

Faith—Now and Forever!

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Dearest Family,

The way the Lord works in our lives and the way He chooses to do things is often past our comprehension. It's mysterious, it's humbling, and it usually takes faith and patience, because the Lord's timetable is so often different from ours. Living for Jesus and following Him and doing His will and His work requires faith and trust and humility, because you're not the one in control—Jesus is. We have to remind ourselves constantly that He knows best, that He does all things well, that His priorities are different and so much more long term and “big picture” than ours are.

2. At the same time, the Lord has taught us so much about the spiritual weapons, He's given us the gift of the keys, and there are so many promises of spiritual power and miracles and victory attached to those spiritual weapons. But even with all the spiritual power at our fingertips, even with all of the Lord's awesome promises—from the ones in the Bible like, “Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He will give it you” (John 15:16), to the recent key promises like “Everything you need you can claim through

the keys,” we have to remember that we can do our part, but we're not the ones calling the shots. We're not the ones with the bird's-eye view of past, present, and future, and the master plan for eternity. We can put the Lord on the spot, we can harness all the spiritual power He has put at our fingertips, we can do our part. But ultimately it is His will that must be done. The Lord is in control, and He knows best.

3. It's so important to keep an attitude of humility and simple trust in the Lord. Otherwise you can struggle with so many questions when things don't turn out the way you were hoping or even the way you really desperately prayed they would.

4. There is so much in the Word on this topic—beginning with the Bible, and scattered throughout the writings of men and women of faith since then, and of course we have wonderfully clear and specific messages direct from Heaven on the topic too. Every now and then it's good to stop and review the various reasons why the Lord works the way He does, why things don't always turn out the way we'd like, why every prayer isn't answered in the manner we'd hoped, why life is sometimes a lot harder than we think it should be.

5. If you don't keep going back to the Word to strengthen your faith, life can seem pretty hard for no good reason—and you can start to feel that it's you, that you must be doing something wrong because things aren't working out so well for you, that the Lord must be displeased with you because He isn't answering every prayer with a miraculous deliverance, that maybe the promises He's given don't actually work “as advertised.” Or you can become frustrated or discouraged with the spiritual gifts and tools the Lord has given us to do the job—prayer, the keys, faith, praise, His promises, etc.

6. The Enemy is always trying to tear down your faith. His job is to try to get you to doubt the Lord's Word. I'd say that's his number-one

mission—and it started way back with Adam and Eve in the Garden. “Hath God said?” (Gen.3:1). He wanted to get them to doubt the Lord and give up their birthright, and in that case his charms and half-truths worked.

7. In addition to the Enemy’s constant attempts to hurt your faith, you’ve also got human nature and your own carnal mind working against your faith, because faith isn’t faith unless it’s believing in something that is unseen—something that you know and believe even though you don’t have any proof.

8. When you go back to the Word, you’ll see that the Lord has answered this age-old dilemma of “Why doesn’t God always answer prayer?” with so many wonderful promises and explanations. He has given us so much heavenly perspective on this matter. But the fact is that life, and the difficulties and trials and times when the Lord seemingly doesn’t answer prayer, will continue to be a test of faith. It will always be so, probably until we get to Heaven.

9. We’ve put together a few excerpts of recent messages from the Lord on this topic, as well as a compilation of some of the milestone messages that have already been published. We have a wealth of encouragement and beautiful perspective. Think of some of the Christians of old who went through terrible and heartbreakening experiences and were alone, sometimes without much written Word at all to hang on to. I’m sure the Lord gave them grace, but by comparison, I feel like I have it so good. While I still have to take things by faith, we have so much more understanding of the way the Lord works, so many more explanations that help to make things clear and shed light on why the Lord does what He does, and the good He brings out of it in our lives.

10. Whenever things are rough, when you feel that they’re not turning out the way you’d hoped, when you feel your prayers aren’t being answered, when the trials of life are a little too much to bear, when the battle seems too long, when your faith is under attack, when you’re

feeling weary and aren’t sure if you can endure much longer, climb up onto the wonderful foundation the Lord has built for your faith through His many promises and encouraging words, and rest in that safe haven.

11. Don’t try to answer all the Enemy’s lies and accusations yourself; let the Word answer for you. Rest in the Word. Rest in the assurance that this isn’t a strange or unique battle—it’s one that every great Christian of all time has had to reckon with, and the answer is the same today as it has ever been—trust in your Husband and His wonderful ways. You can’t figure it all out. It’s a matter of faith, and you don’t have to work up faith. Instead, encourage yourself in the Word and relax in the comfort of knowing that our wonderful Husband has everything in His hands. Rest in Jesus’ arms, let Him shield you and support you, and the storm will pass.

You’re in good company!

12. (Jesus:) There is no easy answer to the question of why I don’t always answer your prayers as you wish, My loves. There are so many beautiful, wonderful, satisfying, encouraging perspectives that you can take when you are faced with these situations in which everything seems to be going wrong and you wonder why I’m not answering or intervening and it seems I’m not doing what I’ve promised in My Word, but in the end it all comes down to faith.

13. In order to have strong faith, it must be sorely tested, refined, and purified. It’s the testing and refining and purifying that is hard—so hard to endure, so hard to understand, so hard to accept.

14. I am just. I keep My Word. I am faithful. But My ways are so much higher than your ways (Isa.55:9). My priorities are so different from your priorities. You want quick answers, visible results. I’m almost always after something deeper, even more precious and long-lasting—the kind of results that take time.

15. This Earth and your short life here is a testing ground, there are no two ways about it.

There's no way to come to Earth, learn what you need to learn, grow in the ways your spirit needs to grow, experience what you need to experience, and accomplish what you need to accomplish without this sore, painful testing. That's the Earth life. That's life experience on Earth, and that's why what you learn during your life on Earth is so valuable—irreplaceable, really—because it's so hard earned.

16. Yes, you have the keys. You have the spiritual weapons. You have spirit helpers. You have so much knowledge of the supernatural realm and how it intersects and works with the physical realm. Those are wonderful hints, clues, shortcuts in some ways. But there are limits to how much I can deliver you from the difficulties without taking away your honor, your reward, your testimony, your privilege.

17. Look back at the great men and women of faith in the Bible and how much they struggled, how many obstacles they had to overcome. Look back at some of the missionaries in the last 500 years and all that they went through.

18. You're in good company! You're living in the Last Days on Earth, and the battles are raging and the fire is hot. But the rewards that come with your service to Me are so valuable, eternal, and beyond compare. I can't spare you from all the difficulty or it wouldn't be a test—or a testimony. You would be cheated out of what you signed up to come to Earth for in the first place.

19. Review Hebrews 11. It's not called “the faith chapter” for nothing. It's about the great men and women who gave their lives for their faith. They didn't just endure for a space and then get rescued. They endured, and endured, and endured, and in the end they gave their lives. “They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. Of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth. These all, having received a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us,

that they without us should not be made perfect” (Heb.11:37–40).

20. And the very next verses go on to say, “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Heb.12:1–2).

21. My loves, there's no “secret answer” that I can give you that is going to see you through the tough times you're experiencing now, or the ones you're going to go through in the future. But what will see you through is faith—faith that never lets go, that never gives up.

22. You don't have to feel like you have great faith. You don't have to feel like a spiritual giant. All you have to do is stick it out, clinging to the anchor of My Word no matter what things look like around you, and eventually you will win the reward of the promise.

23. It's tough and hard. I'm sorry. I know you struggle sometimes, and it seems like nothing makes sense. But if you compare your situation with the other missionaries and prophets of history, you will see that they didn't have it any easier. They had their own trials and tests. They prayed desperately for the answers they felt they needed, and then patiently endured when the answers seemed to be so slow in coming—or didn't come at all, from what they could see. They went through the fire just like you are going through the fire, and in some cases their fire was even hotter.

24. I know what each person needs to bring out the best in them, to refine their faith, to make them pure gold. I don't rejoice to see you in the fire, but I do rejoice when I see your faith stand the test—because then I know that you have gained the reward of the promise, you have endured, and the blessing and honor is yours for all eternity.

25. It's hard to fight the battles day after day. They almost always seem small compared to the really great goals that are before you. You'd much rather be fighting for something that you see as glorious and magnificent. But

you know, great and magnificent victories arise from battles of all sizes. And if you will step back, you'll remember that yours is the most magnificent cause of all time. It's worth living and dying for. It's just that dying daily is so hard, takes so long, and sometimes you lose sight of the goal.

26. But, My loves, you are doing it. You're running the race. Your names are being inscribed in the heavenly halls of fame as you run and don't give up. You're taking your place beside those like Moses, Nehemiah, Adoniram Judson, William Carey, and other men and women of great faith. Despite all the battles and difficulties they faced, they didn't give up, and that's why their reward is so great. That's why yours will be great as well—because you don't give up.

27. If everything was easy, I wouldn't need you so desperately—because there would be plenty of people willing to serve Me and do what you're doing. It's hard, it requires so much sacrifice, faith, and endurance, and that's why you are rare, priceless, extremely valuable—and why I will reward you accordingly, above all you can imagine.

28. So don't give up, My loves. Don't be weary in well-doing. Strengthen your faith in My Word. Drink it in. Let it sustain you. If you're losing perspective, return to your faith, return to the perspective of My Word, and hold on! The victory is coming, and so is the reward, the promise, the blessing.

29. I give you My Word to strengthen you. I give you the keys to do miracles for you. I give you My love to sustain you. But you must endure. That is what you must do, and that is what you are rewarded for—your faith, your endurance.

No exceptions

30. (Jesus:) Your life is a test of faith. It's good to realize that there are no exceptions when it comes to some of these tests of life and faith. I test you to strengthen you. I refine your gold to purify it. I allow you to face difficulties because it forces you back onto your foundation of faith and trust in Me and endurance, and with

time and using your faith you become spiritual bedrock that can stand any test.

31. Of course, sometimes there are obstacles in your way, things standing in the way of My answers, which I wait for you to remove. But it still comes back to faith—believing that I will answer, making sure you've done your part, and then continuing to believe and do what I've asked you to do for however long it takes until the answer comes.

32. In many ways the modern world fights against this simple faith and patience. In Bible times it was easier for My prophets to tarry months or years in a place when I told them to, or to wait years for My deliverance, because life moved slower. You are accustomed to e-mail and phone communication and the Internet and air travel, and the pace of your life and getting things done is much faster.

33. You tend to expect “e-mail speed” answers to prayer. And it's not that I'm incapable of giving them to you. But that's often not the best way to accomplish My long-term goals—and yours too, when it really comes down to it. Speedy deliverance from any difficulty isn't always what will bear the best fruit in the long run.

34. So you need patience. You should pray for patience. You should realize that you are naturally impatient because of the world you live in and the speed at which you are accustomed to things operating. You must realize that I often go slower, because that's the better way to accomplish My purpose. Again, it comes back to faith.

35. Strengthen your faith. That's the bottom line. Faith is the currency of the spiritual realm, and when you've really stood your ground with faith and endured, your faith will be the stronger for it.

36. Endure, hold on, strengthen your faith. Read My Word and cherish it, whether or not it does anything for you on the surface. Learn to value the Word and faith for the treasure that it is in itself, not for what it does in obvious or instant ways. That is a key.

Overcoming and enduring is part of your testimony

37. (Jesus:) One of the hard things about disappointments and the struggles of life, especially if you carry responsibility for others, is that no matter how much you do to overcome or rise above them, you often don't feel like you've done enough, won enough, or been as great an example as you would like to be. The Enemy is always trying to pummel you with concerns that your imperfections might cause someone else to lose faith, to fail, to turn away. These concerns can so easily skew your vision till it's hard to see the good, the growth, the example that you are.

38. You don't often see the ways that your struggles are strengthening the faith of others who see you. It's hard, when dealing with your own mistakes, to see how what looks like failure to you is actually encouraging others to carry on because of your example. That's going to be a huge part of the joy of Heaven when you arrive: seeing how I used the testimony of your faith—even faith through endurance when you never saw what looked like an answer to you—to strengthen and encourage so many others.

39. Faith is persevering in My will, even when you don't see Me answering you. Noah persevered for 120 years in building the Ark, sometimes wondering if he'd gotten something wrong and was failing Me, and other times wondering if maybe I'd changed My mind. But he just kept plugging along nevertheless, keeping the faith. Faith was a key part of the witness that I needed him to give to the wicked world. What greater testament of faith could he have than being determined to obey whether it seemed that I was fulfilling My side or not?

40. I've promised you that the keys will do amazing things. I've promised that you will be a financial power. I've promised to carry you, My brides, in spite of overwhelming tasks, and give you the strength to go on as you rest in Me, feed on My Word, claim the keys, and place every task in My hands. But then, when you obey, you don't always see the fruits immediately and it looks like My promises have failed.

41. You pray desperately but there are still sicknesses, accidents, troubles, and seeming failures. You place your families and flocks in My hands, trusting that I will keep and prosper them, yet all doesn't always flow smoothly and you are stretched to your limits and beyond. It looks like I have failed, or that the keys haven't really got the power I say they have, or that My promises of protection and provision aren't being fulfilled.

42. You don't have the visible fruits of everything going great and wonderful, even though you have done what I asked. But think for a moment about Noah. It took great faith to face those crowds of scoffers after a hundred years of telling them about the coming flood. He could easily have looked at the impossibility of the task before him and how long he was having to endure without seeing results. He had to take the flood and the need for the Ark totally by faith, since he only had My voice to go on.

43. Or look at Moses, after he'd been broken and humbled and learned to depend utterly on Me. He goes before Pharaoh, trusting My promise to deliver the children of Israel, and what happens? Pharaoh says no and makes the children of Israel work even harder! Things looked like they were even worse than before, and by every standard that the mind could grasp, they were! Had My promises actually failed? Of course not. But in those times when to you they seem to have failed, it can cause severe testing if you are looking to visible results to "prove" their veracity.

44. Moses' trusting in My promises and obedience to My instructions looked like a total failure. His people seemed worse off than ever! In fact, he had to go back and face failure several more times before the victory finally came.

45. Do you think Moses was tempted to doubt, to wonder if what I'd said was real? Do you think he felt like that was the end and that My power wasn't so great after all? Of course he was tempted to doubt! Of course it seemed hopeless. He battled fiercely! He was humiliated before the very people he was trying so hard to help.

46. Many times you must step out on blind faith, even when it looks like I've failed or My promises aren't real, or the keys aren't all I've said they were, or My promises of power, protection, and supply aren't being fulfilled like you thought they would be. No matter what things look like, you have to determine that you are going to obey and follow even when everything seems to have gone wrong. That's the greatest testimony of faith that you can have.

47. Sometimes the periods when all seems to have failed are short, sometimes they are long. Before I parted the Red Sea, it looked like all was lost. Pharaoh's armies had the children of Israel surrounded and trapped. But without that time of hopelessness, the miracle would not have been nearly as great a testimony.

48. I said through your David that it takes an impossible situation for Me to do a miracle. That means that you have to face situations that seem impossibly difficult at times in order to see the miracle of My power bringing you through to the victory.

49. I take you through those impossible situations, those times when it looks completely hopeless, and when I require that you hang on for that extra hour, that extra day, that extra period of time, in order to pull down the miracles. That is part of your testimony.

50. When those who are watching see you claiming the keys, claiming My promises, claiming the victories, claiming that I will do the work and somehow bring you through in spite of seeming failures and defeats, their faith is strengthened. When they see you fall and struggle and you still fight on, despite not seeing the proof with your eyes, knowing that I will fulfill My side, then their faith is strengthened to trust Me when things go wrong for them.

You're standing strong!

51. (Jesus:) When the loads feel heavy and the future is bleak, consider what your life would be like if the keys weren't doing miracles and your closeness to Me wasn't affording the protection and power that it daily gives you.

52. Consider the fact that you are Satan's chief enemy. You are facing a foe against whom you would not stand a chance were it not for My supernatural power—including the power that I have given to you through the keys, the Word, faith, and your strong bond with Me. It's tough going and you feel overwhelmed at times, but you are still standing! You are defying the prince of the power of the air (Eph.2:2). You are living right in the midst of Satan's kingdom at a point in time when his power is being manifested in the most powerful ways ever witnessed by man. You defy the powers that be in this wicked world, yet they cannot stop you.

53. The battles are fierce, but you keep moving forward. You may not be running unhampered and effortlessly slaughtering the Enemy's forces, but you are standing your ground and moving forward, even if it takes great effort. You are conquering his kingdom step by step. He is throwing everything he's got at you and he is unable to stop you! It feels like a tough victory and a slow one, but it's clearly a victory!

54. It takes great faith to face what looks like failure and defeat in some area and still keep standing on My Word, on My promises. You sometimes feel weary, exhausted, discouraged, and can't see the victory or even the potential for victory. Virtually every great man or woman of faith throughout history has had to face those times—sometimes for many years, sometimes until the point of death. Yet no matter how long the struggle, living for Me and holding on to your faith is the ultimate victory.

55. How do you think the martyrs in the Colosseum of Rome felt? My promises must have looked like flat failures in man's eyes in those situations. Yet the martyrs won some of the greatest victories of all time as they simply and humbly remained faithful to the end (Rom.8:36,37).

56. The Offensive is going to happen. The Tribulation is going to come. The fruits, miracles, and wonders that I have promised will come to pass. But the preparations that will make each of you into the "do or die," "trust, whatever may

come" powerhouses of those days, will stretch you to what will seem to be the limit and beyond.

57. You may often look defeated in your own eyes, but your commitment, your do-or-die spirit of refusing to let go of the promises, even when everything looks lost and contrary to logic and reason, is the greatest victory of all.

You don't have to have it all together to encourage others

58. (Jesus continues:) You are destined to be leaders, those who will teach, instruct, and shelter many. What will give faith to those you are leading?—When they see you facing the ferocity of battle and suffering the wounds of war, even falling to your knees in exhaustion at times, yet you won't stop, you won't give up. Seeing you struggle back to your feet, again and again, till the battle is won, is a greater testimony than anything else you could do or any witness you could give.

59. It's a fallacy that a leader should appear unscathed by the battle. It's a lie of Satan that good leaders don't make mistakes, don't falter and struggle, don't suffer through the same desperation and frustrations that their followers face.

60. I'm the standard of the leader. If you want to be a good leader, follow My example. I was tempted in all points, as you are (Heb.4:15). I suffered agony, pain, desperation, and moments of doubt and hopelessness.

61. Do you think the battles that I faced in My last hours were easy? Can you imagine the intensity of a struggle that would cause you to sweat drops of blood, as I did in the Garden of Gethsemane? Can you imagine the agony that would cause Me to cry out to the Father as I did on the cross, "Why have You forsaken Me?" (Luke 22:44; Mat.27:46).

62. That's what makes a true leader: clinging to Me and fighting on, no matter what. Look at Joan of Arc. She was willing to face the battle, face the foe, face anything, simply because I told her to. That's what turned fear into faith and weakness into strength in her men. She

didn't appear strong or together physically. She just made it known that she was clinging to Me completely in spite of her shortcomings, in spite of the hopelessness of what I'd asked her to do.

63. When you think of Joan of Arc, you remember the glorious victories associated with her. But think of the scoffing she faced, the years of giving warnings from Me and having them mocked and ignored, even the battles that were lost and the men who were wounded and killed in battle. She faced times when she did what I told her to do and it didn't play out the way she had hoped. She kept doing My will, even when it didn't seem to be having any effect. She was faithful, and she saw the fulfillment of My promises.

64. You're going to see the same. You're going to see the Offensive bearing fruit beyond your wildest dreams. You're going to see the Family standing strong as a great witness of My power in the Tribulation and even before.

65. But it's not going to be effortless. It's going to come through your utter yieldedness to anything I tell you to do, and you will learn and gain that yieldedness through experiencing the times when the answers don't come when you would like them to. It will come through the times when you persevere, even when you have no more strength, till you do see the victory. It will come through the times when with all your heart you cry out to Me, "Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done."

66. Why are you continuing on for Me? Is it because you love Me so much that you're willing to do the job, reach the sheep, and give your all even though the responsibility and calling I have given you often stretches you beyond measure? Do you believe that what I have promised I will perform? Do you trust Me so much that it doesn't matter what things look like to your eyes or mind—you know Me so intimately that nothing could ever dissuade you from following whatever task I give you to do?

67. That's the kind of dedication that will carry you forward and through any battle you will face. That's the conviction of heart that will

cause you to get up off the ground after some blow from the Enemy, to glare right back at him and scream in his face that his attempts to stop you only make you more determined to destroy him utterly.

68. Such demonstrations of faith only come from hanging on through times of seeming defeat. But never fear, for I am in you and I can never be defeated.

Now and forever it will take faith

69. (Jesus:) Faith is the victory that overcomes the world (1John 5:4). Unbelief hinders everything—it even hindered My Own ministry on Earth (Mat.13:58; Mark 6:4–6). Belief on the part of those I wanted to heal or help was an essential part of the miracle.

70. It's easy for circumstances and conditions to hurt your faith, if that's what you're going by. You can find so many things that didn't work, and so few that were obvious and irrefutable miracles. It's also easy to lack faith and feel you don't "deserve" a miracle when you start looking at your sins or faults or imperfections, or other factors that you feel have some bearing on being able to ask in full faith. All of these things contribute to fewer answers than you think you should see.

71. Christians throughout the centuries have puzzled at length, as well as been derided by atheists, over the core question of, "Why doesn't God always answer prayer?" The solution is not to try to understand why things do or don't happen—unless there is a specific cause that I want to show you so that you can learn for next time—but instead to work on your reactions to those things. Your goal should be to approach each situation with fresh faith and trust, counting on Me to do what I know is best, and believing that I've come through for you regardless of how things turn out.

72. It's that "But If Not" faith (ML #313). It's the wisdom of knowing that, although on the one hand nothing is impossible for you, yet not everything is according to My will, and many are the afflictions of the righteous. The power

that I've promised you is understood to be in balance with the other things that I've promised you; for example, about the trials of life and how I use them to strengthen you, or the difficulties of serving Me and how that is part of your testimony, or the lessons that you come to Earth to learn in the first place.

73. As far as what you can do to be more effective in your use of the spiritual weapons and have access to greater spiritual power, of course there are steps that you can take. It's all in the Word. But it takes effort to live this way, and it's not possible for you to be perfect in this regard—although growing spiritually and being more in tune with Me and fulfilling the requirements for accessing spiritual power are things that I intend for you to be continually working toward and growing into.

74. But you have this treasure (My power), in earthen vessels (your weak, sinful human frames), that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of you (2Cor.4:7). Keeping all the conditions in the Word and being obedient and staying separate from the world does increase your ability to channel more spiritual power. But at the same time, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. You have to balance these things. You must understand that you are capable of doing a lot for Me, yet at the same time I know that you're sinners, and I take you where you're at and work with you.

75. There are so many factors in play, and the only absolute is faith—a faith that goes beyond "proof" or validation, a faith that you hold to and keep strong all the days of your life even if you do "die in faith, not having received the promises" (Heb.11:13).

76. The fact is, you are special. You are chosen for a special ministry, but like all the other Christians down through the years, you must walk by faith and not by sight (2Cor.5:7). Reconciling the many positive promises in My Word against the difficult and often terrible conditions of their lives was part of their test and their testimony. It's part of their honor. It's part of the faith life. It's the same for you.

77. You're not the first ones to have faced this dilemma and you won't be the last. That's why it's time to get back to that "But If Not" faith and not worry about the things that haven't happened or didn't turn out as you'd hoped. Picture yourself in a room with endless doors, and I tell you that you have the keys in your hands which will unlock all of them. You try door after door, and while the keys unlock them all, some don't open because a greater power and force is holding it shut—My will.

78. The thing to do is to thank Me for what doesn't work out, and move on to find the one that will. Trust Me that I will take care of you, and I will prosper you, and I will bring you success—the success I know you need, according to My standards. If you expect that you'll be able to demand something according to your will, not Mine, you'll be disappointed (Jn.5:30).

79. True success in the realm of miracles and answers to prayer comes through faith—believing and not doubting. That doesn't mean everything will work out as you think it should, but it means I will be victorious in the end, and so will you, because we are one.

80. Consider all the Christians who have been martyred or have died in accidents or even from sickness, despite My promises of "it shall not come nigh thee," or "I will deliver you from every evil work" (Psa.91:7; 2Tim.4:18).

81. Even in the Early Church, when there were so many obvious miracles and manifestations of My power, the disciples still had to face this issue. James was executed very early on, despite the prayers prayed for his release and safekeeping. At the same time, Peter was freed (Acts 12). The victory in such a case is to praise Me, and to continue to fervently trust Me despite the seeming contradictions.

82. My plan always bears fruit in the end, and you will always be grateful for the times you have walked by faith and not by sight. The more you question Me, the more your spiritual power decreases. The more you trust Me, the more you are empowered to ask and receive. You want the signs first, but it doesn't work that way. You

have to believe and keep believing, and that's when you see the answers.

83. Back to the room full of doors: If you sit down and cry at the foot of the door you can't enter you'll open fewer doors (less miracles), because you're losing faith in My power to answer. But if you can shrug off the one that didn't open, trusting in My goodness and believing that there was a good reason, and continue to use the keys in other doors, then chances are you will see more miracles because you had the faith to keep asking and opening.

84. There is no bypassing the faith factor in your life for Me. Everything in your life of service and sacrifice and even your belief in Me is based on faith. There are some proofs of My divine guidance, such as My creation, and you do see miracles that remind you that I am supernatural and work on your behalf. But even those miracles require faith to believe and to recognize and appreciate. It's all a matter of faith from the beginning to the end, and if you want to be successful, you must learn how to be encouraged by My "yes" without being discouraged by My "no."

85. If something doesn't work out as you'd asked, even if you targeted it with key power, then trust Me that you have done what you could. Rejoice in Me anyway, practice extreme praise, and try again to find My will. Whatever My plan is for you, chalk up times of disappointment to My knowing better than you, and having a plan that is more wonderful and mysterious than yours.

86. That's what faith is—knowing that I'm here, and that what I've promised I'm not only able to perform, but I'm going to perform. I know that you sometimes feel that My promises are a bit nebulous—that there are so many conditions, or that to receive an answer it has to be exactly in line with My will. That's true—any promise could be fulfilled in a number of ways. It's hard for you when you don't fully know what the outcome will be. But when you base your faith on a certain outcome instead of trusting Me to fulfill My perfect will, that's when you're easily disappointed.

87. There is always more to any given situation than you can see, aspects which are beyond your understanding. You must remember that and base your faith on My ability to do what I know is best, not what your limited sight deems to be best.

88. This is not a new battle you are facing. Any Christian, any man or woman of prayer throughout the ages, has had to come face to face with this reality and reach a place of yieldedness and humility before Me in their faith.

89. Look at the very clear promise, “If you shall ask anything in My name, I will do it” (Jn.14:14). Imagine all the people who have claimed this promise, asked for something in My name, and then had it not happen in the way they had hoped or asked. It's a tough pill to swallow in many cases, and when you try to prove Me one way or the other by saying, “Okay, Lord, if this is all really true, make a box of gold appear in front of me,” chances are that's not going to happen and you're going to be faced with the decision of trusting Me anyway, even if there are apparent contradictions and things you don't understand.

90. That's really what it all comes down to. You have to take it by faith that not everything happens as you think it should. Every Christian has faced some share of disappointments and crises of faith, along with miracles and touches of My love. So although you will face disappointments, if you have a true relationship with Me and a true belief in Me, you will choose faith and belief contrary to all reason, and you will understand that when everything seems broken and mixed up, that I have a better plan somehow, that I'm most certainly still here, and that all things are possible with Me.

91. In a way, the disappointments that test your faith benefit you more in the long run than the things that turn out the way you want them to. The disappointments make you search your heart, they make you examine your faith, and when you do, you'll come down to the core of it all: that very little of the spiritual realm is provable in the physical, and that the decision to believe or not is simply based on your choice,

not on the facts. That's the way I made it. That's why it's called faith, because you can't see it, you can't prove it. “More blessed are they who, having not seen, yet have believed” (Jn.20:29).

92. You can choose to have faith or you can choose disbelief. If you choose faith, you become more powerful in spirit, you are less daunted by the “winds and the waves,” the circumstances and conditions that would pull you away from faith, and you grow stronger, not weaker. When you are strengthened in faith, you command more of My power. It's a cycle of victory and growth and greater answers to prayer, greater happiness, greater trust in Me.

93. Faith is the victory; there's no other way. There's no proof that will satisfy the carnal mind, there's no test that I can be put to that will put to rest these questions once and for all. There's nothing that can supersede the role of faith. Faith is the invisible bridge between what you see and what you can't see. Faith spans the gap and obtains miracles. Even if you die in faith without receiving the fulfillment of the promise, you are more than a conqueror, because you walked by faith and not by sight, and you did what you were supposed to do and you finished the course.

94. There are countless things that you don't understand—and not only that you don't understand, but that I'm not going to reveal to you. You hear some things, you understand some concepts, you let Me explain to you some spiritual truths, and then you feel that you should be able to put it all together and sum it up in a logical conclusion that doesn't require faith. But that isn't possible. You don't get to see what's on this side and all the reasons for things and all the mysteries until you get here.

95. From now until then, faith is the only connection that you have to this side. It's nothing you can see, nothing you can feel, and nothing you can prove. It only exists in the hearts of those who love Me. And when you have faith, you somehow know, even if you don't know at all. There's something beyond the physical, something inside you that makes that link and connection, even though the path is so unapparent to the carnal mind.

96. Real faith isn't contingent on results. You don't strengthen your faith by the events around you; you strengthen your faith through trusting Me despite the events around you. You strengthen your faith by belief in Me and taking Me at My Word despite the results, not because of them. Anything else is proof or confirmation of faith, not faith itself.

97. Things go wrong and you love Me anyway—that's faith. You claim the keys and things don't turn out as you wanted, but you still go on for Me—that's faith. You have been disappointed before, but you try again next time—that's faith. You don't quit, no matter what things look like and no matter what does or doesn't happen—that's faith.

98. When you keep doing these things, living in this faith-filled way, the end result is that you come to realize that all things really are possible to you, and that there is no defeat or setback in My service. By taking the road of faith and not worrying about the “proof,” you eventually find that your questions have been answered, all your needs have been supplied, and I have worked things out just like you asked Me to. If something wasn't My will for you, you didn't really want it anyway. All the things that needed to happen have happened, I was never defeated, and in the end, My plan has been fulfilled.

99. You'll see those days, you'll feel those feelings, but only through faith. Now and forever it's going to take faith.

100. (Mama:) I love you, dear Family. The tests of faith that the Lord allows you to face are “common to man.” They're nothing new and nothing to feel discouraged about. As the Lord goes on to explain in another message, it's a mark of honor when you face these tests, because the Lord sees that your faith is worthy of being strengthened further.

101. Of course, you can do a lot to strengthen your faith just through studying and absorbing and implementing the Word in your life. You don't have to wait for hard tests to come to do it for you. In fact, the stronger you

are in the Word, the better prepared you'll be for the tests.

102. The Lord is so good to keep reassuring us and teaching us. Just remember that no matter what things look like, no matter how off your spiritual equilibrium feels, the Word is the solution. The Word is what will stabilize you. Whenever you need a boost in the spirit, the Word is what will give it to you. No matter how mixed up or discouraged you feel, the Word is what holds the answers and it will be the healing balm to your spirit if you soak in it and ask the Lord to help you receive it.

103. Thank the Lord for His Word, which gives us the faith we need in order to make it through the tests and come out victorious!

Much love in our Lover and Compassionate Shepherd, Mama

ADDITIONAL READING

The hero's challenge

104. (Jesus:) The keys are true. There is no false key promise. There is no promise that I am unable to fulfill.

105. But I understand that it's easy to tire when you don't see the results you were hoping for. It is a lot harder to hold on, by blind—almost dumb—faith alone, believing that that which you can't see is the greatest reality you'll ever know.

106. The Enemy is the one behind the discouragement and doubts. He wants to put a stop to the use of the keys, a stop to your faith in prayer and My power to do the supernatural, because if he can weaken your faith, he'll slow down your use of the spiritual weapons, and thus the miracles of the future won't be what they need to be in order to catch the public's eye, to change the lives of many, and to cause drastic change in the world.

107. I allow the Enemy to test and try you, much like I granted his request to afflict Job on every side. If you are to be heroes of the faith, how can I better help you to achieve that

than by honoring you with the hero's challenge of faith?

108. How will you work miracles in the future if your faith is weak, if you pray but don't believe, if you call on the keys but don't expect them to work? You won't. You can't. There won't be a miraculous future if strong faith is not at the core of your discipleship.

109. And so, while the Devil thinks he is weakening My ranks and dooming My future, I rejoice, because each test can strengthen you.

110. Of course it is easy to give in when something doesn't seem to be working, when it doesn't work out the way you anticipated. It's easy to call it quits. It would've been easy for Job to curse Me and die. But when faced with such an easy yet negative option, you can always know that the right choice is in direct opposition to the easy way.

111. The right choice is often the hard choice. The choice to live amidst the affliction of boils, to live knowing that all your children had suffered terrible deaths, to live knowing that you had no house, no belongings, no money, to live even when those you love are telling you it would be better that you died—that is not an easy choice. That was a downright difficult, painful choice for Job. That was a choice to suffer, just because he knew it was right.

112. I blessed Job for his stand of faith. Yes, he was self-righteous, and I needed to humble him. That was one of the main reasons I allowed Satan to afflict him—that Job might become even more precious to Me. But the testimony that lives on because of his name is one of the greatest testimonies of faith—"though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13:15).

113. Job made a statement of faith, that even if what I had told him to do, even if what I had told him to believe in, proved to be wrong—not only wrong, but deadly—he would still trust in Me. Why? Because his love for Me was so strong that not even death could shake it. And the reward of Job's faith was a double fold return-plan of all that I had taken away. He regained twice as much as he had lost because he believed.

114. This story is so close to what is happening in My Family today. Satan has walked the Earth and he has come before Me to plead his case. "Let me weaken their faith. Let me try them and see if they are really as full of faith as You think they are. Let me see if they even deserve the keys." I know Satan's heart, and his purpose is to destroy. But My purpose is that through his testings My Family will come into full life—through stronger faith.

115. This, My loves, is the hero's challenge. Can you commit to believing in the keys and using them no matter what they do or do not seem to do for you? Can you commit to holding on in faith, like Job held on to Me, despite what it seems I do or don't do for you? Can you commit to believing in My promises simply because I have asked you to, even if for no other reason I've given you? Can you commit to putting faith in the keys, praising Me for them, and being an advocate of the keys, even if you never see one single manifestation of their power?

116. That is your test of faith. That is the hero's challenge. When Satan tested Job, I gave no promises of physical deliverance; I simply expected Job to trust Me because I was his God and his Creator. I expected him to have faith because I had never failed him before. Can I expect the same of you?

117. (Jesus:) The hero's challenge is to believe Me despite outward appearances and all circumstances that would point to the contrary. The hero's challenge is to believe Me above anything that your eyes can see or that your senses tell you.

118. I know that the tests are sometimes difficult. I know that there have been times when you've claimed the keys with full faith and you expected Me to come through, and it has sorely tested you to see that oftentimes things don't happen as you have claimed or as the key promises have said.

119. Can you trust, My loves, that these are tests of faith? It is not that I am trying to make your lives more difficult. It is not that I revel in seeing you suffer. It is not that I delight in giving you tests that are hard to bear. But when I do these things, it is because I know that the ultimate result is going to mean greater blessing, power, and fruit for you, and a great, great defeat for the Enemy.

120. I am letting the Enemy test your faith, for this is his hour, this is his time. The Enemy is a key element in making your faith as strong as it needs to be to face your future—so long as you don't give in to him, but keep holding on to Me through every blow.

121. And as you hold on in faith, as you prove your faith in Me by continuing to trust in Me and use the keys and the spiritual weapons I've given you, you will win the victory just as Job did. As Job received his wealth back in double measure, you, My loves, will receive spiritual wealth one hundredfold. You will receive greater faith and yet greater manifestations of spiritual power. That is the reward of holding on in faith. And the Enemy will be incapable of doing anything to stop My power, for your faith will be strong, and your use of spiritual power will be abundant.

122. So hold on in faith. Say like Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Though the keys don't seem to work for me, yet will I trust in Him. Though things in my life are more difficult and heartbreakingly than ever, yet will I trust in Him. Though I feel confused and am hit with doubts, yet will I call on the keys. Though I am discouraged, yet will I trust in Him."

123. Keep trusting and never give in despite how you feel, despite how your spirit feels, despite how your situation looks. The greatest truth, the surest facts, the truest reality are those things of the spirit. Nothing else matters. No matter how real your discouragement feels, no matter how complicated your situation is, the greatest truth is that I love you, that the spiritual weapons work, and that those things you do for and in the spirit will last forever.

It's all part of the plan

124. (Dad:) "It's the Spirit, just the Spirit, that is truth and fact, you see. Yes, the Spirit, only the Spirit, is the true reality."

125. I know it's tempting to doubt the things of the Spirit, and I know the Enemy's lies are pretty convincing, but you've just got to determine in your heart, mind, and spirit that you will not doubt, you will not give in to his lies, you will not believe him, that you will hold on in faith, even if you never see the answer.

126. You have to condition your mind to not even go there. Instead tell yourself, "The things of the Spirit are the true reality. So I will not doubt it."

127. Praise the Lord for those very things you are tempted to feel unsure of. Just get so busy praising Him that you won't have time to think about the doubts or the lies or the worries. Don't feel condemned either if you are hit with doubts along these lines. As the Lord said, the Enemy's attacks on your faith are all part of the plan, part of the strengthening process. So if you're hit, rejoice! Praise the Lord that you're under attack, because that means the Lord has chosen you to undergo the "hero's challenge"—which means that the hero's reward will soon be yours, if you don't give in.

128. Don't get condemned if you're battling. Be thankful. Praise the Lord for trusting you with such a tough battle. Praise Him for choosing you to fight such a foe. Praise Him that this battle is making you into a "hero of faith," something very valuable to the Lord.

129. You are all mighty warriors of the faith, and these are the challenges and tests of faith that you must pass through before you are ready for the reward. Keep holding on. Keep fighting these battles of faith. Keep trusting the Lord no matter what, and I promise that you will be strengthened through these tough fights. Don't be weary in well-doing; there are wonderful times of reaping ahead.—And great blessings too! I love you!

Faith like a rare vintage wine

130. (Jesus:) The world of today is a fast-paced world, where everything has been speeded up and continues to be speeded up with each year that passes. You live in a fast-food world, a world where more and more emphasis is placed on acquiring things quickly, and there is less emphasis on the quality of things. People are naturally used to everything being much quicker, taking much less time.

131. At the drop of a coin a machine spits out a drink, or at a fast-food counter a meal is served in minutes. Once upon a time, people spent a very long time building their houses and acquiring the money to do so, whereas in the world of today, houses are thrown up at a breakneck speed.

132. People expect to retire more quickly, to work less, and to acquire more and have more leisure. Many opt to speed up the process of childbirth, choosing caesarians or other intervention for the sake of convenience. People can instant message and send e-mail or large amounts of data around the world in seconds, or travel to the other side of the world in a matter of hours.

133. This speeding up of the world at large has changed everyone's expectations of what is normal or acceptable. It can lead to heightened expectations on the spiritual front as well—expectations for miracles, answers to prayer and change to occur in the spirit world just as quickly. Although I am a moving, changing God, and in some areas I do speed up to keep in step with the times, in other things I do not.

134. I know the nature of man, and I know what is needed to bring about true spiritual maturity and depth, so that your faith will be properly cultivated and aged, like a rare and valued vintage wine. In today's world the expectations are such that when you pray, believing that you receive it, that you shall instantaneously have it. And yet that was not My original intent when I gave that promise to My disciples.

135. There are times when I do bring answers to prayer instantaneously, but there are also many times when I expect you to allow

for the wine of your faith to mature and develop and to reach the fullness of its flavor.

136. So it is with the spiritual power I have given you, through the keys of the Kingdom, through the power of prayer. When you pray and claim the keys, I go to work for you immediately. Many, many times, in fact in the majority of cases, not long afterwards you see the results—supply, healing, spiritual change, progress, open doors, sheep, etc. All day long, you experience these relatively immediate results as you activate the keys of the Kingdom, and yet you think little of it, for you expect to see those immediate results. And when the keys don't produce the immediate results you expected, you wonder if they "work" or if My promises are true.

137. Throughout the centuries My people of faith have been tested and tried through not seeing the immediate answers to their prayers. They waited thousands of years for Me, their Messiah, and prayed and pleaded with God to send Me. Yet He could not send Me until the timing was exactly right, when all was aligned, world conditions were right, the hearts of men were prepared, the government of the world was what it needed to be in order for My Word to spread and My followers to survive, etc. So many conditions had to be just right, even though so many clamored earnestly for years on end for My coming. Then, after I came, many of those same people rejected Me outright, because the answer to their prayer did not come in the packaging they had hoped for—that of a king of earthly Israel.

138. My brides, you have need of patience, that after you have performed My will, you might receive the promise (Heb.10:36). Patience is not an easy virtue to cultivate, and in fact, it goes entirely against the modern way of the world, which is all about speed, "right now," and instant results. But even though you live in the world, you are not of this world, and the spiritual dynamics have not changed—patience takes faith, and faith is the cornerstone of your lives for Me.

139. You will continue to experience miracles, instant answers to prayer, “dimes from the sky” when I know it is best. And as you become more skilled in your use of the spiritual weapons and stronger in faith, the power will continue to grow.

140. But you will also continue to experience the tests, trials, and challenges of life that arise when My answers do not come immediately. And this trying of your faith will work patience, which is a very important facet of faith.

141. Faith isn’t manifested only in your ability to receive immediate, miraculous answers to prayer; it is also manifested in endurance, longsuffering, and the ability and patience to keep on fighting even when you don’t see immediate responses or action as a result of your prayers and claiming the keys. So let patience have her perfect work, so that your faith can be whole, and entire, wanting nothing (James 1:4).

142. Remember, I’m not on the world’s timetable. Though it’s easy to grow accustomed to the faster pace of the world—and indeed, you live within it in order to win the lost and reach the world—still, faith takes patience, and patience is the mark of a vintage faith, one that has been deepened and ripened and is mature and rich and full-bodied.

143. Question: It seems odd to use vintage wine as a picture of mature faith, especially in light of the Lord’s counsel about new bottles and new wine.

144. (Jesus:) Although I have taught you that My Word is new wine and can’t be held in old bottles, yet your faith is something that must be cultivated and nurtured, and it matures over time.

145. It is important that your faith should grow to its full maturity, to where it can withstand tests—including those times when the answers don’t seem to come.

146. (Jesus continues:) Many of My greats experienced these moments in their lives, when I expected them to endure and hold on in patience. Joan of Arc, for example, prayed and pleaded for Me to release her from prison to continue to fight for her beloved France, and yet I did not answer those prayers in the way she expected. Instead, I brought her Home to Me, to fight for France from the spirit world. Nor did her deliverance come right away, as she went through many tests in prison and the trial lasted some time.

147. I have given you great power in the spirit for these days, through the keys of the Kingdom and the knowledge of your spiritual weapons, and if you want to access their full power, the best starting point is by praising and being thankful for the many answers to prayer and miracles that you have already received. As you identify the answers you receive, both big and small, it will help you to not take the spiritual weapons for granted, and the fact that they work. The keys have given you an extra boost of My power needed for these days, and the keys have unlocked much greater spiritual power than was available before.

148. But if you take the day-to-day answers that you receive for granted, and then stumble in the times of testing and wonder if the keys work or if My promises are true, you will lack the patience and the faith you need to wield your spiritual weapons accurately in those times when much greater determination is needed to break through to victory.

149. So make it a practice each time the Enemy tempts you to focus on the trial and test of your faith and patience, to make a list of specific answers you have received. This exercise will strengthen your faith and help you to differentiate between those times when it is not My will or plan to answer right away, or when you must fight harder for the answer, and the times when I do come through with immediate answers. You’ll find that you experience plenty of both, and you’ll have a clearer picture of the way that I work.

The testing will pass, but your faith will remain—stronger, purer, more precious than ever

150. (Jesus:) Your ways aren't My ways, My loves, and I don't look at the battles and the testing that you're experiencing as a bad thing. I am testing, purifying, and trying your faith so that you may come through as even purer gold. It's a cleansing.

151. Yes, sometimes that means you experience difficulties, you face questions, doubts, battles, hardships—you even face some things that you wonder where on earth they came from. You wonder why you feel the way you do, and you think that something must be really, really wrong with you for feeling that way. But no, it's not. It's part of the purifying and the strengthening process.

152. I allow the Enemy to test you, to try you. You experience what it's like to be buffeted by the Enemy. And then you come through. That's when I know and you know your true strength.

153. How do you pull through? How do you come out of such situations strong and whole? How do you not give up halfway through? As always, the key is in looking to Me, hearing from Me, strengthening your faith by healthy intake of the Word, and drawing your strength from Me. Then you must wield the weapons that I have given you—praise being one of the most powerful in these situations.

154. I understand that it's doubly difficult to do these things when you're in the thick of the battle, and the Enemy will try to hit you with condemnation. Don't listen to him! Praise Me anyway. Praise Me for the good, the bad, and the ugly. Praise Me for the victories and praise Me for the defeats. Praise Me even though you don't really know what to praise Me for. Even if things don't look positive, just keep praising, because praise truly is the victory. In positiveness there is strength, and through praise you are able to see things the way I see them, and My hand is moved on your behalf to bring forth the victories.

155. Use the keys. Think about what you need, and send a specific, targeted key at that need. Don't settle for the general, "I call on the keys." Call on

specific, targeted keys. If you are battling with doubts, invoke the keys of unwavering faith, the keys of simplicity, the keys of My mind. If you're battling weariness, call on the keys of strength, the keys of energy, the keys of lifeblood, the keys of resting in Me, the keys of infusion, and the keys of balance to know when it's time to stop and when it's time to keep pressing forward. Think and pray about what you need, and then invoke the key for the solution. Even if all you do is call on one specific key over and over again, you will see victory.

156. During times of battle the Enemy often comes in with spiritual lethargy as well. He knows that if you are on the attack in the spirit, he will lose. So he brings the double-edged sword of lethargy, because then you won't do anything about it. So get rid of Lethargy, and remind yourself over and over that when you fight in the spirit, the battle will be won.

157. This may all sound like a lot of work, and if you're feeling weary or embattled, a lot more work is the last thing you want. But you have to put your will on My side. You have to choose to fight in the spirit. Even if all you do is invoke the keys and My helpers to fight for you, and then you lie back in My arms and rest in Me, the victory will be won.

158. I'm sorry about the battles and trials and difficulties. Sometimes, however, I cannot answer in the time or the way that you are requesting it. There are many reasons for this, and you know that. You know that My ways aren't your ways, that I know better than you—you know all those principles, but it's still a struggle when you are experiencing difficulties and battles that you wish I would rescue you from. I wish I could rescue you, but that would not help you. You would not learn what you must learn. You would not come through as the strong warriors that you are destined to be.

159. All testing is only for a time. And when it has passed, your faith remains—stronger and purer and more precious than ever. Every single one of you, without exception, will one day thank Me for not rescuing you prematurely and for continuing to keep you in the fire until the victory was won.