

Trust Jesus-you will grow in happiness (blessedness), you will please God and you won't go wrong in life!

Hymn: *by Charles Wesley*

The God of love, to earth He came, that you might come to heaven;
Believe, believe in Jesus' name, and all your sin's forgiven.

Believe in Him that died for thee, and, sure as He hath died,
Thy debt is paid, thy soul is free, and thou art justified.

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Coming into the Presence of the Living God:

Declaration of Truth:

"Will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry out to Him day and night? Will He continue to defer their help? I tell you, He will promptly carry out justice on their behalf. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?" Luke 18.7

Prayer of Invitation:

Our Father, Lord of all, Creator and Judge of all humanity, we gather in the Name of your Son, to hear His Word, to listen to Him as you both warned and promised us in Scripture, that we should be amongst those whom you find to be faithful in love and obedience on this earth at this time. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Prayer:

If you are in a church service, pause here and let there be prayers for each other's needs and for those who are constantly on our hearts. The church Assembly is a special and powerful place for intercession.

It may also be a time to pray with the victors of the persecuted church;

- *for the success of Barnabas Aid programs getting food and medical aid into needy and often violent African locations.*
- *For peace between China and Australia instead of preparing for what would be horrific conflict.*
- *Thanks that God has rallied the nations to sanction Azerbaijan and open highways for desperately needed aid to save the lives of besieged Christians in the Armenian enclave.*

Hymn: *by Matthew Burden*

1. Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees and looks to God alone,
Laughs at impossibilities and cries, "It shall be done!"

Jesus loves faith

And cries, "It shall, it shall be done!" and cries, "It shall be done!"
Laughs at impossibilities and cries, "It shall be done!"

2. Abraham looked to God alone, the promise he believed,
That all the nations would be blessed through Christ, the chosen seed.
Through Christ, the chosen, holy seed, through Christ, the chosen seed;
That all the nations would be blessed through Christ, the chosen seed.
3. Scripture unveils our highest hope and says that it will be:
The glory of God shall fill the Earth as waters cover the sea.
As waters cover, cover the sea as waters cover the sea;
The glory of God shall fill the Earth as waters cover the sea.
4. The grace of our Lord shall be proclaimed; the mission shall be done;
The nations will hear the Gospel call, and then the end will come.
And then the end, the end will come and then the end will come;
The nations will hear the Gospel call, and then the end will come.
5. One day we'll gather 'round the throne, the promises complete;
When every language, tongue and tribe, all nations worship Thee!
All nations worship, worship Thee! all nations worship Thee!
When every language, tongue and tribe, all nations worship Thee!

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Scripture:

- Matthew 15.21-28
- Hebrews 11.1-6
- Psalm 20 (*if you are in a service or group you could read this Psalm responsively, making the breaks at the full stops*)

Message: Jesus loves faith: Trust Jesus and you won't go wrong!

What pleases God? It's very clear isn't it? So simple a young child knows instinctively. It is faith, trust, and confident reliance on our God and on our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit summed it up inspiring the Epistle writer with the words: *And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.*¹

Faith gets the believer close to God. It stirs deeds, faith deeds. Faith works itself into the human soul, into your soul. What you believe is what you become. This attribute is one of three things which we can carry into the life beyond the grave². Faith runs with personal relationship, indeed the deeper the love-relationship the more the trust.

¹ Heb 11.6 NLT

² 1 Corinthians 13.13 If you read the whole section you will see that faith is activated by love and thrives within it.

Jesus was excited when he saw faith happening. The non-Jew who sought out Jesus to heal his servant and the Canaanite woman, desperate for her possessed daughter; Jesus glowed with wonder at their faith declaring it 'great faith'. The Apostle was also thrilled at how the new converts in Corinth and Thessalonica were expanding in faith deeds.

Faith of course is endemic to all life, especially in human innovation and expansion. Some say science deals with facts and religion with faith. That isn't even half true. Scientific endeavour is always using faith, every experiment relies on hitherto understood data and constancies to dig further into areas of reality. Some religion deals with ethereal things but true Christianity, faith in God with much more. Like scientific endeavour it involves trusting that which can be interacted with and known.

Some research shows that Faith or Trust is part of a healthy life and a cause of longevity; the stronger faith is, the longer a person will live. It's a life force.

Jesus seemed to evaluate all his interactions in terms of the faith that was present. If there was no faith he blasted it as 'wicked, adulterous and unbelieving'. Several times the disciples earned a low-grade commendation as of 'little faith'. But the big faith of a few made his day! He emphasized that even tiny (mustard seed size) faith was momentous.

The episode with the Canaanite woman probably more than any other shows how Jesus loved and searched for faith from his countrymen and others who knew something about him.

This woman had heard of or perhaps even seen him. Although she was part of a broken and depraved culture she recognised royalty. "Lord, Son of David" she cried, "have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon possession."

Jesus ignored her, and the disciples thinking Jesus was bothered by her sought to be rid of her. But she persisted and kept worrying with her concern. Jesus turns her down. "I was only sent to the lost sheep of Israel". You don't qualify! But she knew he had it and she desperately wanted his power to help. She falls before him pleading over and over "Lord, help me".

How many blessings are lost to believers who fail to press into the Lord's heart like this woman? She bound her pleas to his mercy. And Jesus let her do it to him.

Then came the crushing cold reason of Jesus: "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs".

Is this the end for her? Does she still hold faith in the grace of this Man? Yes, woman, you are just a dog, the best you can do is wait for the true children to be served. No rights to Israel's blessings, no key to the wonders of the Messiah!

Not enough to quell her desperation! Her feverish raw belief that this Lord of Israel had something for her too. And she will not quiet till it is hers! And with one immortal sentence, she lunges into the eternal truth of mercy and compassion in the heart of this Son of David who is in truth the world's only Saviour!

So Jesus teaches all followers to yield to nothing but the reality of His saving, helping powerful grace. Adequate for all our situations of life, death and on into the eternal! We honour him by taking His Word, believing his character and living riotously, abundantly by faith!

Prayer:

Dear Father, you have told us that Jesus is your beloved Son and we must listen to Him. We should honour Him with our trust above and before all other beings, institutions and powers. Dear Lord, we cling to you as the Canaanite woman of old; burn away our disbelief, and cause us to be blessed as those who, not seeing, yet believe. Lord Jesus take me on into a world of faith in Jesus knowing the life which is Life indeed.

In His Name, Amen.

Hymn: *by Charles Wesley*

1. Spirit of faith, come down, reveal the things of God;
And make to us the Godhead known, and witness with the blood.
tis thine the blood to apply, and give us eyes to see
Who did for every sinner die hath surely died for me.
2. No man can truly say that Jesus is the Lord
Unless Thou take the veil away and breathe the living word.
then, only then, we feel our interest in His blood,
And cry, with joy unspeakable: Thou art my Lord, my God.
3. O that the world might know the all-atoning Lamb!
Spirit of faith, descend, and show the virtue of His name.
The grace which all may find the saving power impart;
And testify to all mankind and speak in every heart.
4. Inspire the living faith, which whosoe'er receives,
The witness in himself he hath and consciously believes.
The faith that conquers all, and doth the mountain move,
And saves whoe'er on Jesus call, and perfects them in love.

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Benediction:

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This service prepared for HopeNet SA by Rev Ian Clarkson