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| **Exercise the Gift of Faith**  *Promise: the gift of faith makes it possible for us to serve our Lord* Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg Hab 1:1-4; 2:1-4; Psalm 62; 2 Timothy 1:1-14; Luke 17:1-10 (17th Sunday after Pentecost, Pr. 22), 10/5/25  *So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, “We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.”* – v. 10  **Lead In –** Like with most firstborns it was impressed upon me that I set a good example for my younger siblings. But I did not excel academically, musically, or athletically. That is to put in mildly! And yet I had a crafty rationale for the mediocrity. Out of concern for my four younger siblings I did not want to set the bar too high and simply overwhelm them. It was an act of charity on my part, don’t you see? … Is it an act of charity when in many of our churches we have been lowering the bar in recent decades?. It is thought we might attract more people that way. But we forget, the bar is not ours to set! Clearly, in the Bible the bar is set very high, impossibly high! And it is important that we understand this.   1. **Impossibly High Bar, the Standard of Perfection** 2. **Note the High Bar in Each of Our Readings**    1. Patient enduring amid suffering and injustice…    2. Sharing in suffering for the gospel…    3. Avoid being the cause leading a little one astray… 3. **The Faith to Receive God’s Grace Is Itself a Gift**    1. The disciples ask for an increase of faith…    2. Faith is a gift from God received through His Word… 4. **Doing Our Duty Even as Unworthy Servants**    1. The qualifying height in the high jump…    2. Only one has ever cleared the bar…    3. What we should have been about all along…   **Final Word –** There is nothing easy about what we have been called to by our Lord Jesus. In fact, it is impossible for us. It requires faith, which is given to us as a gift. It requires God’s presence in and through us. With a new nature given birth in us through baptism, it will require our all. That said, there can be no endeavor more meaningful and rewarding. It involves the redemption of heaven and earth and participation in the fullness of God’s kingdom. We not only wait patiently for the promises to come, we also help to increase the number of people to join us. It is our duty for which we are unworthy, but He lets us serve anyway. It is a matter of exercising the gift of faith. Amen.  **Mt 5:20** For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.  **Mt 5:48** You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.  **Hb 1:2-4** O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save? Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted.  **Hb 2:4b** but the righteous shall live by his faith.  **2Ti 1:8** Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, | **Luke 17:1-10 ESV**  *Unworthy Servants*  1[Jesus] said to his disciples, “Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! 2It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. 3Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, 4and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”  5The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” 6And the Lord said, “If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.  7“Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and recline at table’? 8Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink’? 9Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? 10So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’”  **Lk 17:2** It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin.  **Ep 2:8-9** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.  **Ro 10:17** So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.  **Ga 3:26-27** for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.  **He 5:8-9** Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.  **2Co 5:21** For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.  **Ga 2:20** I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.  **1Ti 1:6** For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands |

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