



Bold Promises in the Valley

With Ashley Williams

Week 2

Big Idea: Faith isn't about knowing how everything will turn out; it's about trusting God enough to take the next step and surrender the outcome to Him.

Main Scriptures:

1 Samuel 1:9-11

1 Samuel 1:20

Key Point: We don't need certainty before we obey—we need the courage to trust God with the “what ifs” and take the next step of faith.

Bottom Line: You may not know what the next chapter holds, but you can trust the God who holds it and take your next step of faith.

Application: Identify the faith step God is asking you to take, surrender the “what ifs” to Him, and choose to say yes even when you cannot see how the story will unfold.

Introduction:

We love guarantees!

Before we obey, we want God to give us the plan, the timeline, the budget, the outcome...

And preferably a PDF explaining exactly how everything is going to work.

We want God to say, “Okay, Mandy, here's what I'm going to do. Here's step one, here's step two, here's what it's going to cost, here's who you're going to meet, and here's exactly how this is going to turn out.”

But God doesn't usually work that way.

And honestly, sometimes we make decisions without knowing what they're going to produce!

For instance....

Have you ever gone to make a recipe and realized that you didn't have all the ingredients!? Ugh, it can be so frustrating right? My hubby sees it as a challenge!

Let me give you an example...a few weeks ago we were out of coffee creamer so he decided he would make his own- the creamer consisted of sour cream, cream cheese and who knows what else! it was... interesting.... (I really do appreciate his willingness to try to make me creamer because he knows how much I love coffee with my breakfast!)

I'm not like that! I'm like hey Siri! What's a good replacement for eggs in a recipe! Or googling alternatives.... Or I just don't make it and move on to what I know I have!

Who likes chocolate chip cookies?

Back in the 1930s there was a woman named Ruth Wakefield who owned an inn in Massachusetts. She was making chocolate cookies and ran out of the kind of chocolate she normally used.

So she improvised....

She took a chocolate bar, broke it into pieces, and mixed it into the cookie dough.

She expected the chocolate to melt into the cookies.

BUT It didn't!

Instead the chocolate stayed in chunks!

And that's how the chocolate chip cookie was born!

Now, I don't know if Ruth Wakefield was standing there thinking, "This is going to revolutionize American desserts."

She probably thought, "Well...that didn't work like I planned."

But she made a decision with what she had, without knowing the outcome.

And sometimes that's what faith looks like.

Faith isn't having the whole recipe before you start.

Faith is trusting the One who does!

We want guarantees.

Before we obey, we want God to give us the plan, the timeline, the budget, the outcome.

But faith rarely works like that.

Faith often sounds more like:

"God, I don't know what happens next...but I trust You."

And that is exactly what He did in that situation.

We don't see everything that's coming.

We can't see the whole story.

But we can trust God enough to take the next step!

And sometimes God isn't asking you to understand the whole story.

He's asking you to trust Him with the next page!

Let's go back to the story of Hannah... Last week we talked about how Hannah wasn't able to have kids and was so deeply hurt and distraught that she couldn't even eat- but then something happened in her (she experienced breakthrough and though the situation hadn't changed- she didn't feel like she had to grieve anymore)

1 Samuel 1:9-11 9 Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the Lord's house. 10 In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly. 11 And she made a vow, saying, "Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."

Hannah doesn't just ask God for a son.

She makes a promise. "If You give him to me, I will give him back to You."

WOW! That is wild faith! She is asking God for the very thing she wants most while simultaneously placing it back in His hands.

Hannah is saying: "God, I trust You with the answer before I even know what the answer will be."

That is faith!

Key Points:

1. Faith isn't pretending there are no risks. Faith is deciding that God is trustworthy even when there are.

Let's talk a little about the What If's...

- What if God doesn't answer the way I want?
- What if I step out and fail?
- What if I give and don't have enough?
- What if I forgive and get hurt again?
- What if I obey and it costs me something?

We spend so much time trying to eliminate the "what if's."

2. But maybe faith isn't eliminating the what if's. Maybe faith is trusting God with them. Faith is trusting God with the "what if's."

Samuel 1:20 20 After some time, Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, because she said, "I requested him from the Lord."

God answered!

But Hannah had already decided what she would do before the answer came!

That is what makes her faith so powerful.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What was the faith step God was asking you to take?
- What made it feel risky?
- What were the biggest "what ifs" running through your mind?
- Was there a moment when you wanted to give up?
- What helped you finally say yes?
- Did everything work out the way you expected?
- What did you learn about God through taking that step?
- What would you say to somebody who knows what God is asking them to do but is still afraid?

WRAP-UP

Some of you are waiting for certainty before you obey.

3. But if you had certainty, you wouldn't need faith.

- You may not know how it ends.
- You may not know where the resources come from.
- You may not know what happens next.
- You can know **WHO** is going with you.

4. Faith is trusting God with the "what ifs."

So here is the question...

5. What is one faith step or promise you need to make to God right now?

- Not someday.

- Not when everything makes sense.
- Not when the risk disappears.

What is your next yes?
