

“O For A Faith!”
John 12:37-43

Introduction:

1. In 1831 - William Bathurst:
 - Penned These Lines:
 - “O For A Faith That Will Not Shrink,
Though Pressed By Every Foe,
That Will Not Tremble On The Brink
Of Any Earthly Woe!”
2. As We Turn Back In Our Bibles This Morning:
 - To John 12:
 - This Is What Jesus Wanted:
 - To Occur In The Hearts Of His Own People:
 - The Jews!
 - When He Called To Them:
 - And Pleaded For Them:
 - To “Believe In The Light!”
 - In 12:36:
 - “While Ye Have Light, Believe In The Light, That Ye May Be The Children Of Light!”
3. And - Of Course:
 - As We’ve Seen All Through:
 - The Gospel Of John:
 - Jesus Christ Is The Light!
 - And - He Shined His Light:
 - Upon Them:
 - So That They - And:
 - So That We:
 - Might Believe In Him!
4. However - As We See In:
 - The Final Week Of Jesus’ Life & Ministry:
 - We Know That The Vast Majority:
 - Of His People:
 - Do **Not** End Up Believing In Him As Their True Messiah!
 - And - In The Verses We Come To Next:
 - In 12:37-43 - We Find:
 - Two Sad & Unfortunate Reactions To:
 - The Light That Jesus Shined:
 - Upon Them!
5. And - Those Two Reactions Are:
 - A Faith That Is Wanting:
 - Which Is No Faith At All!
 - As Well As:
 - A Week Faith:
 - Which Avails Nothing At All!
6. And - It Is These Reactions:
 - That Will Lead To:
 - The Final Fulfilment:
 - Of Jesus’ Mission:
 - To This World!
 - So - Let’s Read These Verses Together:
 - 12:37-43 - “But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: / That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? / Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, / He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. / These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him. / Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: / For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God!”

7. Now - The First Thing We Find:
 - In These Verses - In 12:37:
 - Is Confirmation That:
 - Jesus Did Shine His Light:
 - Upon The Lives Of These People!
 - Jesus Shined His Light:
 - By Doing - "So Many Miracles Before Them!"
8. So - As The Light Of The World:
 - Jesus Shined His Light:
 - Personally!
 - "He" - Himself - Did:
 - Miracles - Not Only Before Them:
 - But For Many Of Them!
 - And - We Have Looked At:
 - Many Of Those Miracles Already:
 - Which Were True Signs:
 - Of His Nature & Identity!
 - So - Jesus Shined His Light:
 - Upon The People:
 - Personally!
 - But Also - Jesus Shined His Light:
 - Powerfully!
 - Jesus Personally & Powerfully:
 - Made The Blind To See, The Lame To Walk, The Lepers To Be Cleansed, The Deaf To Hear, And Even The Dead To Be Raised Back To Life! (Lazarus!)
 - And - All Of His Miracles & Signs:
 - Were Meant To Both:
 - To Confirm His Claims - And:
 - To Convince His Critics!
 - So - Jesus Shined His Light:
 - Upon The People:
 - Personally & Powerfully:
 - Throughout His Entire Ministry!
 - But Also - Jesus Shined His Light:
 - Plentifully!
 - According To 12:37 - Jesus:
 - "Had Done *So Many* Miracles Before Them!
 - At The End Of His Gospel:
 - John Tells Us That:
 - "*Many* other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book!" (12:30)
 - And - In The Very Last Verse:
 - He Adds - "And there are also *many* other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written!" (21:25)
 - So - Again - Jesus Shined His Light:
 - Upon The People:
 - Personally & Powerfully & Plentifully!
 - And John Was Certainly Impressed!
 - 9. But - What About So Many Of The Rest?
 - Instead Of Listening To:
 - Jesus' Plea - To "Believe In The Light!"
 - John Reveals:
 - Again - In 12:37 - "Though He Had Done So Many Miracles Before Them!"
 - "Though" Jesus Had Performed So Many Signs:
 - Personally & Powerfully & Plentifully:
 - "Before Them!"
 - "Yet They Believed Not On Him!"
 - This Means That:

- They Did Not Believe In Jesus:
 - As The Kind Of Messiah:
 - Jesus Claimed To Be!

10. Now - Based On This Alone:
- According To The World's Perspective:
 - Jesus Would Have Been A Complete Failure!
 - And - Perhaps Even Jesus' Closest Disciples:
 - Were Starting To Think This:
 - About Him As Well!
 - **IE:** How Do We Think About Success & Failure In Our Culture? Claims Made - Believed - Followed!
Business & Politics & Even Religion!
 - Now - If You Had Been:
 - Hearing About Jesus For The First Time:
 - Through The Gospel Of John:
 - You Might Have Come To:
 - The Conclusion:
 - That He Was A Failure As Well!

11. And That Is Why:
- John Wants Us To Know:
 - That Even When:

1. Faith Is Wanting:

- In This World - And Even:
 - In The Hearts Of Those:
 - Who Jesus Shined His Light Upon:
 - In A Personal, Powerful, & Plentiful Way!
 - God's Plan For Jesus:
 - Was Not Frustrated - And:
 - God's Purpose For Jesus:
 - Did Not Fail!
 - And That Is Why:
 - After Describing The Reaction Of Unbelief:
 - In The Majority Of The People:
 - John Brings In The Testimony Of The Prophet Isaiah!
 - From Isaiah 53:1 - To Prove That:
- Even When Faith Is Wanting:
 - God's Plan For Jesus:
 - Is Not Frustrated!
 - So - John Quotes Isaiah:
 - In 12:38 - "That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?"
 - In Other Words - Their Reaction:
 - Of Unbelief In Their True Messiah:
 - Was Foretold By Isaiah:
 - Some 700 Years Before!
 - And - True To Isaiah's Prophecy:
 - The People Ultimately Rejected:
 - Both The Words & The Works:
 - Of Jesus - Who Came To:
 - Bring Relief, Redemption, And Rescue To Their Souls!
 - This Was The "Report" Isaiah Gave:
 - Back In 52:9-10 - "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. / The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God!"
 - But - What Was Their "Salvation" To Be From?
 - From Their Sin - As Found In 53:5 - "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed!"

- So - Even Though:
 - Faith Was Wanting:
 - In The Hearts Of So Many:
 - Who Heard The Words Of Jesus & Who Saw The Works Of Jesus:
 - God's Plan For Jesus Was Not Frustrated!
- In Fact - Their Unbelief:
 - Was Even Part Of God's Plan!
 - It Was Already Factored In!
 - And - This Is Still Something That:
 - Those Of Us Who *Do* Believe In Jesus:
 - Can Take Comfort In:
 - In A World That Is Full Of Unbelief!
 - God's Plan For Jesus & His Gospel:
 - Is Never Frustrated!
- And - In Addition To This:
 - When Faith Is Wanting:
 - God's Purpose For Jesus:
 - Will Never Fail!
 - Which Is Why John Quotes Isaiah Again!
 - In 12:39-40 - "Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, / He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them!"
 - This Time - John Tells Us About The Time:
 - When Isaiah Saw:
 - "The Lord Sitting Upon A Throne, High And Lifted Up" - In Isaiah 6!
 - And - John Even Tells Us In:
 - 12:41 - "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him!"
 - So - When Isaiah Saw The Lord:
 - He Saw Jesus, The Son Of God, In All Of His Glory!
 - And - Through This:
 - John Reveals That:
 - When The Jews:
 - *Would Not Believe:*
 - The Words & Works Of Jesus!
 - The Time Came When They:
 - *Could Not Believe:*
 - Because They Had Refused To Heed Jesus' Call Back In 12:36!
 - That Is - They Refused:
 - To "Believe In The Light" - "While They Had The Light!"
 - This Is Something That:
 - We See Time & Again:
 - In Scripture!
 - When A Person:
 - Is Given Light From The Lord:
 - And - They Resist That Light:
 - Eventually God Will Honor Their Wish:
 - And Take Away Even The Light They Had!
 - Or - When A Person:
 - Hardens Their Heart:
 - To The Grace Shown To Them By The Lord:
 - Eventually God Will Just Let Them Go:
 - By Blinding Their Eyes & Hardening Their Hearts Even More!
 - And This Becomes The First Instalment:
 - Of His Judgment:
 - On Them!
 - This Is What Happened To:
 - Pharaoh - The King Of Egypt:
 - Who - When God Told Him Through Moses To:

- “Let My People Go!”
- Not Only Are We Told That:
 - *Pharaoh* Hardened His Heart - But That:
 - *God* Hardened His Heart:
 - As Well!
 - And - All God Ever Has To Do:
 - To Harden A Sinners Heart:
 - Is To Leave Us Alone:
 - In Our Sin!
- This Is Why Paul Reminds Us In:
 - 2 Corinthians 6:2 - That:
 - “Behold, Now Is The Accepted Time! Behold, Now Is The Day Of Salvation!”
 - Because - If You Resist God’s Light & Grace:
 - As Found In Jesus:
 - At Some Point - He May Remove His Light & Grace:
 - And It Will Be Too Late!
- So - This Means That:
 - The Appeal Of The Gospel:
 - Is Urgent!
 - For You & For Me & For Others!
- But - This Also Means That:
 - Even When Faith Is Wanting:
 - God’s Plan Is Never Frustrated - And:
 - God’s Purpose Will Never Fail!
 - Because - Once Again:
 - It Was Through:
 - The Blindness Of Their Eyes - And:
 - The Hardness Of Their Hearts:
 - That God Was Able To Bring About The Relief & Redemption & Rescue He Promised:
 - To The World!
 - It Was Through The:
 - Blindness & Hardness:
 - Of The Jews - In Those Days:
 - That Jesus Christ:
 - Was Lifted Up On That Old Rugged Cross:
 - To Shed His Blood For Our Sin!
- And So - Even Though:
 - Faith Is Still Wanting:
 - In The Hearts Of So Many In This World!
 - We Need To Remember That:
 - God’s Plan Is Never Frustrated!
 - And - God’s Plan Will Never Fail!
 - But Then - In These Verses:
 - We Find Another Reaction:
 - To The Light Of Jesus!
 - And That Is When:

2. ***Faith Is Weak:***

- When Faith Is Weak - In Those Who *Do* Believe In Jesus:
 - At Least In Some Measure!
 - And - We Find This Reaction Next:
 - In 12:42-43 - “Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: / For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God!”
 - Now - At First:
 - We Find Something To Cheer About Here!
 - 12:42 - “Nevertheless Among The Chief Rulers Also Many Believed On Him!”
 - So - The Jesus’ Personal & Powerful & Plentiful:

- Signs - Were Taken To Heart:
 - By “Many” Of Those Who Were:
 - “Chief Rulers” In Israel!
- So - Even Though - For Most Of The People:
 - God Blinded Their Eyes & Hardened Their Hearts:
 - So That He Could Accomplish:
 - His Plan & Purpose For Jesus:
 - And The Gospel!
 - God Also:
 - Opened The Eyes - And:
 - Softened The Hearts:
 - Of Some - Even “Many!”
 - So That They Might Believe In Jesus!
- But - What Kind Of Faith:
 - Did It Turn Out To Be?
 - Sadly - It Turned Out To Be:
 - A Weak Faith:
 - Like So Many Have:
 - Even Today!
 - Though They Committed Themselves:
 - To Christ - They Struggled With:
 - Courage For Christ!
 - And John Further Tells Us Why!
 - When Faith Is Weak:
 - It Is Often Because Of:
 - An Ongoing Fear – Of Man - Over God!
 - Just Like These Jewish Leaders:
 - Who - 12:42 - “Because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue!”
 - Now - Imagine Just How Much:
 - God Could Have Used These Men:
 - If They Had Openly “Confessed” Their Confidence In & Commitment To:
 - The Lord Jesus!
 - But Instead - They Had:
 - A Greater Fear Of Man:
 - Than Of God!
 - Since They Held A Prominent Place:
 - In The Jewish Religion & Society:
 - They Did Not Want To Give Up:
 - Their Inclusion Or Importance Or Influence:
 - In The Synagogue!
 - So - They Were Afraid Of:
 - What They Might *Lose* - Instead Of:
 - Rejoicing In What They Had *Gained*:
 - By Believing In Christ!
 - Why Does John Include This Hear?
 - Perhaps To Show Us That:
 - Even When God:
 - Opens Our Eyes & Softens Our Hearts To Believe In Jesus!
 - We Still Are So Weak In Ourselves:
 - And Prone To The Fear Of Man:
 - That We Need Him To Open Our Eyes Wider & To Continue To Soften Our Hearts To His Grace!
 - Because - Only When God Does This:
 - Can Our:
 - Faith In Him!
 - Fellowship With Him! And:
 - Following After Him!
 - Be Fortified & Strengthened With His Might!

- So - When Your Faith Is Weak:
 - Think About Why!
 - Is It Because There Is Also:
 - An Ongoing Fear Of Man:
 - In Your Heart?
 - This Is What Will Keep Us:
 - As Secret, Silent - And Even:
 - Spineless Christians!
 - But We Can Also See:
- When Faith Is Weak:
 - It Is Often Because Of:
 - An Ongoing Focus – Of Man’s Favor:
 - Over God’s Favor!
 - Just Like These Jewish Leaders:
 - Who - 12:43 - “Loved The Praise Of Men More Than The Praise Of God!”
 - So - Even Though:
 - They Had Some Faith In Christ:
 - Their Faith Needed:
 - To Grow!
 - Because - A Weak Faith:
 - Is Focused More On:
 - Who You Can See With Your Eyes - And Their Praise:
 - More Than Who You Can’t See - And His Praise!
 - And Yet - The Apostle Paul Reminds Us That:
 - “We Walk By Faith, Not By Sight!” (2 Corinthians 5:7)
 - Now - Even Though:
 - Faith Was Weak:
 - In The Hearts Of These Men:
 - Is This The End Of Their Story?
 - No!
 - Because - God Was Able To:
 - Strengthen Their Weak Faith:
 - And Use Them In His Plan:
 - As Well!
 - More Than Likely:
 - A Man Named Joseph Of Arimathaea:
 - Was One Of “The Chief Rulers” Who:
 - Believed In Jesus!
 - And We First Meet Him After Jesus’ Death:
 - In 19:38 - Where We Are Told That:
 - This - “Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus!”
 - So - God Strengthened:
 - The Weak Faith Of Joseph:
 - So That He Might Serve Jesus:
 - Even In His Death!
 - Also - Another One Of The “Chief Rulers” Who:
 - Believed In Jesus:
 - Would Have Been Nicodemus:
 - The Pharisee Who Came To Jesus By Night:
 - All The Way Back In John Chapter 3!
 - And The Next Time We See Him:
 - Is With Joseph - Also In 19:39:
 - “And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight!”
 - God Strengthened His Faith Too:
 - So That He Might Serve Jesus:
 - In His Death As Well!

