

The True Faith (Go To Meeting)

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Luke 18:8: “...Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, shall He find the *true* faith on the earth?”

That’s what we’re going to talk about today and study together.

- What is this true faith?
- What is true faith on the earth?
- Is it just any faith?
- What is this true faith on the earth?

Not only what is it, but we’re going to study what it does and what it looks like, and how is it different from other faiths—the fake or counterfeit faith.

- What is the true faith on the earth?
- What does it have to do with our relationship with God?

We’re going to study this story of Lazarus and what happened. I want us to dive deep into this, and to really consider certain things. To put ourselves in that place as if we’re right there and we’re seeing these things happen and understand what is said, and a little bit more of the emotions and the things that are going on in the minds of everybody who is in this story.

John 11:1: “Now, there was a certain *man* who was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, *which was* the town of Mary and her sister Martha. And it was Mary who *later* anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick” (vs 1-2).

This is giving the context of where it is, which is Bethany, and Jesus knew them: Mary, Martha and Lazarus and loved them all. This is just setting the scene. It’s something incredible, because this really does give us a little more insight of what is the true faith according to God, from God’s perspective. What is Jesus Christ thinking when He says the things that He says, and doing the things that He does.

Verse 3: “Therefore, the sisters sent to Him, saying, ‘Lord, take notice: the one whom You love is sick.’”

They knew that Jesus loved Lazarus, Martha and Mary. They sent somebody to Jesus telling Him this. It was not them themselves.

Verse 4: “But after hearing *this*, Jesus said, ‘This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.’

Now, Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus” (vs 4-5).

We already knew this, because it said in v 3: “...Lord, take notice: the one whom You love is sick.”

There’s a lot of speculation and analysis as to was Lazarus still sick when Jesus was told, because He was not there in Bethany. We don’t know; we don’t know if Lazarus has already died or if he was still sick. What we know is:

- Lazarus is sick
- Jesus loved Lazarus, His friend, and Martha and Mary

But it’s so interesting how Jesus responded. He didn’t say, ‘Yes, I’m going to go immediately so that Lazarus doesn’t die, because I love him.’ He didn’t say that. He said,

“...This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it” (v 4).

It’s so interesting the way that God sees things, and the way the Jesus Christ is saying this, but Lazarus dies. It gives us just a little more perspective of how Jesus sees things and God the Father sees things, from Their perspective of what They’re doing in our lives. It’s not unto death, but Lazarus died and why this sickness came is “...**for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.**”

When we stop and think about it, if we were the brothers or sisters of Lazarus how we would have felt and thought. We’re going to see later the response that Mary and Martha give Jesus. It says, “...**This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God...**” which is a greater thing!

It doesn’t say that it’s to punish Lazarus, the family or make them suffer or even to work something out in them just by Lazarus dying, ***but it’s for the glory of God!*** That’s how God sees things:

I have purpose and I’m going to accomplish it and do what I’m going to do, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.

It was necessary that Jesus Christ would be glorified on the earth, by people who see this great miracle. It was necessary for Him to raise one from the dead so that we can have hope, so that we can know that He could raise people from the dead and He can do that now, and that He promised to do that.

This sickness was not unto death!

Verse 6: “But when He heard that he was sick, **He [Jesus] deliberately remained in the same place two days.**”

Totally different than what us human beings would want, desire and what we think should be done. From our perspective it’s, ‘Let’s go, let’s go! As quickly as we can heal, as quickly as we can!’

God is not thinking that way! “...He [Jesus] **deliberately** remained in the same place two days.”

It’s interesting that John writes this, it’s on purpose that He stayed there. Lazarus had to die, and had to be dead for a period of time *in order that people may believe that He [Jesus] was the Son of God!*

It’s not that Lazarus’ physical life was not important, or the suffering of the family. That’s very important, but God understood that, and He said, “...This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God....” ***Don’t worry about it!***

Verse 7: “And after this, He said to the disciples, ‘Let us go into Judea again.’” *That was after!*

We’re going to see this back and forth, the human thought and the way that God thinks.

Verse 8: “The disciples said to Him, ‘Master, the Jews were just seeking to stone You, and You are going there again?’”

- Why would You do this?
- Why wouldn’t You protect yourself?

Verse 9: “Jesus answered, ‘Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble because he sees the light of the world.’”

John 8:12: “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, **I am the Light of the world...**”

John 9:5: “...**I am the Light of the world.**”

Jesus knew that He was God in the flesh, the Father was with Him and He was the Light and knew what to do. He was being guided by the Father all the time.

John 11:9: “Jesus answered, ‘Are there not twelve hours in the day?....’”

If we know who we are and we’re walking in the Light and staying close to God, we know where we’re going. We don’t stumble! Why? *Because we’re striving to do our Father’s will, just as Christ did!* He did it perfectly because He was the Son of God, because He had the Spirit without

measure. But we have the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit that Jesus had.

Verse 10: “But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles because the light is not in him.’

If a person is not in the Light, they don’t know over what they stumble. They stumble because they are walking in the darkness and not walking in the Light, coming to God the Father and Christ so they might see the Light.

He was talking about Himself and them, as well when He says that the one walking in the Light does not have to worry about that. He says that there are 12 hours in the day, but He wasn’t meaning just the physical light of the sun, He was talking about the Light of the world, which is Him!

Verse 10: “But **if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles because the light is not in him.**”

He’s not just talking about the light of the day, but uses the physical aspect to talk about the spiritual aspect of us walking in the Light of God the Father and Jesus Christ,.

Verse 11: “These things He said... [the way that God sees things] ...and after that He said to them, ‘Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going so that I may awaken him.’”

To Him it’s nothing! It was nothing then and it’s nothing now. To God the Father and Jesus Christ, if He made Adam from the dust of the earth and breathed in him the spirit of life in his nostrils, He can do it again as many times as He wants; He can give us life again. “...**but I am going so that I may awaken him.**” This just tells us how He thinks and what He’s thinking about.

Jesus was doing that not to seek his own glory, but because the Father wanted to glorify Him and give testimony that that was His Son, because Jesus said, ‘I do nothing of My own, and I don’t seek My own glory, I seek the glory of God.

This is such a great example for us to always keep in mind, that Jesus Christ is our example. That’s what we are to be doing, as well, to give God the glory for everything, everything that He gives us to do, to have or to bless others with.

His perspective is that Lazarus is asleep, ‘I’m going to go wake him up,’ no big deal to Him. It’s a great work; this has never ever been done before. Nobody had been raised from the dead except Lazarus.

Verse 12: “Then His disciples said, ‘Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will get well.’”

The perspective of man! If he’s fallen asleep

he's going to get better, why are you going to wake him up. Two completely ways of thinking, two completely different levels: *The carnal mind and God's mind! Christ's mind!* So different!

What does this have to do with true faith? *We're going to see that this is what really gives us more of an understanding of what is really the true faith that Christ wants us all to have!*

Verse 13: "Now, Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of the rest of sleep."

John understood when he wrote it down. The carnal way in the physical terms.

Verse 14: "For this reason, Jesus then said to them plainly, 'Lazarus has died. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, **in order that you may believe**.... [faithize; faith and believe is the same root in the Greek, the same thing] ...But let us go to him'" (vs 14-15)—*so that you may believe!*

What they were about to witness was like nothing that has ever, ever happened, nothing even close to that.

Verse 16: "Then Thomas, called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, 'Let us go also, so that we may die with him.'"

Jesus tells them that they are dead and then he's resting and going to recover. It's like such human thinking, the worst thing that can happen. Let's all go die with him right now. That's not what God was thinking.

When we're close to God, focused on God and centered on Him, He keeps us steady and strong. He keeps us where He wants us to be to do the work that He wants us to do, and the work that He wants to do in us, too, because we're also the object.

It's so amazing because we see both extremes. We want so bad that he won't die, but we will all with him.

Verse 17: "And so, when Jesus came, He found *that* he had already been lying in the tomb for **four days**."

When we think about it, and we read that Jesus deliberately stayed another two days. Maybe He wouldn't have gotten there because it was a long journey; we don't know. But what we do know is that he had been already dead for four days.

Verse 18: Now, Bethany was near Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs away."

Remember that we know that He was not in Jerusalem because He said, "...Let us go into Judea again." (v 7).

Verse 19: "And many of the Jews had come to *join* those around Martha and Mary, so that they might console them concerning their brother."

Many Jews were there, and the stage is set for the greatest miracle from Jesus.

Verse 20: "And when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she *went and* met Him. But Mary was sitting in the house."

Martha was always the busy one, a woman of action. Mary was there. I don't know if she heard; doesn't sound like she did or she probably would have run as well.

Verse 21: "And Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.'" *The carnal mind!*

You could have done something, because I've seen you heal the sick! I wished that you would have been here, but You weren't!

It kind of comes back to this concept that the human mind, how we are wired to reason. Is this true faith? *or* Is this not true faith? Maybe it's true faith in very small amounts, we don't know. This gives us a little perspective of how different our views are than God's and God's perspective.

Verse 22: "But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

It's kind of opening up, like 'I know this in my head and I'm probably asking for too much...' It kind of gives that sense. I'm not saying that's what she was thinking. Maybe she was full of faith and said, 'Whatever You ask of God, God will give you! Please ask Him, please!'

But before she even said anymore, v 23: "Jesus said to her, 'Your brother shall rise again.'" *This is what tells us that there was a sealing to that faith!*

Verse 24: "Martha said to Him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.'" *That tells us that they knew about the first resurrection!*

Verse 25: "Jesus said to her, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me, though he die, shall live *again*.'"

It's so amazing to see that for Jesus to tell her that 'I AM the Resurrection and the Life.'

- the life was Himself
- He existed forever
- He emptied Himself and put away His Divinity
- He was the Resurrection and the Life

Because He gave life to every living being! It was Him right there! It's not just about what He could do, it's about Him, Who He was, and do you really believe. 'the one who believes in Me, though he die shall live again.' Obviously, that's prophetic.

Verse 26: "And everyone who lives and believes in Me shall not die forever. Do you believe this?"

That's amazing because He knew what He was going to do. He was kind of testing her: Do you believe this that he shall live again?" It's almost like this is just a token of it. He knew that He was going to resurrected him to physical life, but that he would die again. The key is that *he will not die forever!* That's why bigger that what He was just about to do, though it had been the greatest miracle that had happened up to that point.

Verse 27: "She said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, Who was to come into the world.'"

That is very profound, because not only did she proclaim Who He was—God in the flesh—but also where He came from and what He was doing. This is profound. It's so interesting! Who knows what was going on in her mind, because:

Verse 28: "And after saying these things, she went away and secretly called her sister Mary, saying, 'The Teacher has come and is calling for you.'"

One wonders what was going on in her mind, but for us to really take this and see this whole story develop and understand a little bit more what was going on, because John gives us that. That really starts getting us to what is the true faith?

Verse 29: "When she heard *this*, she **rose up quickly** and came to Him." *That's why speculate that she didn't hear the first time!* It's not that she didn't want to go see Him.

Verse 30: "Now, Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha had met Him. Therefore, when the Jews who were with Mary in the house, consoling her, saw that she had quickly risen up and gone out, they followed her, saying, 'She is going to the tomb to weep there'" (vs 30-31).

Again, men's thoughts! We've sent that how many times already. Time and time again:

- this is for the glory of God
- but it's not unto death
- Is it really not unto death because he's dead?
- if You had not been here

Then all the other thoughts! And it happens

Verse 32: "Then Mary, when she came where Jesus was *and* saw Him, fell at His feet, saying to Him, 'Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.'"

Same exact words! Showing how we think, how we're wired to think in our carnal mind and limited understanding. That's all we can see, all we can think, to a point that we can hope, unless we truly believed, like Jesus challenged Martha:

- Do you really believe that? That only that I can do this, but that I AM Life and the Resurrection?
- Do you really believe that?

We can really see what happened with Jesus Christ as a human being.

Verse 33: "As a result, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in spirit and was Himself inwardly moved."

He was moved probably because He saw and felt the human suffering in the flesh to that level of a loved one dying, and everyone around grieving, and Him feeling that.

Also many of them knew Who He was, but the majority didn't have a clue. So, He was "...**inwardly moved.**"

Verse 34: "And He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to Him, 'Lord, come and see.'"

*Probably when He got there; v 35: "**Jesus wept.**" The shortest verse in the Bible, but it really means so much, because He felt what we feel!* Up to this point He probably never understood as a human being what a human being physically feels when a loved one dies.

Verse 36: "Then the Jews said, 'See how much He loved him!'.... [again, the carnal mind] ...But some of them said, 'Could not this Man, Who had the power to open the eyes of the blind.... [they knew Who He was and what He had done] ...also have caused this one not to die?'" (vs 36-37).

It's way harder to open the eyes of the blind than to stop a sickness. Could not He have done that? Why didn't He do that? They didn't know that Jesus deliberately stayed two more days. He deliberately waited *and then came to do this wonderful thing for the glory of God, so that the Son of man may be glorified, because that's what the Father had determined!* Not for Himself, not for His own glory, not taking the glory of man; He never did that.

Verse 38: "Because of this, Jesus again

groaned within Himself *as* He came to the tomb. Now, it was a cave and a stone was laid over the opening.”

He groaned within Himself, because from His perspective—put yourself in His shoes for a minute—what He was thinking to hear somebody say, ‘Couldn’t He have done something? See how much He loved him, He cried. So, where’s the love? Couldn’t He have done this?’

That’s what a lot of people in the world think right now:

- Where is God?
- Why does He allow all these horrible things that are going on?
- Is that true faith?
- Is true faith only when God does whatever
 - ✓ we want Him to do
 - ✓ in the way we want Him to do it?
 - ✓ in whatever time we want Him to do it?
- Is that true faith?

It made Jesus groan within Himself! They had no clue Who was standing right in front of them and what He was about to do.

Verse 39: “Jesus said, ‘Take away the stone.’... [I imagine that it was with authority with a strong voice] ... Martha the sister of him who had died, said to Him, ‘Lord, he already stinks, for it has been four days’”—*confirming that he had been there!*

According to Jewish tradition, a person has to be dead for three days to be officially declared dead, that it was not a mistake, that he was not in a coma or something like that. It had to be three days. That’s why He says, “...it has been four days.” There would be no doubt that Lazarus was dead and he already stinks.

Verse 40: “Jesus said to her...” *Like bringing her up again:*

You’re in carnal thinking. I had you open the tomb because I know what I’m doing, and I know what I can do and Who I Am!

“...‘Did I not say to you that if you will believe, you shall see the glory of God?’” (v 40).

Can you imagine what she felt when He said to open the tomb. She with her carnal thinking says that and then He responds:

“...‘**Did I not say to you that if you will believe, you shall see the glory of God?**’”

You didn’t believe me, yet, what you’re about to see is literally going to blow your mind.

Verse 41: “Then they removed the stone *from the tomb* where the dead man had been laid. And Jesus lifted *His* eyes upward and said, ‘**Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You hear Me always; but because of the people who stand around I say this, so that they may believe that You did send Me**’” (vs 41-42).

That’s is so deep! He was always talking with God the Father. In His mind He was communicating with the Father constantly. The Father would tell Jesus was to do, put the words in His mouth.

He knew Who He was, He knew what He could do! God probably already had showed Him what He was going to do, and how He was going to do it. He said, ‘I say this that they may believe that You did send Me.’ What He wanted them to do was to not only believe in Him, but believe in the One Who sent Him, which was both. You have to believe in one in order to believe in the other.

Verse 43: “And after He had spoken these things, He cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth.’” *I can only imagine the power that He said that with!* To see what happened:

Verse 44: “And he who had been dead came forth, his feet and hands bound with grave clothes, and his face bound up with a napkin. Jesus said to them, ‘Loose him and let *him* go.’”

He didn’t approach him in the human way, ‘Lazarus, I’m so glad My Father heard Me.’ **NO!** He knew Who He was. He knew the authority! He knew! He loved Lazarus, but He had also groaned within Himself, *because they didn’t believe Who He was!*

Verse 45: “Then many of the Jews who had come to *console* Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in Him.” *They had never seen anybody raised from the dead!*

Verse 46: “But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.” *Look what He’s doing, He’s resurrecting people from the grave.*

Verse 47: “Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, ‘What shall we do? For this Man does many miracles. **If we allow Him to continue in this manner, all will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away from us both this place and the nation**’” (vs 47-48).

The human thinking and remaining there, stuck in there, instead of saying:

Here’s a man Who just rose somebody from the

dead! We know that the Christ was to come now, could He be the Christ? *Because if He's not of God He couldn't do that!*

Amazing! They didn't want to believe. They're focus was their rulership, their power and their place in the nation. That's all they cared about; that they will come take this. Why? *Because Jesus wasn't joining them!* He didn't do that for them!

What is true faith?

Luke 18:1: "And He also spoke a parable to them **to show that it is necessary to pray always, and not to give up,** saying, "There was in a certain city a certain judge who neither feared God nor respected man.... [as secular as you can have] ...And there was a widow in that city; and she kept coming to him, saying, "Avenge me of my adversary." Now, for a time he would not; but afterwards he said within himself, "Although I do not fear God and do not respect man, yet, because this widow is causing me trouble, I will avenge her, lest she wear me out by *her* continual coming"" (vs 1-5).

Verse 6: "Then the Lord said, 'Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And shall not God execute vengeance for His elect, who cry out to Him day and night, and patiently watch over them?'" (vs 6-7).

*That's exactly what God is doing; He's patiently watching over us **from His perspective!***
Not:

- let's preserve his life for as long as we can
- let's help so that they have as little trouble as possible
- let's make sure that they're comfortable
- let's make sure that they have a good life

That's not what God is thinking! That's our thinking! Our human nature kind of guides us through that, because suffering and pain is hard. We don't like it; it's difficult. But it does something good, because God is not looking from that perspective.

Even in death he's just *asleep!* 'I will wake him up whenever it's time; whenever it's part of the plan!' that is the true faith, believing:

Romans 8:28: "And we know that **all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**"

- believing that God has a plan
- believing that no matter what happens He loves us
- believing that He wants us in His Kingdom
- believing that we are His

- believing that He dwells in us

We really believe in our heart because we see it, even in retrospect. We read the story in John 11 and know that He did it! He can do it, and we believe that about ourselves. Not necessarily because He's going to raise us from the dead—even though that's a very important part of the first resurrection—in this physical life, in a physical sense.

Believing that if a person is raised from the dead just to physical life again, that Jesus Christ is the Life and the Resurrection. He loves us and called us and shows us all of these things.

Do we really believe that's He's in charge, that we are the created beings—being created by Him—and that all things work together for good, because He's allowing them or carrying them out! Do we believe that?

Luke 18:8—*Jesus says:* "I tell you that He will execute vengeance for them speedily. **Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, shall He find the true faith on the earth?"**

Do we believe, not only ***in*** God, do we ***believe God?*** And to what level do we believe God? We read that Martha said:

I know that whatever You ask God, He will do it for You. We know that you have the ability to do it if You ask the Father, because He does that.

What else did she say, because Martha said, 'Lord, he stinks!'

- Do we understand at that level?
- Do we get it in that sense?
- Do we get it to that level?

These are just questions to make us think, to make us ponder about:

- our relationship with God
- our walk with God
- our walk in the Light

In John 15 it says that He is the true Vine, and we're the branches, and we're to dwell in Him and Him in us.

- Do we really believe that?
- Do we live that way knowing that we are a branch?
- Do we believe that we are to be a conduit of His Spirit, so that we may bear fruit for Him? And for the Husbandman, the Father?
- Do we really believe that?

David believed this; he understood:

Psalm 31:15: “My times are **in Your hand...**” *I’m going to be here as long as you want me here!*

Once You don’t want me here, that’s fine, too, because “**My times are in Your hand...**”

“...deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me” (v 15).

I plead like this widow, I plead to You and I know you will execute that; You will execute vengeance. You will do what you said you would do!

Verse 19: “Oh, how great is Your goodness...”

David understood the goodness of God; that’s not defined by whether we have pleasant moments in our lives, or difficulties and challenges, going through a lot of affliction and pain. That really doesn’t define the goodness of God. The goodness of God is so much greater, because those are tools in His hands to:

- shape us
- test us
- mold us
- refine us

like silver and gold

Verse 19: “Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You, which You have prepared... [that’s His work] ...for those who take refuge in You...” *Jesus said:*

I AM the Resurrection and the Life. I AM! It’s not that I can do it, it’s Who I AM! I AM Life, and outside of Me there is no Life. Let the dead bury their dead. They’re all dead unless they come to Me.

That’s true! But do we take refuge in Him! David says”

“...for those who take refuge in You before the sons of men! **You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the plottings of man...**” (vs 19-20).

You know, right now we’re all going through very difficult and challenging times in many areas of our lives. It seems like it’s everything!

- health
- jobs
- oppression
- all kinds of things that we’re up against

It’s even enmity with people—family, friends, acquaintances—everything! It’s in personal

relationships, job, every area of our lives. It seems like we’re going through a very, very tough time.

Many of us have gone through sickness, or are going through sickness right now, or will go through sickness. That’s the challenge, but God is refining us. **Do we really come to Him and believe Him?**

I think we are, because those challenges and those trials, that exactly what it’s doing. We just have to hold onto God stronger than ever; to God the Father and Jesus Christ. To do this, to go in the secret place. David says:

Verse 20: “**You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the plottings of man...**”

That’s what it is at all levels of government and medicine, all kinds of deception.

“...**the plottings of man**; You shall hide them in a shelter away from the strife of tongues” (v 20). *But we have to have the true faith!*

We sign up at baptism; in that watery grave we made a covenant with our Creator that we will never, never stray away from Him, never walk away from Him, what we will not leave Him. ***He has already promised that He will never leave us or forsake us!***

Verse 21: “Blessed is the LORD, for He has shown His wondrous loving kindness in a besieged city... [that’s what we’re living in now; like a besieged city] ...For I said in my haste, ‘I am cut off from before Your eyes’...” (vs 21-22).

That’s what we think! ‘O Lord, You should have been here!’

“...nevertheless, You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried to You” (v 22).

He heard also not only the voice of Martha and Mary but God had already determined that Lazarus was going to die and be resurrected. God wouldn’t want it any other way, and neither should we with our lives.

- if we’re staying close to God
- if we’re loving Him
- if we’re dwelling in His Word
- if He’s dwelling in us

in prayer and study, and just having that relationship with Him! That’s when we are in that shelter!

It’s not the shelter that nothing is ever going to happen to us. It that *no matter what happens to us* it’s going to be for good, for the better, for what God wants working out in us. ***That’s the true faith!*** It’s

not that He will save us. He will ultimately save us in the first resurrection if we stay faithful to the end. But it's not only that, it's that everything else that is part of the plan and the process; nothing takes God by surprise. There's not trial that we come across that He hasn't signed off on.

Like with Job; Satan says, 'Let me take away all his children and possession.' God says, 'Check, that's fine, go ahead, but don't touch his life.'

That tells us that that's exactly what's happening. It gives us confidence and faith that God is good and is always good. That's why we're to do this:

Verse 23: "O love the LORD, all you His saints! The LORD preserves the faithful..."—*the true faithful!*

Not the ones who do whatever they want, like fair-weather fans. That if God doesn't do whatever we came here for, we're out the door. We don't know if we really made that covenant at baptism *if we're wishy-washy!*

"...The LORD preserves the faithful and fully repays the proud doer. Be strong, and let your heart take courage, **all you who hope in the LORD**" (vs 23-24).

1-Corinthians 6:19: "WHAT! Don't you know that **your body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit**, which you have *within you* from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (vs 19-20).

God dwells in us! He made us to dwell in Him! That's what He made us to do. To ever dwell in us and us in Him, to be one with Him and the Father. That's the whole purpose of the prayer in John 17, that's why it's recorded there, because that's what God wants.

Psa. 32 tells us more about the true faith and about the mind of someone who had the true faith like David, a man after God's own heart. A man after the Lord God Who became Jesus Christ. This is what he was thinking and meditating on.

Psalms 32:1: "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

That is the greatest rest and comfort that we can have! That no matter what, if we stay strong in the faith, and we believe Him, there is no condemnation for us!

Verse 2: "Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."

We're not here just for our reasons, for whatever we want God to do, for help because we don't know where else to turn. Because the center in that case is still in us and not in God, it's not in His purpose. This happens to all of us because we all have human nature.

Verse 3: "When I kept silent, my bones wore away through my groaning all the day long, for by day and by night Your hand was heavy upon me..." (vs 3-4).

Sometimes we feel like that. Right now many of us feel like that, that the hand of God is heavy.

"...my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah." *Very, very difficult!*

But this is all for a change. Our human mind tells us that it's because we did something wrong. You have sinned. You know what, maybe it is! But maybe it's not! Maybe it's a way for God to bring up certain things that He needs to cleanse. He still needs to cleanse. Maybe it's not a direct relationship to whatever we're thinking, or something we did recently. It could be, ***but it is definitely working something good in us!***

Verse 5: "I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, 'I will confess my transgression to the LORD,' and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah."

How awful David was, and how bad he was. The iniquity within our heart, He forgives and cleanses us from that.

Verse 6: For this *reason* let every Godly one pray to You in a time when You may be found..."

We can find Him now; in our afflictions He will always hear. He will never ever despise a broken and contrite heart.

"...surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come near him" (v 6).

Even if they do, like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; even if we're thrown in to the fire, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter, because we know we're going to be delivered either in this life or the next one. We're going to be delivered! That's why David believed this:

Verse 7: "**You [God] are my hiding place...**" *David knew that; New Testament doctrine!* Jesus said, 'I AM the Resurrection and the Life!

"...You shall preserve me from trouble... (v 7).

Our biggest trouble is our own mind and limitations, because God can do whatever. David

never lost a battle!

“...You shall encircle me with songs of deliverance. Selah... [this is also for us] ...*You said*, ‘I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you, My eye shall be upon you. Be not like the horse, or like the mule, which have no understanding—which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you.’” (vs 7-9). **But we have to believe Him!**

Verse 10: The wicked has many sorrows, but His steadfast love surrounds him who trusts in the LORD.”

The closer we are to God, the more we will trust and believe, and the more of the true faith that we will have. Sometimes it fluctuates. **Sometimes:**

- we go down
- we go up
- our faith is strong
- our faith is weak

He delivers us so that we remember that! Sometimes He lets us go through difficult things and pass through it so that we remember that no matter what ***He’s still going to be there, and He has not left us!***

Verse 11: “Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.”

We know! We know we have a wonderful promise! We know Whose we are, and it’s not just the promises, ***it’s Himself dwelling in us! Jesus Christ and God the Father are dwelling in us!***

Psa. 34—also a Psalm of David. This is what it’s going to lead to when we understand what the true faith is. It’s really knowing and believing Rom. 8:28; really believing it with every fiber of our being, in the middle of the affliction as hard as it may seem to fight against that carnal mentality and carnal nature.

- You should have been here
- You could have been here
- Why is He mad at me?

No, no! Let’s not have those thoughts in the middle of affliction. Let’s have the thought of repentance and coming to God and pleading like the widow. That’s the attitude.... There’s an attitude in there of just asking in love, patience and humility.

When we believe God, truly like David did, this the result:

Psalm 34:1: “I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall always be in my mouth. My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; the humble

shall hear and be glad. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the LORD, and **He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears**” (vs 1-4).

That’s the worst thing we can have, *fear!* Most of the time the problems are not as big as our fears. But even if it is, even it’s like Job—‘what I fear, that’s what came upon me’—God came and answered Job directly and lifted him up and showed him more things about himself. He had a deeper relationship with God and was a different person, a truly converted person. He was a righteous person before, but what did he become?

Verse 5: “They looked to Him and were radiant; and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried, and the LORD heard...” (vs 5-6).

Just like that unrighteous judge, he still heard, he still did it. ***Much more God the Father and Jesus Christ!***

“...and saved him out of all his troubles.... [we can claim this promise] ...**The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him and delivers them**” (vs 6-7).

Even if they come knocking at the door. Those angels are right outside your door, ***because we fear God, and He will deliver us!*** We must to have no reservations. Nothing is out of bounds for God, whatever He wants to do with us.

Verse 8: “O taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him. O fear the LORD, all you saints, for **there is nothing lacking to those who fear Him**” (vs 8-9)—***nothing!***

Even when a loved one dies, we have hope; we know that they will be resurrected again and come to life. *We know that!*

Verse 15: “The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. **The face of the LORD is against those who do evil...**” (vs 15-16).

Let’s remember that now that we’re seeing a lot of evil in a lot of places.

“...to cut off the memory of them from the earth. **The righteous cry, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles**” (vs 16-17). ***He will!***

We have that as guarantee even if it’s not in this life; even if it’s in the first resurrection, ***He will deliver us out of all our troubles!*** The promise is there! The promise is there in Revelation. He will wipe away all our tears! There will be no more death, nor sorrow and crying.

This is true! Always true! No matter what

you're going through!

Verse 18: "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are of a contrite spirit."

I submit to you that there's never really a more brokenhearted and more contrite person than one who is in affliction! ***IF you're going through affliction right now, the Lord is near you because you are brokenhearted with a contrite spirit!*** That's what affliction does! That's why it's good! That's how we learn! ***It's not a pleasant, but it's good!***

That's the true faith! It's believing that God is good and He has a purpose and is in control. No matter what happens, not matter what is required of us, we're going to do what He says to do! What His Word tells us to do!

Matt. 17 is when the disciples couldn't cast out the demon:

Matthew 17:19: "Then the disciples came to Jesus privately *and* said, 'Why were we not able to cast it out?' And Jesus said to them, '**Because of your** unbelief... [they didn't have the Holy Spirit, yet] ...For truly I say to you, if you have faith as a *tiny* mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, 'Remove from here,' and it shall remove; and **nothing shall be impossible to you**' (vs 19-20).

Why? Because true faith does not serve its own things. The true faith is—those who are really servants of God, and those who are seeking Him—we're not seeking our own. When we pray, the very first thing we say, right after you say, 'Your Kingdom come' is 'Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'

The why that this is fulfilled is we can say to a mountain, "...'Remove from here'...and it shall remove..." ***IF*** God tells us to do that. ***IF*** God shows us to do that. *Because it's His will!* We are just vessels, just branches attached to the Vine and the Husbandman Who are directing us what we are to do.

So, if it comes a time in the next few months, years or decades that God needs a mountain moved and He chose one of us to say, 'Move that mountain.' ***We will, because we believe and that's the true faith!*** Because there will be a purpose in moving that mountain.

The faith is not to serve our own desires, our own will and our own things. The true faith is as a mustard seed, and it can move mountains. Why? *Because:*

- you're connected to God
- you know what His will is
- you're asking Him to show you what His

will is

- you're obeying Him
- you're striving to please Him
- you're striving to do those things

But let's not live in ignorance! Let's not live in the state of uncertainty! Many things are not certain, but the one thing that we know is that we're following God!

If we have any uncertainty as to what we should be doing in a certain thing, let's just ask God and wait for Him to answer. Just ask Him:

Father, what do you want me to do? Lord Jesus Christ, show me where to go; You are the Light, show me where to go, show me what to do. I'll wait on You! This is not about my will, but about Your will!

That's the example that Jesus Christ set for all of us! The true faith!

That's why it says, "...and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you" (v 20).

Why? *Because we're acting on behalf of our Master, our Lord and Master Jesus Christ! The Head of the Church! That's why **nothing is impossible!***

There are many examples of people who have displayed this. One of them is in 2-Sam. 10.

There was a battle and there were the children of Ammon. They hired people from Syria and fight against David

2-Samuel 10:7: "And when David heard of *it*, he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. And the children of Ammon came out and put the battle in order at the entering in of the gate. And the Syrians of Zobah, and of Rehob, and Ish-Tob, and Maacah, *were* by themselves in the field. And Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind. And he selected from all the choice ones of Israel and put *them* in *battle* order against the Syrians" (vs 7-9). *So, David took some, the best ones!*

Verse 10: "And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, so that he might set in *battle* order against the children of Ammon. And he said, 'If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me. But if the children of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come and help you'" (vs 10-11).

This is what I want to emphasize, ***because this is an example of true faith!***

Verse 12: "***Be of good courage, and let us be strong men for our people and for the cities of***

our God. And may the LORD do that which seems good to Him."

To have that kind of attitude and faith, *that's the true faith!* "**...may the LORD do that which seems good to Him.**"

We're going to be of good courage and do what is right. We're going to fight and do everything that we have to serve Him! "**...may the LORD do that which seems good to Him.**"

Esther 4:10: "Again Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a message for Mordecai: 'The king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that whoever, whether man or woman, shall come to the king into the inner court, who is not called, *there is* one law of his: execution—except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter so that he may live. But I have not been called to come in to the king these *past thirty days*'" (vs 10-11).

Verse 12: "And they told Mordecai Esther's words. And Mordecai commanded them to answer Esther, 'Do not think within yourself that you shall escape in the king's house more than all the Jews'" (vs 12-13).

Don't think because you're over there that you're going to be fine. ***Don't trust in your own devices!***

Right now we're all going through a lot of testing in different things. But let's not rely on that. Let's rely on God!

Verse 14: "For even if you are completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance shall arise to the Jews from another place..."

Why? *Because he understood that there's a greater plan from God!* These people will not be completely obliterated.

"...but you and your father's house shall be destroyed. And who knows whether you have come to *such* a royal position for a time *such* as this?" (v 14).

Verse 15: "And Esther told them to return to Mordecai *this answer*: 'Go, gather together all the Jews who are present in Shushan, **and fast for me**, and do not eat nor drink three days, night or day.... [we're going to humble ourselves in the presence of God] ...My maidservants and I will also fast in the same way. And so **I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law. And if I perish, I perish.**'" (vs 15-16).

- Do we have the true faith, brethren?
- Is God strengthening us right now in the true faith for these trials?

- Are we able to say, '**If I perish, I perish?**'?
- Are we able to say, '**Let us be courageous and fight for the Lord our God, but the Lord do His will in us?**'?
- Are we able to say, '**Let the Lord do whatever seems good to Him?**'?

I think we all have a lot to think about with these words, but hopefully we're all being encouraged as well. That *nothing, nothing, nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ!* That we truly believe deep in our heart—***truly believe***—that:

- Christ ***is*** the Life
- He is the Resurrection
- ***all things work together for good*** to those of us who love Him and have been called according to His purpose

Scriptural References:

- 1) Luke 18:8
- 2) John 11:1-5, 3-9
- 3) John 18:12
- 4) John 9:5
- 5) John 11:9-48
- 6) Luke 18:1-7
- 7) Romans 8:28
- 8) Luke 18:8
- 9) Psalm 31:15, 19-24
- 10) 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- 11) Psalm 32:1-11
- 12) Psalm 34:1-9, 15-18
- 13) Matthew 17:19-20
- 14) 2 Samuel 10:7-12
- 15) Esther 4:10-16

Scriptures referenced, not quoted: John 15; 17

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