I STILL Believe (Part 4)

Sunday, August 30, 2020

For the past 4 weeks we have building up the foundation of our faith by reminding ourselves of several pillars of belief. Each week we have started with these 4 verses…

**Luke 18:8 (NIV)**

**8 …**I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

**John 20:31 (NIV)**

**31**But these are written so that you may believe (and continue to believe) that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Then, by believing, (continuing to believe) you may have life through his name.

**John 3:14-16 (NIV)**

**14**Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, **15**that everyone who **believes** (and continues to believe) may have eternal life in him.” **16**For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever **believes** (and continues to believe) in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

**Galatians 1:6 (NCV)**

**6**God, by his grace through Christ, called you to become his people. So I am amazed that you are turning away so quickly and believing something different than the Good News.

Let's review the statements of faith we have studied so far…

1. **I Still Believe** in the **One, Eternal, Self-existent God**, creator of the heavens and the earth, all that is seen and unseen; His love of and desire to reveal himself and have relationship with those whom he has created.

1. **I Still Believe** in the **Trinity of the Godhead** as being revealed as embodying the principles of relationship and association as **Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

1. **I Still Believe that sin separates us from God and that the result of that sin is death or eternal separation from God in Hell**

1. **I Still Believe** that God's remedy for Sin is **Salvation by grace, through faith** in Jesus and His work upon the cross.

1. **I Still Believe** that we are called to **walk**, by that same faith, **in relationship** with Jesus Christ, allowing the presence of His Holy Spirit to **transform us** into a new creation

1. **I Still Believe** that **The Bible is God's Holy Word.** That The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct.

1. **I Still Believe** that the **Baptism in the Holy Spirit** with the evidence of speaking in tongues is the gift Jesus promised to all who believe

1. **I still Believe** in **The Church**

1. **I Still Believe** in **The Ministry** and its offices as given by God to the Church

**I STILL Believe (Part 4)**

1. **I Still Believe** that **God Answers Prayer**

Our key text in Luke 18 is all about prayer…

**Luke 18:1**

**18**Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they **should always pray and not give up.**

At the end of this parable he poses the question… When the son of man comes, will he find faith on the earth? In other words, will people still be praying? Will they still believe that God answers prayer?

The same questions come to mind regarding Paul’s words

**1 Thessalonians 5:17 (ESV)**

**17**pray without ceasing,

When we think of this verse, we often think about how we can pray continually (as some translations put it) But what if we saw this command in light of our thoughts today. How can I continue in my prayer life? No matter the circumstances. No matter the difficulties. No matter how many years I may live. No matter how long it is until Jesus returns. No matter how the enemy may tempt me with the thought that prayer doesn’t make a difference. No matter how many times I may feel like the answer isnt coming.

How can I pray without ceasing? How can I maintain my belief in prayer?

1. God hears us when we pray

**Psalm 55:16,17**

**16**As for me, I call to God… **17**…and he hears my voice.

**1 John 5:14**

**14**This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

**John 11:41-42**

**41**So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. **42**I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

1. God answers us when we pray

**Psalm 91:14-15**

**14**“Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. **15**He will call on me, and I will answer him;

**Isaiah 65:24**

**24**Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

* Sometimes the answer is yes
* Sometimes the answer is no
* Sometimes the answer is not yet
* There will be times that we feel that God is silent, that there are no answers, that our prayers go unanswered

*In fact, when we open our bibles, we hear how some of the heroes of our faith processed their unanswered prayers and frustrations.*

* *After losing most of his family and fortune, Job said, “I cry out to you, O God, but you do not answer; I stand up, but you merely look at me.” (Job 30:20)*

* *Tired of running and hiding from his enemies, King David said, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, and am not silent.” (Psalm 22:1-2)*

* *After the death of their brother Lazarus, Mary and Martha told Jesus, “If you had been here, my brother would not have died.” (John 11:21, 32)*

In these moments we **Wait** on God, we **Walk** with God and we **Worship** God

**Wait**

**Isaiah 40:31 (ESV)**

**31**but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength;

**Walk - We will talk a little more about this in a minute**

**Worship -**

*In the waiting, while we’re walking, we worship.*

* *In the song Even When it Hurts by Hillsong UNITED they sing, “Even when my strength is lost, I'll praise you. Even when I have no song, I'll praise you. Even when it's hard to find the words, louder then I'll sing your praise.”*

* *When King David was trying to process and understand the Lord’s plans and purposes for his life, he worshipped. The Psalms we have from him are a collective cry out and up to the ears of the creator.*

* *After Job lost his livestock, his servants, his sons, and his daughters he, “...got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground* ***in worship.”*** *(Job 1:20)*

* *In his popular song, Walk by Faith, which he wrote on his honeymoon, Jeremy Camp shared these words, “Well I will walk by faith, even when I cannot see. Because this broken road, prepares your will for me.”*

*These are just a few examples of the power of praise from both ancient and contemporary sources. C.S. Lewis is quoted as saying,* ***“It is in the process of being worshipped that God communicates His presence to men.”*** *What if your worship actually helps bring you closer to Him? Closer to His presence? What if worshipping God brings you closer to the answers and responses from God that you are so desperately seeking.*

1. But we must pray

* Prayer is seeking God

**Jeremiah 29:13**

**13**You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

* Prayer is spending time with God
* Prayer is talking to God
* Prayer is listening

*A man prayed, and at first he thought that prayer was talking. But he became more and more quiet until in the end he realized prayer is listening.* **- Soren Kierkegaard**

*As my prayer became more attentive and inward, I had less and less to say. I finally became completely silent... This is how it is. To pray does not mean to listen to oneself speaking. Prayer involves becoming silent, and being silent, and waiting until God is heard.* **- Soren Kierkegaard**

* Prayer is communicating with God
* Prayer is not manipulating God into doing what you want

*Prayer is not a button to be pushed; it’s a relationship to be pursued.*

*Prayer does ‘work,’ but it works very differently than we’d like. It still ‘works’:*

*When we can’t trace out any direct result from our prayer.*

*When the opposite of what we prayed for happens.*

*In those moments when we feel very distant from God.*

*When we bang down the door of heaven for years and are not sure anything is going on up there at all.*

*God is not a puppy to be trained or a chef in the kitchen who prepares food to suit our every whim. He is sovereign.*

*As Richard Foster says:*

*For those explorers in the frontiers of faith, prayer was no little habit tacked on to the periphery of their lives; it was their lives. It was the most serious work of their most productive years. Prayer—nothing draws us closer to the heart of God.*

“The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays.” **- Soren Kierkegaard**

*Prayer is a silent surrendering of everything to God.* **- Soren Kierkegaard**

1. **I Still Believe** in **Divine Healing**

*Divine healing is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement, and is the privilege of all believers.*

**Isaiah 53:4-5**

**4**Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. **5**But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

**Matthew 8:14-17**

**14**When Jesus came into Peter’s house, he saw Peter’s mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. **15**He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.

**16**When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. **17**This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: “He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases.”

**James 5:14-16**

**14**Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. **15**And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. **16**Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Do You Still Believe?

**Mark 5:21-36**

**21**When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. **22**Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. **23**He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed *(He believed that Jesus could heal his daughter)* and live.” **24**So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. **25**And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. **26**She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. **27**When she heard about Jesus *(She believed Jesus could heal her)*, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, **28**because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” *(she pressed in - or kept believing - despite the things threatening to kill her faith. Often when we begin to believe God for healing, we find things blocking our way. The question is will we pressed forward in belief)* **29**Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

**30**At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

**31**“You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’ ”

**32**But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. **33**Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. **34**He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

**35**While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”

**36**Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.” *(Jesus told Jairus… Keep Believing… Don't give up… Don't let fear still your faith…)*