

Faith Begets Trust
Luke 17:5-6

May I ask you to bear with me today as we take just one more incursion into this so very mysterious element of God's Grace to us, His Grace of "Faith". And then to actually take one more step forward beyond "Faith" on into His blessed Grace of "Trust", "Trust".

As devoted Christian believers in our Lord Jesus and as dedicated students of these scriptures, it really must be our earnest desire and purpose to always be reaching forward to "know" Him, to know Christ all the more. Reaching, as the saying goes, "beyond our grasp". And not just to know "about" our Lord, but to truly and intimately know "Him" personally.

One of my favorite passages in these scriptures is given in Philippians chapter three. Those words,

¹⁰I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. (Philippians 3:10-11)

But as we "reach forward to know Him", we are also cautioned by these scriptures that in our striving we be careful to not "reach too far". That as we read and as we study these precious words, we must also be careful to not read "meaning into them", "meaning" that is not there.

And so, with that as our desire and also our caution, may we carefully examine these few words spoken by those disciples that day when they made the plea to the Lord Jesus, "Increase our faith", "Increase our faith". Listen to those words given to us in Luke chapter 17, and then also to Jesus' response.

⁵ . . . the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."

⁶ So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. (Luke 17:5-6)

Here, the very obvious desire and plea that is being made to the Lord Jesus is that He would reach into their hearts, their souls, their minds and their spirits, and that he would bring about a greater belief, a deeper abiding "faith" in Him.

But is that all that's being asked within their request? Or is there something deeper, something more in their relationship with Him that the Holy Spirit is prompting them to want, something on beyond that which most Christians experience within their "faith".

And that is the question that I want us to ponder as we study these words of our Lord. Because folks, the response from the Lord Jesus sure seems to imply that far, far greater things are in store for those of us who truly desire to have a deeper, more intimate relationship with Him, a far greater faith than most of us experience.

When we were last together we said that "faith" has a very special meaning, a meaning that bespeaks something on beyond simple "belief", a mysterious conviction that takes place within a person's soul that can cause them to think and to do things they would not otherwise think or do.

We said that the word "faith", "Emunah" in the Greek, is best defined with the simple words as being "an innate conviction that transcends reason!"

Let me say those words again, because, for me, they are some of the most profound words I have ever encountered. Listen again!

"Faith is an innate conviction that transcends reason!"

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These words tell us a very simple, but very profound truth, that in the matter of "faith", we cannot "think it out", we cannot "reason it out", we cannot intellectually define it, and we cannot use any other of those ordinary ways to understand it. That is because "Faith" actually does transcend reason!

Faith is far deeper than just our capacity to think. It is a deep and demanding "conviction" that takes control over our mind, our heart, our soul to such an extent that we begin to do the next thing as if all of it is really real, as real as anything else that we can feel, see, taste and hear. Really real!

And may I say in as strong a way possible, that our understanding about "faith" cannot and it must not be limited to simply "believing" in God. Believing is only a beginning step in understanding the meaning of "faith". As James tells us in chapter 2 of his Book, "even the demons believe in Christ, but they tremble".

Folks, it truly is not enough just to “believe” in the Lord Jesus. That is an easy part! But “faith”, the kind of “faith” that you and I must have, and the kind of “faith” that these disciples are pleading for is so much, much more, so much deeper than simple belief.

I mentioned in an earlier study that this “faith” that we are pursuing is one part of an overall relationship that we must have with our Lord. But that “faith” is foundational, absolutely essential and foundational to all of the other parts of the relationship that we need to have with Christ.

In the three gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13 that God gives to us, “faith, hope and love”, I am convinced that “faith” is absolutely essential as the foundation for the other two gifts. That without “faith”, “hope” and “love” might never take place.

And “faith” is essential for another, perhaps even deeper reason than all of this. And here is where we reach for a meaning of “faith” that is not specifically said, but is strongly, very strongly, implied. And that is that the eventual culmination, the furthest extent of “faith” will result in “Trust”, “Trust”. That the ultimate purpose of “Faith” is to produce “Trust”, “Trust in our Lord”, a condition of “Trust” that will cause us to do things that we have never done before.

“Faith” produces “Trust” as a mysterious unction wrought within a person's soul by the Holy Spirit, a “persuasion” that will take place within a person's soul that can cause them to confidently “step” into a fiery furnace without fear, or for a person to go running without fear into a battle against a vicious giant, slinging a stone that he is fully persuaded God will guide to its mark.

Folks, “Faith” must have meaning and purpose. As our brother James tells us in his Book, “Faith” is a doing thing . . . that “Faith without works is useless and dead, and no faith at all.”

But in our “doing” of our faith, it must always be as an outworking of our “Trust”, “Trust” in the One Source of all that takes place on the earth, the Lord Jesus. A fully persuaded belief that the One who rules and reigns in the Heavenly Places is also at every moment reaching into the things we are doing here on the earth, guiding and directing our steps. A “Trusting in Him” that we are simply acting on His behalf to make all the desires of His will and His purposes to take place.

Pause for a moment and think about what is being said in these words. God has a plan that He is working out within all the many occurrences taking place on the earth at every moment. He tells us about that plan all throughout these scriptures. One of my favorite places where He tells us about His plans is given in Jeremiah chapter 29 where He says to us,

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for harm, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)

These are such simple words, but they tell us about the generous heart of God, that He loves us and that He is working out a plan that will eventually bring us to His desired end for us, eternal life.

And further, that He will use the “gift of faith” as His means to bring us to the fulfillment of those special plans that He has for us.

But also, for those that would dare take an additional step on forward, He will also cause us to “Trust” in Him, a step in our relationship with Him that is further on beyond “belief” and “faith”.

And folks, I confess to you that as I consider the words that I am saying to you, I really don't fully understand them myself, I can't fully grasp this furthest extent that God calls “Trust”.

My thoughts go to what the Apostle Peter must have experienced out there on the Sea of Galilee when Jesus invited Him to step out of that boat and to walk on the water with Him. For a brief moment, Peter “trusted”, he actually went beyond “belief” and beyond “faith” and for that brief moment he actually “trusted” the Lord Jesus, and he walked on that water. An impossible “hope” that became “substance”, that became “real”. And it was brought about by “Trust”.

And while you and I might never walk on water, I have no doubt that it is absolutely possible and it is “doable” If we will take that step on beyond “faith” into “Trust”.

And also, if it would bless our Lord, we could say to a mulberry tree, “be uprooted and planted in the sea, and it would do it”. All brought about by our “Trust”, simple “Trust” in Him.

Folks, our “Faith”, our believing in God, must have a purpose. And that purpose is for us to have a foundation on which we can place our “Trust”.

The Lord Jesus wants you and me to “believe”, to have “faith” in Him, “faith” that “Trusts” that He “is” who He says He “is”, that He really does “exist” and that He is fully involved in every detail of our lives.

As we are told in Hebrews chapter 11, we must truly believe and “Trust” that He “is” and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. “Faith” that “Trusts” that He is absolutely trustworthy to be and to do all that He promises within these scriptures.

And that we can step forward into any situation, any circumstance of life with full confidence that He will guide our steps. Proverbs 3,

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding.

⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Think about those words for a moment! Do you believe them? Do you really believe them? You and I must believe them. “Belief” is the first step, yes a very small step, but the first step. We believe the words of John 3:16 don’t we? We really must also believe these words . . .

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
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Did you notice the change in the wording? Here, instead of saying, “believe in the Lord”, or “have faith in the Lord”, the instruction is to “Trust in the Lord”.

What is taking place within these instructions? For my understanding folks, it is as we have been saying here in these past few moments. It is simply that “trust”, “trusting in the Lord with all your heart” is the next step in our belief and in our faith.

And no, “Trust” is not an easy thing to do. It would have been far easier for Peter to have remained in that boat. And yes, it is easier for you and me to sit

comfortably in our easy chair or in our church pew and “believe”. But not so “Trust”. As our belief grows and as our faith grows, we begin to “trust”. And for each of us it will be that natural progression. We begin with belief, belief turns to faith, and faith then begets “trust”. And praise be to God for “Trust”.

And again, “Trust” is a step beyond faith, because “Trust” requires us to actually do something, sometimes to put ourselves at risk, sometimes even a painful risk.

But wait, are we really “at risk”? If our God is trustworthy to look after us in times of risk, are we really at risk? But what if our steps forward into “Trust” will bring us suffering? Is it OK if we suffer? We don’t like to suffer. But is it still OK if we suffer?

Jesus thought so! He willingly took what we would call “a risk” and He suffered. But He did it for a purpose. He suffered that we might “gain”, that you and I might gain eternal life.

Yes, Jesus was God as He suffered, but He was also very, very human. And in those awful hours of His suffering, He had to have the same kind of “Trust” that is required of you and me. Jesus had to put His Trust in God the Father. And yes, God the Father was trustworthy.

And thanks be to God, He accepted Jesus’ suffering. Because that is why you and I have the blessed salvation we now enjoy. Jesus’ suffering was a “propitiation”, an atonement for our sins and now we have eternal life.

Jesus “Trusted” God His Father in the worst of suffering, and oh dear Christian, you and I must have that same kind of “Trust”.

But sadly, I confess to you that right now, I don’t have that kind of “Trust”. I really, really do want to have that kind of “Trust”, but I still don’t, at least, not yet!

And the question for us, for you and for me really needs to be, how do we move on forward. How do we get from where we are to where we need to be, from simple, and easy believing, into faith, and then on into the more difficult realms of “Trust”, “Trust”.

While at this moment, I really don’t know the complete answer to that question, I do know with confidence that “Trust” will come to me. And that it will come in the same manner and from the same Person who has given me the first steps of

my "Trust", that of belief and faith. "Trust" will come as a "gift", "a free gift", from the Lord Jesus.

And how can I know that with such confidence? It's because, I know that right at this moment I really am moving forward, that I already have far more "faith" and far more "Trust" than I have ever had before, that my "faith" and my "Trust" are growing and increasing, and that my faith and my trust will continue to increase as I yield my heart to my Lord. And especially, that I must never look back. As with the Apostle Paul, I must say . . .

¹² . . . I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

¹³ Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,

¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12-14)

Before we call a close to these moments of pondering this heavier consideration about "Trust", may I simply thank you for bearing with me as I struggle to understand some of these deeper things of God and as I also invite you to join with me in this pressing on forward.

I know that it is much more comfortable for us to just sit peacefully in a pew each Sunday and quietly worship the Lord, certainly easier than our venturing into the deeper waters of "Faith" and of Trust", "Faith" and Trust" that can make strong demands upon our souls, demands that we might not be comfortable experiencing.

But as devout followers of our Lord Jesus, we really, really must press on forward to that upward calling in Him.

Pray with me!