

Special Messages of 2019

Functioning through Faith

Edited Transcript

Khayree Pender

Patrick Morley:

I'm actually very excited today to introduce our speaker, Khayree Pender. Khayree comes from Philadelphia. He's a Philadelphia boy and boy, he's got freedom in America all through his blood. Let me tell you. At a very early age, Khayree really did get a sense of a calling on his life. He ended up going to seminary before he went to college. Who does that? Who does that? But then he went to the University of Central Florida, has a bachelor's degree from there in criminal justice always had a desire to help people. So he became a youth minister with a special emphasis on the young men in the youth ministry, but also had a passion for law enforcement. So, when the opportunity arose became a corrections officer down here in Orlando, and that of course is a ministry to men. He attends the Experience Christian Center, which is less than a mile from the house I grew up in, by the way, where he serves as the executive pastor, which is a leadership and administrative position. He's an elder there and the executive pastor. He sensed a desire to be more involved in helping men on the front end of their life instead of helping them correct their mistakes (corrections officer, get it) and so he applied for his lifelong dream to become a law enforcement officer. And so, he is one of, by this time next year, will be 120 law enforcement officers in a 70,000 person city that we call the University of Central Florida. And so just imagine being a police officer, a full tactical gear kind of police officer. This is not a security guard position. This is a full police officer. I think Khayree told me, he said, "We have a hundred police Tavares has 20. So there you go. So it's like a very big job. And then you have a bunch of young people who are transient, you know, and so just think of all the extra effort that's required to be a law enforcement officer out there. His, but his passion is ministering to these young people And the stories that he's told me, and perhaps he'll tell us this morning, are fantastic about helping these young men and women in a redemptive way. And so Khayree is going to be our special guest speaker this morning. So I wonder if you would join me in giving a very warm, rousing welcome to Khayree Pender

Khayree Pender:

Good Morning. I don't know what to do after an introduction like that. When he started to speak of some of those things, I was like, wow, that is me. You get to reflecting and I'm thinking, okay, some of those things... But I thank you so much, Mr Pat. I appreciate you for this opportunity on this morning and for all the young men that are here this morning to be able to share with me and the topic that's dear to me this morning as well. As he stated, I'm right now currently a UCF police officer. And a lot of people really think like, "I didn't know that they had a whole a police station out there?". It's a full fledge police function. Often I try my best not to take anybody to jail. So that's my first thing.

I try to exhaust every option that I can before I have to take you on a trip down to 33rd. Because when I think about it, I had several options to work at Clermont and Orange County, Orlando. Those places are great, but when the opportunity come up for me to be a police officer at UCF, I quickly jumped on it.

It's not very rare that they open up that position and to be able to be a part of that, what's going on now in that school is a great place to be. And the reason why I took the opportunity to be a part of UCF police departments, because when you think about it, you have 70,000 students That come in. Not all of them are going to stay in Orlando. These are people that are about to be deployed all over the world.

So if I could come in contact with some of the students that are at that school and be able to plant a seed in their life before they get deployed all over the world, my work is done because I'm making it for my part to be an impression in their life so that when they do leave and they go out, maybe they may have a story or talking about how they came in contact with an officer or someone who spoke to them, spoke well of them to help them out in their decisions and even better their lives as well. Not to mention as well, I'm married, have three beautiful children and we're starting all talking about functioning with faith. And one thing I've found out is it's always great to have somebody next to you that may have a bigger faith than you.

You agree? And in my instance, it's my middle child. My son Khayree II. If there's anybody that's going to tug on my faith is going to be him because he gives me all types of assignments and things that I never thought that I probably could do. But, his faith is so huge. He came home the other day and said, "Dad, you know what? We went on the field trip and we were downtown." I say, "Great. How was the field trip? Did you like it?" He said, "I loved it. I saw this huge building down there and you know what? I want you to pick that building up and bring it home to me because I liked it that much."

You talking about faith? You want me to bring the whole building? And sometimes when we deal with faith, we try to counter it. So, you know, I had to tell him, that I couldn't take the building home because that'd be stealing. Didn't want to expose my face saying, okay, I didn't really think that I can do that. So as we go through this on this morning, we were talking about faith. Sometimes when you bring that word up, I'm gonna be honest with you, you would think that you would be swearing at people because that word, faith, is just a tough one. And when you think about it, who's really going to address the elephant in the room when we talk about faith? Who really wants to attack that 13,000 pound elephant when we have to address it? Faith is something that I've always dealt with because it was given to me, but I didn't know how to function in it.

Growing up I was fortunate enough to have parents that were saved that took me to church and they would give me quotes like that. "Hey mom, dad, I want to do this. I'm thinking about trying out for this football team." They will say, "You know, son, you gotta have faith". What is that? What do you mean, "I have to have faith?" When you begin to look at faith, you think about there's no instruction manual, there's no directions on how to use it. And I'll search Publix, Walmart, you can't, you can't order it either. You try to find out where is it. So you tried to figure out how do you obtain that? What is the faith? So we're functioning through faith. Have a question here and have you ever been in a situation where resources or connections couldn't help you? Being a man, let's think about it.

It's a high demand on us. We are expected to come up with a solution. We are expected to resolve the situation and sometimes I can tell you, addressing situations that come to me are addressing situations, not with faith, but sort of with the ego sometimes or even maybe testosterone. You know what, I'm going to come here and I'm going to take care of this situation. I'm going to figure it out. But when I come to the situation, find out that my own personal being my own resources, my own stories won't help me out in this situation.

When we look at Luke you think about Luke chapter five, 17 and 19, it's a great story of faith. The first thing that I want to talk about, well first we'll say this, "but faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen"(Hebrews 11:1). In Luke chapter five verse 17 through 19 is a great story when we talk about faith. There's three things that I'll talk about when we deal with faith. And the first thing is finding faith. When we talk about faith, we can't order it. You can't find it. Amazon Prime can't have it to the next day. Those things are, it's not there. But Luke chapter five, 17 and 19 is a great story. It deals with the paralyzed man. Deals with the paralyzed man who needs to find faith. And if we think about our lives, there's probably been situations in our lives where we really had to deep down pull on faith.

Where could we find it at? But here in this story we have a man who was paralyzed, couldn't walk, couldn't move, but he knew faith was in town. Something that moves me about that story was he had friends with him that carried him to faith. Now I'm trying to figure out how it was it, was it the men that carried him that had faith or was it him that had faith that asked them, "Hey, can you get me to faith?" It's always great to have somebody next to you that has faith that may be a little bit bigger than yours because sometimes when we look at our situations, faith is nowhere in the realm of us being a resource of something that we want to use. Because at that point in time, depending on the situation, you may say, you know what, I need an immediate response. I need an immediate, I need this resolved immediately.

So we have a paralyzed man who has some great friends. So like this room. I can think, I think if I was in a situation, I would love some of you guys to, you know, help me out of my situations that I may be in. He was a paralyzed man and he asked him, his friends took him. They knew Jesus was in town and he had to have faith. I don't know how long he's been paralyzed and never told us. They never even told us about his condition, but he had some friends around him that carried him to where they found out Jesus would be. Jesus was in the house doing his ministry as he as he always is, and they carried him to the place where Jesus was.

But they came up with a dilemma. As they took him to where Jesus was, they found out that it was too packed for them to even get in. Couldn't even take him in. Isn't that like faith sometimes? You get geared up. You feel great about yourself. You say, "You know what, I'm going to go here. I'm gonna do this." And then when you get to the situation to face it with faith, you sort of lose the hope. You lose the energy that you had. You lose those things that you thought you were going to face it with being based on the situation. Now they could have been very much discouraged because they were standing there. They knew where Christ was. They had to find faith. So when in the situation, I want to find out for yourself, where do you find faith in times of distress?

What do you do? Do you find another solution that you push faith to aside? Did you lean on something else? Now at that point in time, his friends, they could have left him and said, "You know what? We brought you to where you asked us to. We took you here, but at this point there's nothing else that we can do for you. We want to get you in to see Jesus, but it's packed. You see it for yourself!" It's great to have people next to you that has the same energy that won't give up, but also want to see these things resolved as well. They said, you know what, and I will need to know what type of friends these are. You gear yourself around people like this. They said, you know what? The place is packed. We can't get in there right now. This is what we'll do.

"We'll go to the roof." It just gave me chills. It gave chills because they said, you know, we're going to find a solution. We have faith in and believe that you know what? We're going to find faith today. We're

going to get it. Everything that you've been seeking, that thing that you want it, we're going to make sure that we get you to that point." And sometimes my faith, there's no way to even gauge it. You can't see it. It's not like a meter that you know that when you're getting your gas, you can see how much. There's not enough. Maybe it took all of them to combine their faith to get to this end solution of what they needed. So the house was packed, they couldn't go through the front door. Not only that, they carry him from the journey to where they needed to be, but they took enough strength, enough faith that they had in their self and that they believed and they took them through the roof.

They begin to take them to the roof, peel back the roof and lower him down in front of Jesus. If that isn't faith, I don't know what to tell you. They lowered him in front of him and Jesus was so impressed with it. He told them, "Go ahead. You're forgiven, you're healed." So there's a point of time that even though you may face a situation with faith, you may approach it. You may come up and it may seem like, you know what? I don't even know if faith is going to work through this. What will you do? How do you find faith? So many times that we look for faith as it being a top layer, but there may be some things that we made may need to peel back just as that roof to make sure that we found our faith. Because it's there! I don't know how big it is. I don't know how small it is, but it's there. They figured out that they needed to pull back some things to make sure that they get to faith.

Now, what do you mean that I may need to peel back some things through faith? We've all been through some situations in life that probably left a bad memory on us. We probably never got the solution that we wanted. We probably never received those things. And think about it, when you face failure and you come apart or head to head with failure or some things that never worked out the way that you need, that's just another layer on top of your faith. Okay. It didn't work that time. It's another layer on top of your faith. Okay. I don't know if it's going to happen.

Doubt, fear, not wanting to the mess up again, not wanting to look bad, not wanting to start over again. Those are all layers that are on top of your faith, but then you have to peel back those things to make sure you get to it. One thing I found out about faith. It's just so funny that even though we may have all those things, that faith is strong enough to support even those things that we may lean so much on. Faith is strong enough to support our failures, our doubt, our fear, those things that we may very much deal with on a daily basis. It is so faint for us sometimes even just to look at it because I'm hoping and believing in something that's not tangible to me. I'm not sure about you, but I love to have an exchange sometimes knowing that if I'm given something, I receive something in return, but I'm believing in something that I'll never see.

I'm believing in something that I will never touch. It's not like I can present this faith to you, but I have to show up. But faith is strong enough to support those things that we may try to layer on top of it. These guys figured out, you know what, we may not be able to get into the door, but out there there's another way for me to access it and that's what I want to put out today. We have to make sure that, you know what, the first way we approach it may not be it, but we have to always have an alternate route to access our faith. So here we have that one which has grown in faith as well. It was a great one, but the next one I wanted to talk about is **facing faith**. So the first one that we did was **finding faith**; the paralyzed man, his friends, they had to find faith.

You have to find out in yourself, deep down, removing layers away, where is my faith at? Where is it? Is it in that eight year old boy that didn't make the basketball team that I lost? Is it in a business contract that didn't go through that I felt. Where is it? Where did I last leave faith? Because at one point we had it and we took it to a situation and it didn't work the way that we thought it was and we left faith there.

I can remember myself, the summer of '95, going out for a wide receiver position for Lyman High School. Just moved down here. I thought I was pretty good. I didn't drop no balls. I thought I was doing all right.

Here it is. We had guys that never came, but knew to coach and got the position. I had faith. I mean I did the practice. I went to the practices. I was 14 years old. I had faith in it. My mom told me, "Hey Khayree" I was telling her, listen, I'm hoping I get this position. She said, "Well, you have to have faith" I'm thinking, no, I have to have good hands to catch the ball and make sure I get the position. That's what I need to do. We always get those spiritual things thrown on us. Okay. Hey, so you gotta know I need to make sure I'm able to catch the ball that the quarterback throws. I go through and I decided, hey, I'm gonna take this thing that she told me about that I've never used or felt and go out here. Break the huddle, Lyman High Greyhounds. Hey, you ready? We're all in position. We all in the line. Khayree, you ready today, man. This is the day they give out our positions. Yeah, man, I got faith. You got what? Yeah. You know I'm ready. Ended up being, I hope you guys won't talk about me after this, but these were some great guys, a third string wide receiver.

I know, you like Khayree, well could you catch the ball? 14 years ago when I was 14 years old, guess where I left faith at? On that practice field because it didn't work for me. I left it. That's where my faith was until another situation came up and had to find out where was faith and had to go back to 14 year old Khayree to pick faith back up. Finding faith.

Next thing that we deal with is, after you find faith (here's the crazy thing) you have to face it. Me getting older, there's some things that I know that I have to do just to make sure if just for men's health, if y'all know what I'm talking about? I don't need to go a little, men's health, you know, older men's health, that checkup? That's just something I don't want to face.

I just, I mean, are you with me?, I just don't want to face it. I just like, I know the time is coming right? But I have to face it and you figure about certain things that we have to face in life or things that we did had to face and it leaves an impression on you. Here we have Naaman in 2 Kings 5:7-8 who was a warrior. I mean, it don't get no better than this. I mean, when you think about being a warrior, you think about your troops going out, conquering, your taking land, you're successful. You're doing everything that you need to do. I mean, when you think about a warrior, I mean, you think about looking at.. Who wouldn't want to look like a chiseled Greek god, just I mean, you don't have to say nothing. You know, you just walk up and everything just happens. I mean, he had the stature, he had the stats, he had the people with them. But one thing that Naaman had was he had leprosy.

He had the numbers. He had the victories. But he has something that he had to face every day with his life. And that was leprosy. So was he really winning victories or is he really losing himself? 'Cause you think about it, yeah, he the great victories, but when you think about leprosy and you begin to look at it, It's nothing compared to not even modern day AIDS. Nobody wants to be around you. It's something that he had to face daily. So, we can imagine about his type of faith, what he had or what he had to deal with. I can imagine that he would do anything to get healed. But word had came that, hey, there was a prophet in town and we're believing that this prophet can heal you of what it is that you have. Now he's thinking, okay, this is a disease that I have right now.

There can't be this. Nothing can happen with me on this point. But it was willing to try. So you mean to tell me that in the state that you are, people not being around, you dealing with scrutiny dealing with your own mental things that you're going through that he was able to find faith somewhere in himself. He was, he was willing to face that situation. He was willing to stand face to face with his leprosy and

then hopefully with faith as well to say, you know what? I'll be healed. The prophet was in town. Word came. Hey, this is what I need you to do. I need you to dip yourself. You dip yourself and on that last time you'll end up being healed. But before he can get to that, he was frustrated. They said he ripped his robe. He ripped it because I'm thinking there's no way in the world that this could happen for me. Certain times we have to face things that you feel as though, you know what, I, I'm embarrassed. Faith won't help me on this. I don't know what I can do to get through this. Naaman was a warrior. And it's funny about being a warrior in stature, but how about in faith and spirit? He found something inside himself. Then said, you know what? I'll try it. He had to face it. He had to face faith. He had to face faith with the condition that he was dealing with, and there may be some conditions that we may deal with. being men. Let's just be honest, it's a great name for it, says **The Man in the Mirror**. I remember times when I couldn't even look in the mirror.

I didn't want to look in the mirror because why? I didn't want to face it. I didn't want to face what I was dealing with. I didn't want to face the things that I was going through. But he said, you know what? I'll face it, but he couldn't do it alone. He had to find faith. Where did he pull it from? Where did he find it? How did he face the faith? There were people around him that encouraged him to get to a place where he needed to be and ultimately ended up being healed. He faced the situation. Majority of times we may not get results from things that we want, are things that we need or that we want to see is because we don't face it. We look at the situation, I say, I pass on it. It won't happen, but we never faced it with faith.

We faced it with our own intuition. We faced it with our own results, our own, our own strengths, but we never took anything with us to face the situation. He was strong enough to say, you know what? I'll face it. I'll face it. I'll go with it and I'll take something with me. And ultimately became healed. So what are some things that we decided to put on the shelf that we didn't want to look at anymore; that we didn't want to face because we didn't know how to approach it?. Now, can I go back to my storing shelf and say, you know what? I'll go back and face this now. Not by myself, but I'll face it with faith. I'm pretty sure we all have our own shelf with things that we put up there that we said, you know what, I don't know how I was going to do with maybe a contract that I had, maybe something that I wanted to do. I don't know how I'm going to do it. Yeah, you don't know. But you may have to face that situation with faith. And it's a proven fact that it shows when you face it with faith and in Naaman's story that he became healed. He took that time.

So you find faith, you face faith. And the last one that we'll talk about comes from genesis chapter 22 verse two and then I skipped down from verses 10 through 12 and it deals with it **following faith** It was okay if you find it. That's great. It's even better if you face it. But the last thing is if you follow through, follow through with faith, follow through with it. Here we have a story, a familiar story that we all know. We have Abraham and he has his son, a son, whom he loves so much. He heard from the Lord said, "you know what? I need you to sacrifice your son, the one whom you love" And I don't know about you guys. I don't want to have conversations with God like that. I don't want you to have to sacrifice something that I really love is like, okay, faith, believing, follow through.

Abraham heard the call, received it and went on his journey. One thing particular about that journey that I love so much, it was a three day journey. They told us. Can you imagine getting a call like that and you had three days to think about it. Could you imagine the turmoil that you go through it? I would change my mind so many times. I don't even need three days. You can give me 10 minutes. I'm like, oh, I don't know if I really want to do that. What we're talking about following through with the, it tells us here in this story the obedience that he had in his follow through. Sometimes faith can be tricky and one

thing I love about it is it pulls on you and areas that you really don't even know what makes you strong in areas that you don't even know.

I don't know where my son got him telling me that he wanted me to bring a whole building home. That's fine for him to even believe in me to think that I can do it and I'm not going lie to you and say that I dropped my wife off downtown at work and I looked at the building. He made me believe. Let me see what he talking about. Follow through. Abraham, his son, sacrifice. That takes faith. Someone that you love because when you sacrifice there is normally something there that we're putting on an altar. At that point in time, his son was going to be held as that sacrifice. It was so funny. His son even, you know, question, hey yo listen it dad. I know we getting our wood and fire and everything together, but where's the sacrifice? Not knowing that it probably was going to be him. His father had to be so obedient and lined up within God. Hearing his voice, the follow through with faith that before he can even raise his hand back to do it, the Angel stopped him, and that famous story, there was a ram in the bush.

How many times have we cut ourselves short but not approaching it or even following through with it after we made our mind up saying I have the faith to do it. How many times have we seen a situation? How many times have our follow-through hasn't been great? One thing I, I guess I've always had problems with sports. Here's another one. Basketball. Got sat down on the bench playing basketball, like to think that I'm a great shooter, I would always get hollered at about my coach or even pulled out the game. Maybe it was just me. Maybe sports wasn't personally. Maybe I was supposed to play. He would always scream at me after I was shooting, "Follow through because there's a chance that you may miss that shot, but it also gives you opportunity to get your own rebound." Following through with faith. We don't know the outcome after all.

It's hope. "substance of things hoped for, evidence of things not seen". I don't know. I mean why not? We trust the other things. We believe it. Things that we haven't even met, even by word, those things. He had to trust him. He had to follow through and I'm going to tell you that sometimes it gets hard, but face is a subtle comfort for you to say, you know what, these things could happen. It could change. But first I have to find my faith. Where did you last leave it? What situation left you kind of in a, in a even position and say, you know what? I don't know where it is, but after you find it, you know what? I'm not going to go off the last memory where I left you at. I'm going to face you this time to let you know I'm willing to try it again and I'm so encouraged to say, you know what? That I'm willing to try it again. That even when we step up to the next situation, I'm able to follow through. Find Faith, Face it and Follow Through.

Lord, we thank you for this day. We thank you for the challenges that we've even been placed to face. We thank you for what you've done for us and what you're doing for us. We believe in you God to know that it's not on our own, that we can handle every situation by ourselves. You put things in place for us and we asked today God that wherever it was that we left our faith, help us find it. Some of us may have it. We ask that you build it back up for us. Some of us may not have used it for awhile. We ask that you help us clean it up. Lord, we thank you. We know that it may be a subtle thing, something that we don't take for granted, but there's something in us, that saying, you know what? I'll try it again, Lord, we believe in you and we trust in you and we thank you. Amen.