**HAVE FAITH IN GOD**

Mark 11:22-24

Key Verse: *Mark 11:22 – “Have faith in God,” Jesus answered.*

Praise God! Halleluyah! A new year is coming. We need to remind ourselves about the most important quality that will sustain us in the new year - faith in God.

I would like us to do two exercises during this message:

1. We will say; “I THANK GOD for 2024.” (4 times, for 2024)
2. to say “AMEN” to a prayer at the end of the message. (5 Amens, for 2025)

Mark 11:22 is my testimony and new year key verse message. If you recall, this same verse was our key verse for the year 2024. So with the first exercise, let’s give thanks for what God has done in our lives as a result of our faith in Him.

*EXERCISE 1: “I THANK GOD for 2024.” (x4)*

I am grateful to God for this opportunity to reflect on my life and learn to put my faith in God for the new year. The year 2024 might have tested your faith in God in different areas. You might think you are growing, that’s good, or you may think you’ve not done well, that’s not good. We need this time (New Year Key Verse Writing/Sharing) to have deep reflections and genuine repentance where necessary.

I invite you to take this testimony message / 2024 wrap-up as refreshment for your faith for the coming year.

May we learn to practice faith that bears much fruits and faith that overcomes all impossibilities in the new year. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

This year, we can testify that God has been gracious to us in many ways. We began this year 2024 with same key verse; Mark 11:22 (HAVE FAITH IN GOD), and a few other Bible verses from: Isaiah 40:28-31 (THOSE WHO HOPE IN THE LORD WILL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH), Acts 1:1-14 (YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES), Ezekiel 37:1-14 (A VAST ARMY OF GOD) With the Word of God, we overcame many challenges by faith and with renewed strength from God as we taught the Bible to Rutgers students.

We had much spiritual events such as; Young Leaders conference, North American Staff, Easter conference and Baptism of 12 young believers, GLEF Revelation study, Trips and Fun activities, Welcoming Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas events, Graduation, Wedding, Birthdays / Baby-shower.

Through these events we shared common love and fellowship, and shaped our spiritual identity as Royal Priesthood and Holy Nation - a People of God. In 2024, we had some guests like Zia, Joyce, Anastasia, Mssn Jose Ahn, Dr. Peter Chang, Mssn Esteban Cho, and Mssn Paulos from Brazil. They came to share our spiritual atmosphere, and I believe they were truly blessed both for their spirit and belly. Thanks to Mssn Rebecca Lee / Mssn Sarah Kim, and all others, who faithfully serve our guests with delicious delicacies.

**HAVE FAITH IN GOD (Mark 11:20-24)**

*Mark 11:22 – “Have faith in God,” Jesus answered.*

This comment by Jesus comes after Peter expressed his shock on seeing a fig tree which Jesus cursed die (Mark 11:20-21). And Jesus directed Peter to the source of power, God. He said; Have faith in God.

When Jesus said, “Have faith in God,” he wanted Peter and the disciples to overcome their fear because Jesus was raising them to be leaders that would spread the gospel all over the world. Fear if the opposite of faith, and it is a serious problem confronting many Bible teachers. When we are fearful, we cannot lead our campus students to Jesus. The source of this fear is satan, whose goal is to lead people to destruction in hell.

What does it mean to have faith in God? Most of all, it means to overcome all fears and depend on God alone. In Hebrews 11:1,6, we learn that faith is having confidence in what we hope for; and without faith you cannot please God. *[Now faith is* ***confidence*** *in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see… And without faith it is impossible* ***to please God****, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.]*

What kind of faith in God does Jesus want us to have? *(Check verse 23) - “Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them."*

Jesus wants us to have faith that moves mountains. Faith that moves mountains is faith that defies our human limits. As the year comes to an end, there are many predictions for the new year. One of such predictions says that Artificial Intelligence will become more sophisticated and make so many difficult tasks possible. This may cause many to put their faith in AI, but we know that AI also, is limited, it cannot move the mountains of sin, fear, and unbelief, only faith in God can move all mountains and make all things possible for us. There is nothing that the Almighty, Creator God cannot do. A mountain is too big for me to move. But God can move any mountain.

Vs.24 teaches us the way to overcome our fears and doubts, it is through faithful prayer. Sometimes we don’t know if we truly have faith when we pray. Like me, I measure my prayers to check which ones God answered. This practice may cause me to be troubled when I experience unanswered prayer according to my expectation. One truth I trust is the fact that God has promised to never leave me nor forsake me. So even when I experience unanswered prayer, I must humble myself and pray more with faith and love of God in my heart, and not have an entitlement mindset.

When we make efforts to raise Bible students, we need to know that the work of planting faith in the hearts of anyone is like moving the mountains of sin, fear and unbelief/doubt out of their hearts, and satan does not like that, so he will try to resist you and give you so many excuses to avoid gospel mission. By studying the Bible and meditating on it daily, we can build our faith in God, and then we can adequately serve our families, our next gens, Rutgers campus students and to the ends of the earth.

TESTIMONY:

The year was filled with many adventures and many blessings for me and my family. The most prominent experience for my family this year is about Ezra, our sweet baby. Right from the first month of the year, my wife was given the godly assignment to carry our son for nine months, and deliver him into this world. The process was filled with joys and pains, blessings and lessons. We thank God for taking us through the process successfully. Today I can boldly say that baby Ezra was born by faith in Jesus Christ. I can say this because all through the pregnancy period and during delivery, we experienced so much uncertainty concerning my wife’s health and our unborn baby. Our finances was also affected since my wife had to take a break from work to care for pregnancy and for the newborn. We learned different lessons of living by faith during Bible studies. One lesson for me this year is that it is easy to talk about faith with the mouth, but quite difficult when we face situations where our lives depend on practically expressing our faith. My family was living each day by faith in God. God blessed our faith and sustained us for each new day, week and month, right to the end of the year. Halleluyah. At this point, I humbly acknowledge the blessing of this loving family - NJUBF. Brothers and Sisters in Christ served and supported us with much prayers and practical gifts. Thank you, God bless you.

Concerning mission life of raising Bible students, NJUBF experienced the work of The Holy Spirit, especially when one Shepherd’s heart was filled with mission spirit and love for the lost students on Rutgers campus. By faith in God, he reached out to many students and some became consistent Bible students. This year we welcomed new students like Sister Esther, Brother Luke, Mofe, Colin, Kyle, Matthew, Sylvester, Chad. This is a great work of our God Who answers our prayers and blesses our faith. In fact, Bro Luke has also been raised as fisher of men on Rutgers Campus, he boldly invites students for Bible study. This successful fishing effort reminds me of the key verse from our Luke study; *Luke 19:10 - For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.* Through one Missionary’s fruitful work, we can also have faith that God will revive our mission-spirit and make us fruitful Bible teachers and fishers of students.

I thank God for the privilege to participate in gospel mission through different avenues of service. God blessed me with two Bible students (Colin and Sylvester), and we are building spiritual fellowship up to the family level. I praise God whenever I remember how Bro. Colin invited his family to share fellowship with us, just like the Samaritan woman (in John 4) that heard the gospel and spread the word to all her community. Sometimes, that is how God multiplies our effort and fruit. When we serve one sheep faithfully, they can invite their community, and somehow, we may raise more than 70 disciples of Christ.

Reflecting on my year, I realised that our Young Leaders group needs more prayers and encouragement. We have many Young Leaders that are willing and cheerful to serve God’s mission, but in this stage of life we face a lot of insecurities. I observed that myself and many Young Leaders are deeply engaged with work and activities to secure the future, and we manage little time to organise ourselves to serve Church responsibilities. Thank God that every member of the group believes in Jesus Christ. That is a good foundation for other spiritual qualities. We can do much more to practically express our faith in God and faithfully serve His mission. In the new year, once again, I ask for your prayers on behalf of Young Leaders, that we may live by faith in God, and faithfully live mission-centered lives by faith in God, trusting that our future is most secured with Jesus Christ. I am hoping that we can have more fellowship together and find other strategies to serve each other, serve the Church and serve Rutgers students. If possible we can pray to revive our student campus meetings.

This year I was introduced to serve vision team for Saturday IBS, and we are enjoying a blessed fellowship moment reading ‘Life-Together’ book. Thank God for the punctuality and diligent spirit in vision team members, and to our loving/passionate parents, thank you for your great support. We pray to have more vision for serving God’s work in the new year.

It is truly a blessing to live a mission-centered life. Things of the spirit are most beneficial to us. When I feel tempted to not serve Bible students, God’s Word reminds me that it is my flesh that’s trying to stand in the way of my obedience/service to God. *1Cor. 2:14 – The person without The Spirit does not accept the things that come from The Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through The Spirit.* When you feel reluctant to do God’s work, know that it is satan fighting your faith in God, and we have to pray with faith that God will move our mountains. From our GLEF Revelation study, we learned that those who are victorious will inherit the blessed life (eternal life), while those who don’t win will face second death.

***Rev.21:7-8*** *– Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children.* ***8*** *But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.*

This year my family struggled with many bills and debts that felt like mountains on the neck. My prayer topic for 2025 is that I may have faith that moves all the mountains.

I am also praying for God’s direction so that I can offer leadership and mobilize our young brethren to serve God better and joyfully.

This new year, let us repent of idleness and unfruitful works. So that we can truly work hard for the glory of God. Let’s pray for the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts and lead us in this mission. Some practical ways for us to restore our fellowship is to restore early morning prayer / devotion and reading the Bible everyday (sample from Revelation bible reading). There are 1189 chapters in the Bible, and if one reads 4 chapters a day, you may finish Bible in 2025. Have faith in God!

Tomorrow, we will learn how to successfully serve as witnesses for Jesus by The Power of The Holy Spirit. (pray for Mssn Abraham). By Sunday we will learn that the most blessed life is the life devoted to God *(like Ezra)* (pray for Mssn Peter’s message on Sunday). As we prepare for the new year, please be aware of the Word Jesus is giving us today - *‘have faith in God!’* With this message, Jesus is reminding me and you that we can trust Him with everything and every concern. By faith in God, we can be much more fruitful in 2025. By faith in God we can live mission-centered life, with joy. As a Church, we can overcome our challenges and limitations, and raise 70 one-to-one Bible students in the new year for the glory of God. Amen.

Now, I’ll like us to say amen to each prayer in Numbers 6:24-26 (The Priestly Blessing)

*[EXERCISE 2: to say “AMEN” to each prayer blessing]*

Num.6:24-26 – [I pray with you this new year 2025;]

The Lord bless you *(AMEN)*

and keep you *(AMEN)*

May His face shine on you and be gracious to you *(AMEN)*

The Lord turn His face toward you *(AMEN)*

and give you peace.. *(AMEN)*

Key Verse: *Mark 11:22 –* ***“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered.***