

Faith Towards God

by Anton Bosch

Faith towards God is a personal and complete trust in God, not just believing in the existence of God or relying on our own efforts to save ourselves.

Duration: 37:23

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Mark 1:15, Luke 24:47, John 3:16, Romans 10:9, Hebrews 6:1

Topics: "Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the life and ministry of John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church. Wesley had a strict regimen of prayer, Bible reading, and ministering to others. However, despite his dedication, his preaching had no impact on people's lives until he encountered Jesus and put his trust in God. This transformation led to Wesley becoming one of the greatest missionaries and evangelists of all time. The sermon also uses the analogy of crossing a gap with a rope that is too short to illustrate the futility of relying on religious practices alone for salvation.

Transcript

Hebrews chapter 6 verse 1 Therefore leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits. Now, last week we spoke about repentance from dead works, and we said that there were two kinds of dead works that we need to repent from.

The one is works that lead to death, in other words, sin. And the other is trying to save ourselves, trying to enhance and improve our relationship with God through the things that we do. Salvation by works.

And we know that the scripture teaches that we are not saved by works lest anyone should boast, but we are saved by faith. And so the thing that follows on repentance is faith. Faith towards God.

Now, the problem with faith is that it is a religious word. We have this huge religious concept as to the meaning of faith. It is very seldom used outside of religious context.

And yet the Greek word which is used in the New Testament was originally not a religious word. It was just an ordinary common everyday work. The Greek word is pistos, and it means to believe, to be confident, to have certainty, to trust.

Now, if we replace that word faith with trust, then a lot of these scriptures make a lot more sense. And, in fact, it is not incorrect. Theologically, it would be 100% correct to use the word trust.

Now, when we speak about trust, it makes a lot more sense because it is a word that we all understand. We know how to trust certain things. We trust our motor cars.

We trust the electrical system that Eskim is going to, when you flip the switch at the door, that the light is going to come on. You trust the municipality that when you open the tap, the water is going to come on. Now, it is amazing that we have such trust in these things, and yet these are so untrustworthy in many ways.

And yet when it comes to the things of God, we do not always have trust. We do not always have faith. And so, the word simply means to put our trust, and in the context of the New Testament, to put our trust completely in.

And you will see that it is trust or faith towards God. So, now immediately you see the link between the two, between repentance from dead works. Dead works says, I am trying to save myself.

I have got to turn away from that. Stop trying to save myself. But now, what do I do? I need to turn to something.

So, because when it speaks about repentance from dead works, it means a turnaround. Now, if I am turning away from saving myself, what do I turn towards? I need to turn towards trusting God. So, instead of trusting myself, I need to trust God.

And that is why these two are so closely linked here. Not only here are they closely linked, but they are closely linked throughout the Scripture. In Acts chapter 20, for instance, Paul says that this is the gospel that he preached.

Repentance and faith. And you will find right through the book of Acts, these two things go together. Repentance and faith.

Repentance and faith. Now, without both of them, we do not have a complete story. Now, I remember last week we said that all of these principles need to be in operation in our lives.

If we have only one of them, or if we overemphasize any one of them, we can end up in error. Or we can end up on the wrong track. So, we have to have all of them because they balance each other.

If we just repent from dead works and we do not apply faith towards God, that means we are going to just stop doing everything. We are just going to sit still and expect something to happen. Now, that is not the full story.

Turning away from sin, turning away from trying to save ourselves, we now need to do something else, and that is to turn to God. Now, the two are necessary. If you just turn to God without stopping to save yourself, well, again, it is only half the story.

It is not the full story. Now, the problem is that we all have a concept of faith. And we have, as many people as are in the room here, we have different concepts as to what faith really is.

And I am just going to touch on three things that faith is not, so that we can just get an understanding of some of the things that it is not. Faith is not just belief in the existence of God. Many people say, but I believe that God exists.

I believe that God created the world, even. I believe in Jesus. And they say, well, certainly that is the kind of faith that the Bible speaks about.

And this faith is obviously very important for salvation. It is important because John 3.16, that well-known verse, says that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life. It is not whoever joins Him or whoever pays Him money or does anything for Him, but who just believes in Him will not perish.

Now, if salvation then hinges on faith, it is important that we understand faith correctly. And if we then say that just believing in the existence of God, that that is not sufficient for salvation, that is not the kind of faith that is necessary for salvation, then we need to explain that very carefully. In the book of James 2, it says that the devils also believe.

And it says they tremble. In other words, they believe not just in the existence of God, but they believe in the awesomeness of God. They believe in God's greatness.

And yet they are not saved. You see, they believe in God's existence. They believe in Jesus.

They believe Jesus rose from the dead. But they are not saved. It is far more than just believing in the existence of God.

It's far more than just an intellectual agreement or assent to the existence of God, or to even everything that is in the Scripture. What do we mean by that? How do we need to go beyond that? Well, faith needs to, this kind of faith, trust in God, needs to go beyond saying, I just believe that God exists. It needs to become personal.

And that's the difference. The devils believe that God exists. But it's not a personal issue.

And I'll explain what I mean by that in a moment. Many people believe in God to help them. Many people pray that God must protect them.

Many people pray that God must help them in times of financial or emotional or physical distress and difficulty. Many people pray for God's protection on the road. Many people pray to God for all sorts of things.

And they believe that God actually answers their prayers. And they say, but I believe, that's faith. Yes, it is faith, of a sort.

But it's not saving faith. It's not the faith that can actually save me. And I like to call that temporal faith.

You believe in God for that moment, for that particular situation. But again, our faith needs to go beyond just believing God for this little thing here, and that problem there, and that issue over there. You know, they used to say in the Second World War that there were no atheists in the trenches.

You know, if you're in those sorts of situations, everybody believes that God exists. But not everybody is saved. You see, because the moment they come out of that situation, suddenly the faith is gone.

Suddenly I don't believe anymore. And so, when I face a major crisis like people did in the World Trade Center this last week, many people who found themselves in that situation cried out to God. Now, many of them who will have escaped the situation, will, in a week or two or three's time, have forgotten about God.

Will have forgotten about the commitments that they made to God, promising that if God saved them and helped them, that they would serve Him, and all of these promises that we so easily make to God. That's temporal faith. It just was there for a moment.

But it wasn't faith which absorbed their whole lives. It wasn't a complete trust and surrender to God. And so, saving faith is not just believing in the existence of God.

It's not believing in God for a temporary situation. And thirdly, it is not a feeling. Now, again, many people say, well, I feel I've got faith.

I feel that my faith is strong today. And then tomorrow, well, I feel my faith is not so strong. It's something I feel.

And so, they work very hard at sort of making that faith stronger by cranking a little spiritual handle. The illustration I like to use is when I was a little boy, we used to have dynamos on our bicycles. And we lived on a farm.

There was no electricity. And so, you didn't have many bright things at night. And so, what you do is turn the bicycle upside down on its handlebars, and you crank the pedals, and you get the dynamo to really make this light burn.

And the harder you crank the pedals, the brighter the light shines. Now, to many people, that's faith. It's something that's dependent on me making this thing work.

And the harder I concentrate, and the harder I focus on God, and the harder I do these things, the greater my faith is going to be. Now, you can hear what this sounds like. It sounds like dead works again.

It's going back to the original, where it depends on me to do this thing, and to generate this faith, and to get this faith working, and to get this faith... And when next time I face a problem, next time the world comes crashing down around me, suddenly the faith's all gone again. And suddenly I don't believe. Real faith goes beyond those things.

Now, let's deal with another negative, before we begin to speak about the positives. What is misplaced faith? Because now, remember he speaks about putting faith in God. It's faith towards God.

Notice he doesn't just say faith. Repentance and faith. But he specifies repentance from dead works, and faith towards God.

Faith towards God. Now, there's a lot that we can say about that, but it's faith not in what I'm able to do, number one. That's the first thing.

It's not faith in what I'm able to do. You see, this is exactly the problem. Many people have faith in their religious deeds.

In the fact that they belong to the church, in the fact that they go to church, the fact that they pray, the fact that they read their Bibles, that they pay money to the church, that they try to live good lives, that they do

good deeds. Now, where is their trust? Their trust is not in God. Their trust is in themselves.

Their trust is in the things that they are able to do in order to get into heaven, in order to be saved. Now, that is not the saving faith that the Scripture speaks about. Here, Hebrews speaks very clearly about faith towards God, having faith in God, not faith in myself, or faith in the things that I do.

Faith in dead works is not true faith. Faith in ourselves. Well, it's a stupid thing to put faith in yourself, because, in fact, we are powerless.

We are very weak. We think we are great, but, you know, when sickness comes, and when difficulty comes, we suddenly realize, you know, I had my faith in the wrong place. You know, we have faith in our bank balances.

We have faith in the government. We have faith in our health. We have faith in our jobs.

We have faith in all sorts of things. We put our trust and our confidence in these things, sometimes for spiritual welfare, sometimes just for security. But all of these things are stupid things to put our faith in, because none of them are secure.

None of them are able to last. And so, misplaced faith is faith in anything other than Christ. In anything other than Christ.

And so, if I'm trusting in myself, if I'm trusting in my religious deeds, if I'm trusting in material things, if I'm trusting in the world around me, it's misplaced faith. And it's not able to save me. It's not able to improve my situation with God in any way.

Some people have faith in faith. Now you say, well, that sounds strange. Faith in faith.

What do we mean by that? Well, again, you remember the little handle that I cranked to try and generate my faith, and my trust is in my faith. But you see, it's not faith in my faith. It's not faith in my ability to believe.

It's faith in God. It's trusting in God. Now, remember that the difference between everything outside of Christ and Christ is the fact that He is the only one who is trustworthy.

You see, when we speak about, we trust someone. Who do we trust? We trust people who have proven their reliability. Somebody knocks on your door and says, lend me, you've never seen them before, and they knock on your door and they say, lend me 10,000 Rand.

Would you trust them? Well, not very likely. Because they haven't proven their reliability. They haven't proven their trustworthiness.

But if you have a long-standing friend, and you've known this person for 30 years, and this person has been absolutely trustworthy and dependable and reliable, and they say, lend me 10,000 Rand, you may lend them the money. Because you say, this person is reliable, is trustworthy. I know I can put my faith in them, that they will repay the money.

And so, when we look at the things around us, they are not reliable. They are not dependable. The World Trade Center, we thought was a symbol of American capitalism and of the tremendous power of man and the things that we are able to do.

A marvelous feat of engineering. And yet it comes crashing down. And many people's faith is shaken.

Because their faith was in what we can do as men, what we can do as people. And so, if we put our faith in anything outside of Christ, it's misplaced. Because it is not something which is reliable and trustworthy and dependable.

And yet God is faithful. God is trustworthy. God is reliable.

And God never fails. And God proves His greatness. He proves His reliability.

Not just in one year, or over two years, or three years, but over centuries. And that's the record of the Scriptures. That's what the Bible teaches us.

Is that God is absolutely reliable. He is absolutely faithful. That He fulfills His Word.

Jesus said that heaven and earth will pass away, but My Word will not pass away. My Word will endure forever. And so, God and His Word is absolutely sure and steadfast.

And that is the only thing in this life, and in the life to come, that is trustworthy. And you know, it's amazing how we put our confidence in shaky things. In things that are not able to give us security.

And that particularly are not able to save us. And yet there is only one who is able to give us absolute security. And that is God.

There is only one who is absolutely reliable. And you know, we may have friends, and I've had friends for many, many years, who in times of difficulty ran away and failed me. And yet God will never fail.

God will never turn away from us. God will never break His Word. But God is absolutely dependable and absolutely reliable.

And the Scripture speaks about a friend that sticks closer than a brother. And so, we're able to put our trust and our confidence in the right place. Now, I'm going to use two illustrations to try and explain what I mean by having my faith in the wrong place.

The first story I'm going to tell you is about a man called Wesley. And I'm sure you've heard about him. He is one of two brothers, John and Charles.

And they essentially started the Methodist Church. Now, Wesley trained for five years in the Oxford Seminary to become a minister. And so for five years he studied the Scriptures.

After that he was in the Anglican ministry for ten years. And then from there he went to Georgia in America as a missionary. Now, here's a man who had put his whole life on the line for God and for the Church.

He was absolutely faithful. His whole life revolved around the things of God. His regimen was absolutely amazing.

He would get up at four o'clock in the morning. And he would pray for two hours. And then he would read his Bible for an hour.

And then he would have breakfast. And then he would go out. And he would go visiting people and ministering to people, to the sick and hospitals and people in prison.

And he would do this till late at night. And he would come back the next morning at four o'clock. He would start all over again.

This was his whole life. And you know, he went to America and he came back on a ship, on a small ship. And the ship was caught in a storm.

And the waves were wanting to overcome the ship. And the sails had torn. And Wesley realized that he wasn't saved.

He realized that he was so scared of death because he had no assurance that if he had to die that night in that storm, that he was going to go to heaven. And you know, on the same ship was a group of other people, other missionaries also, Moravian missionaries. And these people were singing hymns.

And he went to speak to them and he said, but how can you be so happy under these circumstances? And they said, but we've got no problem because if we die tonight we're going to go to heaven. So what's the problem? And this shook Wesley because here's a man, and you can see how he had put his confidence and his trust in the things he was doing, in his religious deeds, and that was not able even to give him any security. And then when he went back to England and he landed in England, a little while later he happened to go to a small church and someone read a message or a sermon of Luther on the book of Romans.

And remember this was the thing that the light that went on for Luther is that the just shall live by faith. That we are not saved by the things that we do, but we are saved by trusting God. And when Wesley read this, or when Wesley heard this message being read, suddenly the light went on for him.

And for the first time in his life, he had assurance that his sins were forgiven. He had assurance that he was going to heaven because he had turned to God in faith. And he had stopped trusting in what he was doing, all the hard work he was doing, praying from four o'clock in the morning, working for God, laying absolutely everything on the line for God.

He realized he had been trusting these things to save him, and that these things were not able to save him. And he began to put his trust in God. And that changed his whole life and he became one of the greatest missionaries and one of the greatest evangelists and preachers of all time.

And as a result of today we have the Methodist Church which is as a result of that, and it's called the Methodist Church because of the absolute methodical way in which Wesley approached his religion, and yet that was not able to save him. Now, if we use another illustration, and we say that we have a gap between two valleys, and you've got to cross over that valley, and that gap is 50 meters that you've got to go across. You've got to somehow get across from this side to the other side, and there's a deep chasm down there.

If you had to fall down, you'd be dead. But you didn't have a rope that was long enough. You only had a rope that was 25 meters long.

So you had a nice thick one inch rope that could carry a few tons, but that was only half the length. And someone came and said, look, you know, I've got a piece of string that will make up the rest of the length, another 25 meters. And you say, well, you know, I'm not prepared to trust that.

That's not going to work because the string can't hold my weight. And the person would say, but you know, you've got the rope. The rope is, you know, half of it is good.

And maybe the other half is slightly suspect, but it's not going to work. And then the person may say to you, well, look, you know, it's 50 meters. What we can do is, if we had a rope of 45 meters and 5 meters of string, maybe that will work.

But that's also not going to work. And even if the rope was 49 meters, 49 and a half meters, and the string was only a half a meter, it's still not good enough because it still won't reach the end. It's still not going to hold you up on the other end.

Now, what I'm saying is that, is that what we do is we put our confidence in our ability to save ourselves. That's like the string. It can't do the job.

It's just not strong enough. And we put some of our trust in our abilities. And we put some of our trust in what God has done.

But you know, it doesn't matter how much I put my trust in what God has done, if it's not totally in what God has done, if the whole length is not God's work, if the whole length is not the rope, even if it's one inch of self, it's not going to do the job. It's going to fall down. And so you can see that some people maybe have half their trust in God and half their trust in their religious deeds, or in their good works, or in their good character or personality.

It doesn't matter what that mix is. If it's not 100% in God, then it's not total trust in God. And that's not able to save me.

And so I need to have 100% confidence, trust in God, and in God alone. In God alone. And that is the principle that Luther established.

He called it in Latin, *sola fide*. Only faith. Only faith.

No works. Nothing that I can do. Everything that God has done.

And my confidence, my trust, needs to be in what God has done through Jesus on the cross. And not in anything that I have done. And that is when I begin to exhibit faith towards God.

So, let's say now, let's speak about what is it then that I must believe? What is it that I must believe? Well, obviously I need to believe that God exists. We spoke about that earlier, that the devils believe that. And without that we can't even begin.

Hebrews 11 says that we must believe that God exists and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. And so, that's obviously the first thing. I need to believe in God's existence.

But that's not sufficient. I need to believe in more than that. I need to believe that Christ died.

But not just that He died. But that He died in my place. Now, you can see that the first part of that is quite easy.

Millions of people believe that Christ died on the cross. But they are not saved. But when I begin to understand that in fact He died in my place, and when I begin, when that truth becomes real to me, and I

say that I believe that Jesus died for me, that it was in my place, that He took my guilt, He took my punishment upon Himself, upon that cross.

And when I begin to believe that, that's the beginning of saving faith. And so, it's not just a general belief that Jesus died on the cross. But believing that Jesus specifically died for me.

Specifically died for me. Now, in the Old Testament, what would happen is that they had a sacrificial system. And part of that system was a thing called a scapegoat.

We still use that word in our language today. We speak about someone who became a scapegoat. And many people say Hansi Kronier is a scapegoat.

In other words, he's the one who's got to carry the blame for everybody else's mess. Now, what the scapegoat was, was they would bring two goats, the man would bring two goats, and he would lay his hands on the scapegoat, he would confess his sins, and now, symbolically, his sins have now passed on to that goat, and they would take that goat, and they would chase it out into the wilderness. And that goat is now gone, and the animals, the wild animals would probably eat it, or whatever would happen to it in the wilderness.

But now that goat is gone, and that goat is carried with it. It's the sin. And so, the other goat would be taken, and that one would be killed.

So, the one would escape, and the other one would be killed. And so, Jesus becomes our scapegoat. He becomes the one upon whom we have placed our guilt.

And so, the same way as those men in the Old Testament would put their hands on the goat, and they would carry over, symbolically, all their sin to Him. So, all our sin was symbolically carried over to Jesus. And He died upon the cross of Calvary.

Now, when I believe that, you can see how that it changes my whole approach, because now I no longer need to pay for my sins. I no longer need to work for my salvation, because Jesus took my guilt. Jesus took my sin upon Himself, upon that cross of Calvary.

And I'm able to go away free. And that man who brought the two goats, he would go away from the tabernacle, and he would be free. His sins have been dealt with, because an animal took his place.

And so, Jesus took our place upon the cross of Calvary. When I begin to understand that, and I believe that Jesus actually died for me, that is the kind of faith that saves. Because now, it's no longer me.

The focus is not on I. You know, and when you say to someone, well, you know, why do you believe you're going to heaven? Oh, I do this, I do that, I do that, I do this. It's on I. But true faith says no. Jesus died.

It's nothing about me. Jesus died for me upon the cross of Calvary. That's the truth.

That's faith. Faith towards God. And so, also, we need to obviously believe that He was raised from the dead.

Now, this also is difficult, because many people believe Jesus died, but many people have great difficulty in believing that He could be raised from the dead. Many theologians believe that Jesus died, but they

don't believe that He was raised from the dead. Now, if we go to Romans chapter 10, and I've not taken you to many scriptures tonight, but we need to look at this one, because this one is quite important.

Romans chapter 10, verse 9 says, If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Now, that's so simple, and it's so straightforward. If you confess with your mouth, in other words, a vocal confession, and you believe in your heart that Jesus, that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

For with a heart one believes to righteousness, and with a mouth confession is made to salvation. For the scripture says, Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame. Now, immediately that presents the third problem.

You see, because you can begin to see that faith is not such an easy thing. First of all, it's not easy for me to believe that Jesus actually died in my flesh. And yet, it's true, because the scripture tells me that it is true.

Secondly, it's not very easy to believe that someone actually rose from the dead. And yet, we know it is true, because not only does the scripture prove it, but we have historic evidence of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that leads me to the third thing I must believe.

I must believe the word of God. I must believe the word of God. Now, the first two actually come from this point, because how do we know that Jesus died for us on the cross? Because the scripture teaches us so.

But how do we know Jesus was raised from the dead? Because the Bible says so. And here's the third thing I need to believe. I need to believe the word of God.

Now, many people say, but I believe the Bible. But you know, do we really believe the Bible? Do we really believe everything that the Bible says? And just here's one as an example. Can I believe that when the Bible says that if I believe in my heart that God raised Him from the dead, I will be saved? Do I believe just that? You see, we say, but that's too simple.

It can't be like that. Surely, I've got to do something. I must do this or that or the other thing.

Maybe I must do some kind of penance, or maybe I must... You see, we don't really believe. But if I believe, if I can believe the scriptures, that is saving faith. Because that would change my life.

And so you can see that many people say they believe. But they don't really believe. Because the moment they come up against a scripture that seems too difficult or seems too simple, they say, oh no, no, that doesn't really mean what it says.

But it does mean what it says. And so there are just three things I believe that I need to believe. Three things I need to put my confidence in.

That Jesus died for me. That Jesus was risen again on the third day. And that the scriptures are true.

That the word of God is true in every detail. Okay. Now, the second thing, or the thing that now flows from that, is we say that, okay, that's easy, I believe.

And this is the problem. Many people then say, okay, I believe. I believe Jesus died for me.

I believe that he rose for me. I believe in the scriptures. But now, James brings another angle on it.

The book of James towards the end of the Bible. And he says that if I really believe, it's got to have an impact on my life. There must be a resultant change in my life.

And so believing must result in works. Now you say, but you've just told us that we're not saved by what we do. We're saved by faith.

But you see, the works that I now do are not works I'm doing in order to be saved. Or in order to enhance my relationship with God. The works I now do flow from my faith.

And so, yes, I may do the same things. Wesley continued to do the same things. He continued to pray in the same way.

He continued to preach even more, even harder. But he wasn't doing it in order to be saved anymore. In order to save himself.

He was doing it because of gratefulness for what God has done. So yes, we continue to do maybe the same religious things, but we do them for a different reason. And you can see in Wesley's life the change.

Even though he was doing the same things, he was still preaching. He was now preaching with great power. And suddenly people's lives were being changed by the message.

For ten years he preached and it was having no impact on people's lives. And yet suddenly when he finds Jesus and he believes the word of God, his whole life and his whole ministry is changed. And this is the problem.

Many people believe. I'm going to tell you a third story and that is, those who are older will remember a guy called Blondin. When I was a little boy, Blondin was quite the man.

He was a tightrope walker. And he used to walk in all sorts of amazing places. And amongst others he walked between two huge skyscrapers in New York City.

They spanned the wire and he walked across that. And then one day he spanned a wire across the Niagara Falls. And he began to... There was a huge crowd on both sides, on the Canadian and on the American side.

And he would walk across this. And I remember reading about this as a little boy, the most amazing story. And he even carried a stove across and he put it on there.

And he cooked himself breakfast and he had bacon and eggs or whatever he had. And people were absolutely amazed. And then he went over to one of the sides.

And he said to the crowd there, Do you believe that I can carry someone on my shoulders across this wire? And everybody says, Of course we believe. We've seen you go up and down and do all sorts of amazing things. Of course we believe you can do it.

And then he said, Now someone come, I need a volunteer to carry. And of course there were no volunteers. Now you can see they didn't really believe.

They said they believed. But they didn't really believe. They didn't actually trust him to be able to carry them across.

And you see this is the problem. We say we believe in God. We believe that Jesus died for us.

Many people do that. But when they are called to act upon it. Now how do I act upon it? These guys what they had to do or the person who was going to volunteer.

Is they would have to forsake their trust in solid ground. And they would have to put their trust in London to carry them across. And that was the problem.

You see their trust was on Mother Earth. Their trust was not in London. And this is the problem.

Our trust is in our religious deeds so often. Our trust is in our good works. Our trust is in all the things that we trust in.

And we say but we trust God. But when God says let go of those things. Stop having confidence in those things.

Just put your trust and confidence totally in me. Then immediately we have great difficulty. Which shows that we don't actually believe.

We cannot come to a point where we can let go of those things. And we can grab hold of Him. And grab hold of Him with all of our life.

And say God I am putting my trust in you. And in you alone. Now the sad thing is that sometimes it takes us a lifetime to come to that point.

Where everything else fails us. And eventually when everything else fails. We have absolutely no option.

But to cast ourselves upon God. And to put our trust in Him. Now we don't need to come to that point.

We don't need to come to a point where everything is cut away from us. And then we have no option but to trust in God. You know it's like a man who is drowning in the sea.

And you know if a little plank floats past. Maybe initially he will say well I don't want that plank. I want a proper ship you know.

I want a lifeguard. I want something of substance. But you know when he realizes he is drowning.

He is going to grab hold of anything he can. Now we don't need to come to that point where everything else is cut away from us. We need to come to a point early on in our lives where we say.

But these things that I am trusting in are not able to save me. My works are not able to save me. Let me repent from those things.

Let me put my trust, my confidence in God. And in Him alone. Now when we do that.

We will see that there is a total change in our lives. And this is what James says. Yes we may continue to be religious.

In fact we will be. But in fact it will be for a different reason. It will flow from a true faith.

Not flowing from trying to please God. Trying to earn brownie points with God. Trying to save ourselves.

No. These things I now do. I do because I love Him.

And because I found Him to be real. And I found Him to be true. And so that's true faith.

That is saving faith. When I no longer trust in anything else. But I trust in Him.

And in Him alone. Amen. Let's pray.

Father we admit that we so often trust in the wrong things. And we trust governments. And we trust men.

And we trust financial systems. And we trust the health care system. And we trust in our own health and our own abilities.

And Lord we trust the religious systems. And yes all of these things are good and right Lord. But they cannot save.

There is only one who can save. And that is Jesus. And so Father we pray that if we have not put our trust totally in Jesus.

Lord that you indeed give us grace. That we may turn away from trying to hold on to things that are vain. And things that are empty.

And things that are powerless. And that we may put our trust and our confidence totally in Jesus. And in Him alone.

We thank you Lord that that is all that's required. It's simple. And that's why Lord we understand that even a little child is able to enter into the kingdom.

Because they just trust. They don't ask the reasons. They don't try and work it out.

But they simply trust. Help us to become childlike in our faith. To put our trust in you knowing that Jesus died for us.

That He rose again. That He is coming again. And Lord we thank you for the reality of these things.

We thank you that you are not asking us to have blind faith. But Lord that your word is true. And that you have proven yourself to be reliable and dependable through thousands of years.

And so Lord we thank you that we are able to trust one who is trustworthy and reliable. And Lord together with Peter we would cry help our weak faith Lord. Our faith is weak.

And we tend to trust in things that we see rather than in things we do not see. But we pray that you would help us to indeed put our confidence in you and you alone. We ask it in Jesus name.

Amen.

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