

- > Great Day.... We are so glad that you have joined us here, to hear what the Lord is wanting to tell us today.
- This message segment is brought to you by: **Discovery Crossroads Ministries**.... Scripture says, "**with God, All things ARE possible!**".... and that's why our ministry motto is: "**Where dead-ends, become alive again!**".
- > Today's message title is: "**Faith-Flop**".... **OK but, What is a "Faith-Flop"?**.... **I am saying that:** a Faith-Flop is: something that happens, every time we **FAIL in our faith, and land hard & flat, on our back, or on our face!**
-this is kind of like: Seeing someone do a "**Belly-flop**" into a pool....(*it's just not a pretty thing... And, it hurts too!*)
-or maybe it's: When you see someone showing off (*acting the fool*) on snow skis, and then crashing & burning hard....
...(*Here's: someone who lacks wisdom, is out of control – and is taking bad chances with their body.*)
- **A Faith-Flop** is **much the same** as the "**Belly-Flopper**", and the "**Skier Show-off**".... We take many bad **chances** with our Faith; some chances are detrimental. **Folks**, we really CAN, "**act the fool**" with our Faith! The apostle Paul said, "**We absolutely can, SHIPWRECK our Faith!**".

-- Let's dive deeper into **what it is to experience: "Faith-Flop"**.

> **For Point #1**, let me say that: **We all WILL Flop in our Faith, from time to time!**... *The goal is not to **STAY** Flopped*

- There is no doubt in my mind, that: we all will **Fall from Faith** every now & then. I myself have experienced times when: I wasn't sure of what God was doing, *causing me to lack a bit of trust in Him!...* (*the actions of God's Supernatural-Divinity, can sometimes make our wee minds say, "Wait; What?" - and if we cannot reconcile that question, our Faith can Wobble, Flop, or Give up, altogether!*)

-- Let me give you a couple of "Faith-Flopping" **examples**:

...**a) Jesus' disciples on a stormy Sea of Galilee....**

Matthew 8:23-26, "23 Then Jesus got into the boat and started across the lake with his disciples. 24 Suddenly, a fierce storm struck the lake, with waves breaking into the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. 25 The disciples went and woke him up, shouting, "**Lord, save us! We are going to drown!**" 26 Jesus responded, "**Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!**" Then he got up and rebuked the wind and waves, and suddenly there was a great calm." NLT

- Whatever Faith, that they thought they had – just Flopped in the storm!

....**So**, the disciples believed that Jesus was God, and yet suddenly they **QUESTIONED** whether He was or wasn't...(the storm brought **DOUBT** to their minds & hearts, and **Rattled** their Faith!) **Why, was their Faith so Rattled?** Because, they were experiencing a "**Faith-Flop**"!.... And, Jesus confirmed that with, "**You guys have SO LITTLE faith!**". **Seriously, folks**, when your Faith begins to Rattle (*like: old, dry, dead, bones*), you are experiencing Faith, Flop – *and the Rattle can be quite soul-shaking.* **Don't mess around, Cry out to God!**

...**b) Crazy man, Peter**....

Matthew 16:21-23, "*21 From that time on, Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. 22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, "Never, Lord!" he said - "This shall never happen to you!" 23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me - you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."* NIV

....**Yeah**, Somewhere in Peter's following of Jesus, he wasn't really following Jesus! To follow Jesus means: you have to know *What & Who He is all about!*... Peter's Faith took a bad-turn,

when he didn't understand that Jesus came to earth – to die for the sins of mankind. Peter wanted to make sure no one did that to Jesus, which told Jesus that: Peter was really being His enemy – *because frankly, we are either **FOR** Jesus, or **AGAINST** Him!* So, Peter's words actually spoke against **God's Will** for Jesus, which caused Peter to be more aligned with satan, than with God!... *Has your Faith ever been more aligned to satan's will, than God's Will?*

> *Again, We all WILL Flop in our Faith, from time to time!*

- Let me give you just a few reasons, WHY this happens.

...*Our Faith Flops, because:*

a) **The devil is a formidable foe....**

Ephesians 6:10-12, “*10 A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. 12 For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world - against mighty powers in this dark world - and against evil spirits in the heavenly places (realms).*” NLT

-- Those of you who have elected to follow Christ, **WILL BE** attacked by satan, on all sides – for he hates the lovers of

God, and he is out to get them...(**low**: *he is out to make them stumble & fall flat on their backs/faces*)--(**So**, *you better understand, the devil lives to: give every believer an "SKO"; (not a TKO)... he wants to give us a "Spiritual Knock-out"*)

...**Genesis 3:1** says, "*the serpent was more crafty (cunning), than any of the wild animals, the LORD God had made.*" NIV

...(that means: *Human beings are NOT as smart as they think they are – the devil can outwit them, at every turn!*).

...**Has the devil ever outwitted you, and given you a Spiritual Knock-Out?** If he did, I hope you got up and dove back into fighting the Good Fight of Faith!

b) **Our Faith can Flop when: the storms of life, take our eyes off of Jesus....** **Matthew 14:22-32** tells of another time that Jesus' disciples were crossing the stormy Sea of Galilee, and Peter requests to walk on the water with Jesus.

- **Here, verse 28** gives us all a great lesson... Peter called to Jesus, "*28 Lord if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water. 29 Jesus said, Come. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 **But when he saw the wind, he was afraid** – and **beginning to sink, Peter cried out, Lord, save me!** 31 Immediately, Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. Jesus said to Peter, **You of little faith, why did you doubt?** 32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down.*" NIV

-**Key point here**: The **Winds of Doubt** can blow across our Faith, and make it Flop.... And it happens (*as this story suggests*), every time we **Take Our Eyes OFF of Jesus!**
- **Jesus alone**, keeps us **IN** Faith – but apart from Him, we just **Flop!**... (*As glue holds two things together – likewise, Jesus holds us **IN** Faith!*)
 - **As a side-note**: I hope you didn't miss the Great Connection mentioned in that passage, between: **Peter** crying out to Jesus, and **Jesus immediately** reaching out to save Him!
- * Don't let the Storms of Life, flatten your Faith for good!

c) **Our Faith can Flop** when: **We lust after the flesh, instead of after The Holy Spirit...** **Romans 8:5-6**, “*5 Those who live **according to the flesh** have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live **in accordance with the Spirit** have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6 **The mind governed by the flesh is death**, but **the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.**” NIV*

....This passage clearly demonstrates how: our Faith can Flop, when our mind is **set on** the things of the flesh (*or, on the things of this world*). *The more the world **draws us** towards itself, the more Jesus **fades** from our view (mind & heart) – and when **He** fades out of our life, our **Faith** Fades & Flops with it! Our mind thinking on the flesh, CAN/DOES make our*

*Faith Flop very quickly! **Have "YOU" let the flashy things of this world, Distract you & Flop your Faith in Jesus?***

> **Listen**, **all is NOT lost** if your Faith has Flopped (*Failed*) - for Jesus has **Compassion** on us, and can **Fix** our broken Faith!

-- **So**, that leads us to **Point #2: Jesus Resurrects our Dead (*Flopped out*) Faith!**

-- Let me give you a couple of "**Repaired-Faith**" examples:

...**a) There's a story in [John 8:1-11](#), of a prostitute that was caught in the act of adultery....**

The Old Testament law said that: a man & woman, caught in the act of adultery, were to be stoned to death (*Deut. 22:22*)

- Jesus walks into this situation, with some Pharisees conspiring to condemn a woman to death. **Jesus** said to the Pharisees, "*Whichever of you is without sin, you may throw (cast) the first stone!*" Hearing this, all the religious leaders dropped their stones and walked away! Jesus then asked the woman "*where they all had gone, and if no one was left to accuse her?*" She simply replied, "*There's no one, sir*". Jesus tells her (*John 8:11*), "*Then, neither do I condemn you – go now and leave your life of sin*"...(or, "*go and sin no more*").

Point: Jesus came to earth, "**NOT to judge, but to heal & save!**" **That's the Power of God's Grace to us!**

b) Another example of healed broken faith, is found in John 21:15-19 - where Jesus is found restoring the **Floppy (*Messed up*) Faith of Peter.**

So, the disciples have just seen the Risen Lord for the 3rd time, and Jesus invites them to quit fishing and enjoy breakfast with Him. But there is work to do, and Jesus goes right to it.... verse 15 says, "*When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these? "Yes, Lord" he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." 16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." 17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt, because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep.".... **So**, more discussions go on (*about how Peter will live & die*) – but after that, Jesus told Peter, "**Follow me!**".*

- **So**, after Peter **Failed** in his Faith, about a half of dozen times – Jesus **Restores** Peter's Faith, and tells Him to Follow Him!

* **The Big point here is:** Jesus was telling Peter to "*Feed His Lambs/Sheep*" – because He was **Restoring** Peter, so that he could get back to serving the Lord... Peter was to build

Jesus' Church, and take care of the people within it. If Jesus wasn't going to forgive & cleanse Peter, and put him back to work – then Jesus would have had no reason, or need, to **Restore** Peter! **That's the Power of God's Grace to us!**

* **Never let** satan make you think that: your Faith is **beyond** Repair (*because of many screw-ups*) – Jesus always Restores!
Have you given up on following Jesus, because the devil has made you think that you cannot be forgiven or used for God's Glory? God loves to take the lowly in spirit, and rise them up out of the ashes of their own brokenness!

> **OK**, let me give you just a few reasons, **WHY** I believe that Jesus **Can, Will & Does, Fix** our **Deflated-Faith**.

a) Jesus knows that: our flesh is weak....

Matthew 26:41, "*Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. **The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.***" NIV

- We so often WANT to do what is right, but our Flesh (*our: mind, heart & mouth*) always gets in the way (**falls short**)!
Do any of you agree?
- Our WEAK flesh, can be seen as "**GIVING IN**" to evil/wrong: desires, temptations & influences...(*it happens every day!*)....
....and once our Flesh "**gives in**" to the lure & love of evil, our spirit **experiences** deep: sadness, regret, shame & guilt.

- **YET**, Christ's Compassion for us, is greater than we realize....
He doesn't want us STAYING down on ourselves, about our Faith-failures. He KNOWS that we WILL Fail, but He wants us to be "**Overcomers**" – and that's why He pulls us back up off the floor, and tells us, "**Try again!**" - "**Try again!**".

b) Jesus Fixes our Faith, because He knows that: we cannot outwit the devil.... 2 Corinthians 11:3, "*But I am afraid that just as **Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*" NIV**

- As Eve was "**Conned**" by satan.... the author suggests that our Faith can be "**Conned**" too!
- We think that we are **smart**, but our smarts are generally only towards the things of this world. Typically, we are **dumb** (**ignorant**, or **not fully up on**) the things happening in the high, heavenly, realms....(*most Christians don't even know what the **Jezabel spirit** is*)! What we do NOT know about (**spiritually**), is the playground of satan.
Satan will come from ways & directions, that most people never knew existed, or never knew was possible!
- **YET**, Jesus is our Complete **Wisdom** (*or, The One having All Wisdom*). He OPENS OUR SPIRITUAL EYES, to the dangers ahead - or to the dangers of the roaring lion, that daily seeks to devour us...(*Jesus literally pulls us from his jaws/teeth*)

Has the devil conned you and left you Faithless? Arise and follow Jesus anew, with renewed Courage!

c) Jesus Fixes our Faith, because: He is ALWAYS with us....

Deuteronomy 31:8, "The Lord himself goes **before you and will be with you; he will NEVER leave you, nor forsake you. Do not be **afraid**; do not be **discouraged**."** NIV
...(Fear & Discouragement, are satan's weapons against Faith!)

- For our Faith to GROW strong, so that it "cannot be" Flopped – means: our Faith must **STAY** in a constant **State of Nurture**.
- Jesus being by our side, and constantly teaching & training us – means: our **OLDER** (*younger, more naïve*) Faith, can be **REPLACED** with a **NEWER** (*stronger, more time-tested*) Faith... *a Faith that can Stand-firm, thru every: storm, trail, temptation, or negative circumstance, that is thrown at it!*
 - Think on it: How STRONG would your faith be, KNOWING that God constantly SURROUNDS YOU – second by second, of every single day? **KNOW it folks!**

d) Jesus permanently Fixes our Faith, because: we are His.

John 10:28, "I give them eternal life, and **they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand."** NIV

- **No one, or Anything, should ever mess with God's children!** Father God will jump all over the soul, that tries to make one of His children stumble! Don't mess with God!....

The Lord told us, "**No one will ever snatch us (His children), out of His Hand!**", and His Word makes that statement a sure thing! **Believe it & Bank on it, folks!**

- > **In moving to a close**, **Jesus is the Author & Perfector of our Faith**). He is totally committed to "**De-flopping**" our Faith... He will do as He needs to, to keep our Faith **INTACT** – throughout our lives, and all the way into heaven! **And**, the awesome deal is: Jesus keeping our Faith INTACT, means: He can **Guarantee** our entry into the Kingdom of God!.....
- **How deep is this?..... Ephesians 1:13-14**, "*You also were **included** in Christ, when you **heard** the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you **believed**, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit **guaranteeing** our inheritance, until the redemption of those who are God's possession - to the praise of his glory.*" NIV
 - When we accept Jesus into our heart, as "**Savior & Lord**" - our Faith gets "**Marked** with the **Seal** of God" (a seal saying, "We ARE God's kid"). Even in the midst of our **weakness** (*our **back-sliding** into a Faith, Flop*), God's Seal upon us still "**Holds firm**", **regardless**. His Seal of "Salvation-Promise", remains "**Intact**" forever - *no matter how badly we mess up our Faith!*

- > **I want you to remember today?....** Jesus knows our flesh is weak.... He knows that the devil can outwit us.... He knows that we get hung up on the sparkly things of this world, that takes our eyes off of Him.... **And YET**, He is always **with us**... ..(*He is our constant Helper*).... Thru thick or thin, He always **maintains** that **we are His Own** - *promising that: No one, nor Anything, will ever be able to snatch us out of His Hand.*
- **Listen**: **If you will Hold** to these truths, the devil will **have a hard time, making your Faith, Flop!**
- > **Folks**, **STOP** intentionally sabotaging your own Faith! **Quit** Belly-flopping, off of the diving-board of life. Our wrong: thoughts, desires, motives & intentions, take our Faith down hard roads of destruction! So, it's up to us to intentionally **STOP** going down those roads. With God's Help, **Set** your mind & heart on things above, where Christ is seated!
- The goal of Faith is to: grow closer & closer to Jesus, NOT fall further & further away from Him. Call on Jesus ANYTIME that you think, that your Faith in Him is Flopping!
- **Seriously**, **Anyone** who is weary & carrying heavy burdens (*or, who has Flopped-out Faith*), turn to Jesus - and He will give you rest (*and renewed Faith*).... Make the call friends!

Discovery questions:

- 1)** What does a “Flopped-out” Faith look like to you? Have “YOU” ever experienced it - something like experiencing a belly-flop in a pool?
- 2)** Can you explain to others what the feeling was like, while your Faith was flat on its back or face - meaning, how tough was it? What intrusive-thoughts, or feelings, plagued your mind during that Faith-failure?
- 3)** What kind of things contribute to believers experiencing Faith, Flop? (*for help, go to the message transcript – for it identified several of them*).
- 4)** If you have yet to experience a Faith that fails; do you believe that it still can happen to you? Explain your answer!
- 5)** How heartbreaking would it be for “YOU”, if Jesus just outright said to you, “You really have such little faith”? Worse yet, what if Jesus said to “YOU”, “Get behind me satan; your faith is not acting according to God’s Will – only your own”?
** I don’t know about you, but I would hate to think my Faith is a stumbling block to Jesus!*
- 6)** In the message segment, speaking to the “Reasons Why Our Faith Often Fails” – Do “YOU” really believe the devil is a formidable foe”? If you do you believe this - why?

- 7)** Would you agree that the moment you “Took Your Eyes Off of Jesus”, is the moment that your Faith went sideways?
Explain! *The Winds of Doubt can be devastating to our Faith!*
- 8)** How hard is it when our flesh takes over our mind, and moves it away from involvement in our relationship with Jesus?
Things that glitter can ruin, even shipwreck, our Faith!
- 9)** Do you believe that God can put flesh, blood, breath & life back into old, dry, dead bones? (see: *Ezekiel 37:1-10*).
* But seriously, do you believe that Jesus can Resurrect your Dry & Dead Faith? Should or Does our Belief in Jesus Restoring our broken Faith, have anything to do with Him actually doing it?
- 10)** Do you believe that “YOUR” Faith is Weak? Explain why you believe this!
- 11)** Should we ever WORRY about our Faith staying cold or dead, or UNABLE to be forgiven & restored - when we KNOW that Jesus is always with us, and that we are His (*No one, nor Anything, being able to snatch us out of His Hand*)?
Shouldn't these Truths bring you Comfort & Strength, to help you keep up the Good Fight of Faith? *Take a new look at Ephesians 1:13-14, and enjoy the Truth & Freedom of Jesus Christ, within these words!*

12) Do you really believe that with one Shout-out to Jesus, all can be forgiven & made new with a Fresh Start? *May you learn to **count on this Truth**, in YOUR Faith-walk with Christ!*