

FROM THE PULPIT

Faith: Desire to believe

By Brad Bryant
FOR THE PANTAGRAPH

How can faith possibly matter, when everything is collapsing around us?

I serve as a Red Cross disaster relief volunteer, where I'm blessed to work with your awesome neighbors — people willing to put their lives on hold when local or national disasters strike.

While training new volunteers, we stress personal preparedness, before disasters occur. Those who aren't prepared are merely "more victims." Those who plan and prepare are better able to "go help."

This also applies to our spiritual life. God doesn't cause disasters, but for those who have "prepared," intentionally building a relationship with God, they find a comforting, guiding "partner" to walk with them through their "disasters."

God promises to be found. Some steps were recorded by the prophet Jeremiah (29:11-14),

where we find this promise: "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

But finding God is not the end of the journey.

It is merely an important step. Faith helps us begin that journey.

Another prophet, Alma (<http://tinyurl.com/yd9sqyo>) compares faith to a "seed." If you only have a "desire" to believe, you can "plant" that seed in your life, nurture it, and God can grow it from desire through faith to knowledge.

Your daily choices affect that seed's growth, and your faith in God.

Note in Jeremiah that not everyone finds God; only those who seek "with all your heart." Everyone is invited and encouraged to seek God, but it requires a deep commitment to encounter God, and some intentional choices!

Alma reminds us to "experiment" with God's promises, found throughout the Scriptures. If we do X, then God promises to

do Y. Experiment with God's promises. Allow the cause-and-effect results to build your faith.

Do not try to do it alone. Yes, it is possible to find God anywhere, but some situations make it much easier.

We best grow closer to God when we are engaged with a healthy church family. A quality church family provides you with relationships, encouragement and opportunities to take steps toward God, helping that seed of faith to grow in you.

As your faith grows, your trust and relationship with God grows.

Remember: God loves you, and wants you to find him. Find a church family that helps you meet the living, loving God," who knows you personally, and wants to be your partner in the storms and disasters of life.

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