

**Text:** Various

**Title:** Faith respecting traffic, weather, illness, and interpersonal issues

**Truth:** Proverbs 3:5-6

**Date/Location:** Sunday November 26, 2023 at FBC

## **Introduction**

My pastoral burden in this message is to help you increase your faith with respect to the subjects in the title— weather and illness and interpersonal difficulties.

## **I. Scenarios**

Here are a couple of scenarios for each type of situation.

- A. Traffic: The roads might be filled with people driving, and I hate that. It is a pain in the neck, and I cannot control my temper because of all the cray drivers, or it is uncomfortable.
- B. Weather: It might snow quite a bit and I will not be able to make it back home from church.
- C. Weather: It might be dangerous to go out today because of the weather.
- D. Illness: I might get sick if I go to church.
- E. Illness: I am not very sick, and I really want to go to church.
- F. I have an awkward situation in my personal life. I am not going to church so I do not have to deal with others about it.

G. I have a beef with someone at church, so I am not going to go there, because if that person is there, I cannot go there. I cannot be in the same *building* as *that* person.

## II. Wisdom and Faith Work Together

Remember there is risk in *everything*. Paradoxically, there is risk in doing nothing. Sometimes that risk “feels better” while it has a certain and clearly worse outcome. Keeping your money in the FDIC insured bank at 0.1% interest is worse than putting it into a money market with very little risk of loss, but which at least earns something near inflation. This is because the dollar number stays the same in a bank account, but the value most certainly decreases due to inflation.

Another example: insisting on having church at home when you are well able to go out: the downside of this does not become manifest until the day of judgment, so it is easy to put off the fact that you are—by staying home—in active disobedience to God!

The live stream does it easier to have small faith because you can comfort yourself that you are “doing what you can” when you are not doing what God thinks you can.

To each of the scenarios I started with, we have to apply wisdom.

- A. Traffic: Do you have enough faith in God to carry you through any traffic delays, congestion, construction, etc.
- B. It might snow quite a bit. Sure. 1 inch? That’s nothing. With appropriate caution, you can drive safely. What about 10 inches of snow? That’s a problem. Even if you are surprised and the snow comes earlier than planned

and you get stuck at church, what is the worst that happens? You stay here overnight. Or more likely someone else can drive you home. Or you can stay the night with another church member who lives closer. Whatever. It's not a big deal. Compare that to the real trials that believers pass through in the world.

- C. The “might” of the weather has become something of a frustration for those of us who have some Michigan weather experience behind us. We have had one or two school closures based on forecasts of snow when no snow accumulates! The risk-aversity of society has infected us in the church—I see it clearly—and we become scared.
- D. Yes indeed you might get sick if you go to church. But you might get sick if you go shopping, which some of you might do for the same number of hours per week as you are in church. Or you might get sick if you go to work, or some other social event or family function. Do not try to deceive others that the *only* thing you do in a week is go to church, and that you could get ill nowhere else! If you have enough faith in God to go out to those other activities, you should have to gather to worship God too. Remember our illness policy: basically, it is easy. If you are sick, stay home. If you are possibly contagious, stay home. If you are on the edge of contagion (like days after your illness has resolved but you are still coughing), come and stay away from people and wear a mask or diligently deal cover your cough or better yet use some medicine to suppress it/decongest/etc.
- E. Illness: If you are sick (notice that *if* statement), do you have enough faith to not go to church? That everything

will be OK there without you? That you will be able to survive spiritually despite your absence? That *you* don't have to be seen there by everyone? That you do not have to go to check the box or please God this week?

- F. Awkward: Do you have enough faith in God to get over yourself? Are you really going to disobey God (by skipping attendance at His worship) so as to avoid someone asking you—probably with some genuine concern—about your awkward situation? Your response can demonstrate Christ-like humility and a testimony to others that even though you have a difficulty, you are still faithful.
- G. Beef with someone: Do you have enough faith to go anyway and trust that God will help you through it? Do you have enough faith in Christ that He can guide you as to how *you yourself* might need to change in this situation? Maybe not talking about the subject matter that you argue about? Or addressing the issue kindly instead of avoiding it? Or addressing it as your conscience tells you, but you do not want to humble yourself that way?

## Conclusion

The basic idea is that we need to have more faith in God and less reliance on ourselves and our own wisdom. Trust in the Lord and acknowledge him. He will take care of the outcome. We need to do this in traffic, regarding illness, interpersonal difficulties, and weather.

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