



ELISHA – RIDICULOUS FAITH

DIG THE DITCHES ... ACTIVE FAITH

“ELISHA ... RIDICULOUS FAITH” - AN OVERVIEW:

Welcome back to Creekside’s LifeGroup series, *Elisha ... Ridiculous Faith!* During this four week series we’re diving into 4 adventures of a man named Elisha. Elisha lived around 800 years before Jesus. His role, given to him by God, was to serve as a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel. This was a time when Israel was in rebellion against God. Elisha’s job was to do what he could to turn them back. Throughout his ministry, Elisha lived out incredible faith in God. We might even call it, *Ridiculous Faith*. During these four weeks, we’re learning from Elisha’s faith and seeing how his example can inspire us to trust in God and step out in faith for Him.

The title of this week’s LifeGroup session is *“Dig the Ditches – Active Faith”*.

Faith acts on what it believes.

ICEBREAKER

Tell your group about a time you or your family has acted in faith. Maybe your family moved to a new area without knowing if you would be able to find jobs. Perhaps you’ve signed up for a course or major at school, not knowing how things would pan out. Share your faith action or experience with the group.

STUDY

PLAY VIDEO

READ 2 Kings 3:1-20 Elisha and the Moabite Campaign

Context of 2 Kings 3:

Chapter 3 of 2 Kings is a fascinating story where we find the three kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom joining forces to fight a war they thought they could easily win, but things didn't go as planned. The kings then ask Elisha for help in their fight. The answer Elisha gives the kings is not what they expected. Elisha tells them (in the King James Version) to go and dig ditches and that God will fill the ditches with water, which will nourish the troops and their cattle. If they do this, Elisha tells the kings that God will deliver Moab into their hands. The kings likely found Elisha's request a bit ridiculous, but they believed in God's promise and did as they were told.

Source: LifeChurch.tv

- Imagine what it must have been like to have been one of these kings and to receive this order from God to dig ditches. What objections do you think they may have had? What emotions do you think they would have experienced?
- What do you think the soldiers may have been saying to each other after they received the order to go and dig ditches?
- After a seven day march with no water the soldiers would have been exhausted and depleted. Why do you think God might wait until we exhaust our own resources to call us to act in faith?

Ridiculous faith is creating space for God to work before there is any sign that what you are seeking will come.

- What might it look like in your life to "dig a ditch"?
- Someone has said, "If you want to see water in your life, then dig a ditch." Why do you think God often asks us to begin to act before we have all the evidence in place that what we hope for will happen?
- What might it look like in your life to "dig a ditch"?

PLAY VIDEO

READ: James 2:14-26 out loud together as a group.

Context of James 2 – Faith and Faithfulness

James, one of Jesus' brothers, writes his letter to believers in Jesus who had been scattered by persecution. His goal in writing is to encourage his readers to pursue a life of undivided faith and loyalty toward God. In his letter, James emphasizes faithfulness to God is expressed through good deeds. A faith relationship with God cannot be based merely on believing a true statement. Saving faith always results in actions. Our faithful actions emulate our God who continually acts in good ways toward us. Faith and good deeds, James argues, are inseparable.

TEAM EXERCISE:

For this exercise, subgroup into three teams.

TEAM 1: Read again through James 2:14-17

- What do these verses teach about the importance of action as an expression of faith?
- What is a key verse that helps you understand the importance of faith AND works?
- Finish this sentence – *Acting in faith is important because ...*
- Prepare to share your findings with the rest of the group.

TEAM 2: Read again through James 2:18-20

- What is a key verse or phrase in these verses that you can use to sum up what Paul teaches on faith and works?
- What is the danger of saying we have faith but not acting on it?
- Finish this sentence – *Acting in faith is important because ...*
- Prepare to share your findings with the rest of the group.

TEAM 3: Read again through James 2:21-26

- See if you can come up with 3 examples of faith actions that God might call us to today.
- What is the difference between relying on our good works to save us vs. doing good works as an expression of our faith in God?
- Finish this sentence – *Acting in faith is important because ...*
- Prepare to share your findings with the group.

After your group has come back together and shared your findings, have a look at the faith actions that James calls us to in his letter.

FAITH ACTIONS WE ARE TO DO

ENDURE testing – READ James 1:3

ENDURE temptations – READ James 1:13-14

RECEIVE wisdom – READ James 1:5-6

INHERIT the Kingdom – READ James 2:5

PRAY for the sick and RECEIVE forgiveness – READ James 5:15

RESCUE the wanderer – READ James 5:20

EXPRESS our faith through love – READ Galatians 5:6

PLAY VIDEO

Throughout his letters, the Apostle Paul wrote about the importance and necessity of good deeds as an expression of our faith. As a group, read through the following verses and talk about the questions that follow.

READ:

Romans 2:6-7

- What does Paul say is our reward for doing good deeds in this life?

READ:

Galatians 6:5-10

- How does the law “you will always harvest what you plant” (v. 7) help you understand the importance of acting in faith?

READ:

Ephesians 2:10

- How does our relationship with Jesus impact our ability to act in faith?

READ:

Philippians 2:12-13

- What does it look like practically to obey God with “deep reverence and fear”? (NLT)

READ:

1 Thessalonians 1:3-4

- Would you say the Apostle Paul was as big of an advocate for acts of faith as James was? Why or why not?
- What faith act do you sense God may be calling you to? How can your LifeGroup help you to take a step of faith?

PRAY

Ask God to work in your lives to show you the acts of faith He is calling you to. Ask Him for power, perseverance and courage to take a step!