going to be difficult. And Habakkuk is trembling and shaking as he sees what's coming. You know, it's a sign – not just for Habakkuk, but for all of us – because this glorious end-time vision of Christ filling all things has not yet happened; and before it does, there will be a tremendous judgment and shaking of everything, which is exactly what the Book of Revelation describes.

So many people take "faith" to mean that they can change their circumstances. For instance, if you are sick, then you can develop your "faith" and get healed. Or, if you don't like your financial situation, you can change it just by "exercising your faith" and just speak money and blessings into existence. Or, if the devil is giving you a hard time, you can just speak some things out in faith and the devil will disappear. And, of course, if things aren't going the way you want them to go, people will often say there is something wrong with you – you just don't have enough faith, because if you had faith, you wouldn't go through these problems. So it's your fault, right?

⁸ Hab. 2:14.

That's such a childish, immature, kindergarten-level of looking at things, but that's where a lot of people are. They think that faith means the *absence* of problems. Really, faith is demonstrated *in the midst* of problems. Faith does not say, "I can avoid problems and things I don't want!" Faith says, "My confidence is in God, no matter what." Problems may come, things may go from bad to worse, but I will not doubt the goodness and greatness of God, even when things are not going the way I want them to go, even when things seems to be going against me. I'm not going to pout, moan, groan, gripe, complain, and get mad at God and blame Him for not working everything out to my satisfaction – I still trust, believe, have confidence, and assurance in the goodness and greatness of God, even when I don't understand what's going on, and *especially* when I don't understand what's going on. Even when I don't like it, even when I don't want it, and *especially* during those times! Now, that's faith.

Things may not change – but *we* can change. We cannot choose our circumstances, but we can *choose* our response to them - what our attitude and our behavior is going to be when things that like that happen. We can get bitter, or we can get better.

So this is faith: not just confidence, assurance, trust, that God is Who He says He is, and God will do what He says He will do – but to still have that confidence whether I live to see it or not. That's an unshakeable faith that creates boldness and fearlessness.

See, nowhere does God say you will always be free of pain in your body, that you will always have money in the bank, or that you will live to be 300 years old. Our bodies get old and worn out. Money comes (if we're fortunate), but eventually money goes. Our confidence cannot be in how we feel, how we look, how much material wealth we have accumulated. It just can't be. All these things are temporary. Thank God when you have them, but can you thank God when you don't? That is the test. And that is what

Habakkuk is being challenged with. “The just will live by faith,” God says. And Habakkuk had to learn the same thing we have to learn – faith means trusting God, even when things don’t make sense. You stop trying to make sense of those things and you put your confidence in the Lord.

By the way, isn’t that what the three Hebrews said when they were about to be cast into the fiery furnace? “Our God is able to deliver us, but even if He does not, oh king, we’re not gonna bow down to your idol.”¹⁰ Now that’s what I’m talking about, right there! God *may not* deliver you from every fiery furnace you find yourself in. Are you going to be frustrated about that? Or are you going to have faith? And, beyond that (this is what I’m getting to) – is your faith a kind of “fair weather” faith, that you can trust God just fine during the good times, but when things start to go bad, you falter and fail and find fault with God? These guys said, “Our God is able to deliver us. No question about it. He can deliver us. *But even if He does not*, we’re going to worship Him anyway! We’re going to serve Him anyway! We’re not gonna bow down to you, to your idols, or anything else. Period. Do what you gotta do! It’s not going to shake our faith in God the least little bit.” I’m saying their faith took them to the next level, which is *fearlessness*. That confident assurance that God is able, but even if He does not, He’s still my God and I’m still going to worship Him! Yes! That’s the fearlessness of a mature faith. That’s the righteous being as bold as a lion. And yes, God did deliver them – but the point is, they were prepared for the possibility of death, and even that did not cause them to question the goodness or greatness of God.

Now watch what Habakkuk says here in Habakkuk 3, starting in verse 17. He is shaking and trembling over the vision of judgment he has just seen. And this is how he concludes:

⁹ Hab. 2:4.

¹⁰ Dan. 3:17,18.

[Hab 3:17-19 NKJV] 17 Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls-- 18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. 19 The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's [feet], And He will make me walk on my high hills. To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.

See? A lot of people will praise and thank God and talk about their great faith in God – so long as they have figs and fruit and fields and food and flocks. See what I mean? Really, their confidence is not in God – their confidence is in these other things. Where is your confidence? Job? Career? Money? Health? House? All these things can be taken away. Habakkuk went from frustration to faith, and then he made the final journey from faith to fearlessness. He said no matter what, I will rejoice in the Lord. Same thing as Paul said: “We rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.” Habakkuk realized that he couldn’t put his confidence in figs and fruit and fields and food and flocks. And neither can you. Thank God for them when you have them, but don’t put your confidence in them. Habakkuk says my joy comes from God, not in the things that God gives me or in the things God can do for me. I will rejoice in the Lord Himself. I will joy in the God of my salvation, and I will walk with Him in the high places like a deer, far above the concerns and cares of this world.

So I began this program with a question: Do you think that it is possible to find a place in your walk with God that takes you beyond *faith*? I think Habakkuk’s journey from frustration, to faith, to fearlessness, reveals the answer. True faith leads to fearlessness – boldness, confidence, and assurance – that, regardless of whether I understand things, regardless of whether I like them, regardless of whatever thing I am faced with or forced to go through, God is Who He says He is, and He will do what He says He will do. I may

not live to see it, but I will see it – if not in this age, then in the age to come, when God wipes away all the tears from our eyes and the former things are forgotten as He makes all things new and beautiful.

Words to think about and meditate upon, until the next episode of *Outside the Camp*. For now, this is Chip Brogden, reminding you that this is the day that the Lord has made, so make it a good day; and remember that greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world!

ANNOUNCER: You've been listening to Outside the Camp with author and teacher Chip Brogden. We hope you enjoyed today's broadcast and found it helpful and encouraging. If you'd like to get additional teachings, audio recordings, books and other Christ-centered resources to help you grow spiritually, visit us online at ChipBrogden.com. Outside the Camp is made possible by the prayers and financial support of listeners like you. Until next time, on behalf of Chip Brogden, I'm Kathy Smith, reminding you that you can do all things through Christ Who strengthens you!