

FAITH *Matters*

“I felt like I was losing my faith.”

Dwight Peterson spoke these words while filming an episode for the Christian visual production, *Work of the People*. Peterson, a former professor at Eastern University, was on hospice care due to the paraplegia he had lived with since 1979, and his keen sense of mortality provided space for a thoughtful reflection on faith.

“A friend of mine came and visited from Iowa,” he says, “and I told him that I just couldn’t find my faith.” Peterson tells the story with a quivering voice and tear-soaked eyes, moved by

Written by **Matt Dodrill**,
Senior Pastor, Pulaski
Heights Baptist
Church



the memory of his friend’s reply: “That’s OK,” his friend began. “We have it for you.”

Peterson, who died in 2016, offers this story as a contemporary example of what occurs in Mark 2, where a few men lower a paralytic through the roof of a house where Jesus is staying. The most remarkable part of this story is that after healing the paralytic, Jesus gives credit to the men who lowered their friend through the roof. It’s *their* faith that enables the healing.

In our age of atomized individualism, we often conceive of faith as just a “personal” expression of trust and obedience. But there’s more to it than that. Faith is also a *corporate* gift given to the whole community.

In the Christian tradition, when we take the Lord’s Supper, we feed upon this meal *by faith*. But what if we’re simply unable to carry that faith by ourselves? What if, upon receiving the bread and wine, depression zaps the energy needed for a robust faith in that moment? What if grief makes God’s goodness seem incoherent? What if doubt shatters all assurance that God is holding things together? What if, like Dwight Peterson, you just can’t find your faith?

That’s OK. Your faith is not a condition for God’s grace. Rather, it is God’s grace that guarantees the presence of Jesus in the Supper, and the whole church abides in that presence even when we don’t “feel” it. When the person beside you passes the bread and cup, they are holding up your faith, providing for you and extending the body of Christ by eating with you. Even if you’re having trouble believing, take and eat.

At the conclusion of the video, Peterson calls this “wild grace.” It’s wild because it doesn’t depend on us, and it moves in spite of us. It’s wild because, in times of unbelief, our brothers and sisters lower us through the roof and believe *for* us.

So practice wild grace today. If you feel like you’re losing your faith, do not despair. Someone else has it for you.



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