

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 9 Jan 2022

Sermon Title : Faith Coming or Going

Speaker : Rev Reuben Ng

Text : Romans 10:17

INTRODUCTION

This is the second sermon in the 'Key to Transformation' series. We are focusing on 'Transformation' because that is our church vision, given to us by God years ago and we want to partner with God to be a people with lives which are transformed to be like God, and then go on to transform the lives of others and change the world. This year, we will be embarking on a journey of knowing God because we need to know what God is like so that we can also imitate and be like Him in our transformation. God may speak to us in different ways; He may reveal His will and intent to some of us through dreams, or through other people and even through a donkey as shown by the way God spoke to Balaam in the Bible. But the best and primary way to know God is from His love letter to us - His Word, and therefore the Bible.

As believers we all want to please God and we know that we can please God by obeying Him. And perhaps obedience pleases God because being obedient is a reflection of our trust and belief in God that His instructions and intentions for us are for our wellbeing.

Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6)

If we read His Word and know His will, His intentions and desires for us but we do not do it, we have not pleased Him. We have not obeyed the Word because we do not really believe or trust in it. We may know it in our heads, but it has not reached our hearts for us to trust God and obey.

- Our beliefs always dictate or guide our behaviour – e.g. we sit on a chair because we believe that it will be able to take our weight.
- Without faith in God, there will not be obedience to God. Therefore, we need to be a people of faith to bring pleasure to God because when we truly trust and believe in God, our behaviour will be in perfect obedience to His will.

Whatever is not from faith is sin (Romans 14:23)

Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the forbidden tree because they did not believe what God said was true. Because they could not trust God, their actions were sin.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

- When we think or do anything that is without faith, it is displeasing to God. Our actions will frustrate God or cause Him pain and so it is sin.
- When we do not trust and believe in God, our actions usually stray from His will.

This may happen in our lives when we:

- (i) steal or cheat to get funds - we are doing that because we do not believe that God will provide for us or that God will prosper us in His own way and time. Hence we do things our own way and sin.
- (ii) back-stab or speak ill of someone and pull that person down so that we will look good in front of our bosses and colleagues - it is because we do not believe that God will promote us in His time and way or that His goodness can reach us to bless us in whatever position, station or office that we are in.
- (iii) leave church or our faith because we get angry with God when we go through painful periods or sufferings in our lives and so we stop worshipping Him - it is because we have lost the belief that even in the midst of sufferings, God is good and He is faithful. And that there are other ways He will show His goodness and faithfulness to us.

How do we have faith? (Romans 12:3)

Without faith, it is impossible to please God and whatever is not from faith is sin. Faith and belief in God is so important and thankfully God did not leave us to struggle on our own but ensures that we have faith to please Him,

“... God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.” (Romans 12:3)

- All of us, as children of God, are totally capable of pleasing God because we have faith which God has given us.
- It is what we do with the measure of faith that God has given to us that will cause it to decrease or grow.
- We need to apply that faith because faith is like a muscle which we need to exercise so it will not grow weak. When we apply our faith by putting it into action, it will grow. (Mark 11:23)
 - This verse does not imply we can get anything and everything we want from God using a formula of “keep saying it”. It is in the context that everything Jesus says is in perfect alignment with God, and so everything He says will happen. Similarly, it means that everything God tells us in His Word such as a promise or an assurance is in alignment with God’s will, but we need to express our faith in our action. Hence, “saying” is the action in this verse. So, when we believe, we need to apply/express our faith in our action.

Faith coming or going?

Mark 11:23 also tells us we need to believe and not doubt. When faith goes, doubt comes in.

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Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Faith Coming (Romans 10:17)

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

- Faith comes by us hearing, immersing and dwelling in God’s Word continually.
- Faith comes when we keep reminding ourselves of what God says and what His promises are, by God’s Word to us.

In Exodus 14, Moses had led the people out of Egypt by following God’s word, he found himself in between two places – the Red Sea before him and desert behind him where Pharaoh’s armies were closing in. God told him to camp there, and that when the time came, he was to raise the staff in his hand over the sea and the water would divide and part for the Israelites to pass through safely. Even when the people complained and made noise to Moses, he clung onto God’s word. Faith came when Moses obeyed God’s word, he held on to it and did not take his eyes off God’s presence. God parted the Red Sea and Moses led his people to safety just as God had directed him.

Faith going

- Faith goes when the Word of God becomes something distant and far from us.
 - The moment we stop looking at God’s Word but start looking at our situations and give more weight to or dwell more in what other people say than in what God says, our faith goes away.
- When faith goes, doubt comes.

Matthew 14 illustrates how faith comes and goes for Peter. Peter heard Jesus bidding him to “Come” during the storm in the sea of Galilee - faith came when Peter did as he was told and stepped out of the boat to walk towards Jesus without sinking. Yet when Peter saw the wind, faith went away and doubt came instead because he took his eyes off Jesus, and thus began to sink.

This is why God’s Word is so important. We are called to be people of faith to please God, and therefore we need to spend time in the Word.

CONCLUSION

As we embark on our church-wide “Transformed by the Word” reading plan to know God better, do not be deterred by the need to catch up on the readings if you have missed some days. What is important is to start on the daily reading and to keep on doing it because every time we spend time in the Word, faith comes. Let us not wait until we are in a tough situation before we start going to the Bible to look for God’s promises. Let us regularly hear, immerse in and dwell in God’s Word so that when things happen faith is there and we will not be distracted by the situation, but will continue to keep our eyes on Jesus.

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Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

As a group, spend some time to share your success and struggle in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do at the previous meeting.

A. Review Sermon Content

Purpose: Reflect on one key takeaway.

Take a few minutes to memorize Romans 10:17 and recite it together.

1. After reciting, say together, "This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God."
 - a. As you recite God's word, how has it impacted you?
 - b. (i) What is the key takeaway for you from the sermon "Faith Coming or Going"?
 - (ii) How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

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Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 2a. Why can we only please God with faith? Give some examples of verses in the Bible that show faith is crucial to please God.
- 2b. “... **God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.**” (Romans 12:3)
- (i) What does this tell you about God?
 - (ii) How can you be a good steward of this faith that God has given you?
- 3a. (i) Are you able to express your faith in action in your life after reading God’s Word and knowing His will, intentions and desires for you?
- (ii) What are some situations where you face challenges in expressing your faith in action?
- 3b. What is one thing you can do to overcome the challenges in 3a(ii) above?
- 3c. How can your group members encourage or help you to achieve 3b. above, for the following week(s) till your next meeting?

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Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

4. Share your personal testimony on how clinging unto what God had spoken to you at a time when you strayed from Him drew you back to Him.

OR

Give thanks to God for His goodness to you when you show faith in Him.

5. With a prayer partner, bring all that have been shared in 3b and 3c to God, asking for the Holy Spirit to grant you boldness to exercise your faith in your action so you may grow the measure of faith God has given you and please Him.

As a group, discuss what the group can do together to increase your faith and knowledge of God, praying for God's strength and presence to lead and guide you.

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