

(Wednesdays in Advent were done in a Bible study/small group format)

Letters of Faith

Jesus continually challenged His disciples to greater faith. What would His challenges be to us? What is the greatest step of faith you have ever taken? Have you ever placed your faith in someone or something that let you down? How did that feel?

25 During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear.

27 But Jesus immediately said to them: **“Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”**

28 “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”

29 **“Come,”** he said. 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, cried out, “Lord, save me!”

31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. **“You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”** (Matthew 14:25–31 NIV)

Would you call someone who had just gotten out of a boat and walked on water someone of “little faith”? What do you like best about this account?

19 **“O unbelieving generation,”** Jesus replied, **“how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.”**

20 So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

21 Jesus asked the boy’s father, **“How long has he been like this?”** “From childhood,” he answered. 22 “It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.”

23 **“If you can?”** said Jesus. **“Everything is possible for him who believes.”**

24 Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”

25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the evil spirit. **“You deaf and mute spirit,”** he said, **“I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.”**

26 The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, “He’s dead.” 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.” (Mark 9:19–29 NIV)

Do you really believe that “everything is possible for those who believe”? Why/why not?

Do you think anybody will ever write a children’s book about a little train struggling up the tracks saying, “If I can, if I can, if I can...”?

Is there a better response to our faith struggles than that of the boy’s father: “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief”?

25 He said to them, **“How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!**

26 **Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?”** 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.” (Luke 24:25–27 NIV)

“Slow of heart” might be the perfect description of Jesus’ disciples generally. In what ways does that describe us?

Why is it important that we don’t restrict our Bible reading and believing to the New Testament?

