

# Living by faith Part 4

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[ 0 : 00 ] Take your Bibles and go to Luke chapter 1. Now I've got you going there, but let me warn you, it's going to be a while before I get there. Okay? But Luke chapter 1, it'll be a little bit before I get there. You just saw those words up on the screen?

To come, thou long-expected Jesus. That's what our message is titled today. Come, thou long-expected Jesus. If I follow through the Lord leading me the way I think he is, we'll be talking about different Christmas carols between now and Christmas.

And so we're going to be looking at those different carols. This particular carol, come, thou long-expected Jesus, was written by Charles Wesley. It's another song. So you've had five, four, four songs, five songs this morning, four songs, whatever.

You've had some songs this morning. They were written by Charles Wesley. Let me tell you a little bit about Charles Wesley. Charles Wesley knew what it was like to live on shaky hope.

Shaky hope. He and his brother John were raised in a home where their father was a minister. And they decided to follow in his footsteps.

[ 1 : 17 ] And they went to Christ Church College in Oxford. And while they were there, they were known that they were very committed to their faith.

They, while most students were kind of nominal in their faith and kind of just went through things, the Wesley brothers were very sincere in what they did.

They got up early in the morning, studied the Bible, read the Bible, to spend time praying. They spent time fasting.

They spent time in self-denial. There were times they would go through things and not do certain things because of their trying to live a good, righteous life. During his sophomore year, Charles had friends who saw what he was doing.

And they decided to join him in the way he lived his life. And they called themselves the Holy Club there at Oxford. But even though he was doing all this and had this, these group of friends who were following him and stuff, he still had a lot of doubts about his standing with God.

[ 2 : 28 ] After they graduated, he and his brother John decided to go to Georgia as missionaries. So they come from England over to the States, the colonies then, and go to Georgia as missionaries.

But it didn't work out too well. And after about six months, Charles went back to England. And as he returned to England, he still was burdened by a lot of doubt.

And once he got back there, he met up with an old friend by the name of George Whitefield. George Whitefield was now an evangelist. George Whitefield would go out and preach about being born again by the simple faith of Jesus Christ.

Charles knew that faith in Christ was important. But he still felt that his endeavors to live for God made a difference, played a part in being able to go to heaven.

During this time, he's struggling back and forth about what to do and still having all these doubts. He meets another man by the name of Peter Mohler. Mohler. Mohler.

[ 3 : 32 ] He was a missionary. And he patiently spent time with Charles. He patiently went over things with him over and over and over again, explaining to him God's simple way of salvation.

But Charles still felt that his works had to be a part of things. Matter of fact, after one of their conversations, he wrote in his journal.

He kept a journal. And on February 24th, 1738, he said this. Bowler asked me, do you hope to be saved?

I answered, yes. He then asked, for what reason do you hope it? And I replied, because I've used my best endeavors to serve God.

He shook his head and said no more. I thought him very uncharitable, saying in my heart, what? Are not my endeavors a sufficient ground for hope? Would he rob me of my endeavors?

[ 4 : 36 ] I have nothing else to trust to. Three months later, Sunday, May 21st, 1738, everything changed. The Bible truths that George Whitefield and that Bowler had been preaching to him finally came into focus.

He finally understood what they were saying. He finally understood that salvation was not something he could earn. It came through Jesus Christ and through him alone.

That day he believed the gospel. He put his faith in Christ. He was born again. And he wrote in his journal that day, I now found myself at peace with God and rejoiced in the hope of Christ.

The hope of Christ. Think about that. The hope of Christ. Charles finally understood where the real source of hope came from. He understood it and had nothing to do with his endeavors.

And for the rest of his life, he will preach and he will write songs about the hope of Christ. Matter of fact, Charles Wesley wrote over 6,500 hymns.

[ 5 : 48 ] Yeah, that's a lot of hymns. That's more than one a day for most people's lives and stuff. And over the next 50 years, as he wrote those hymns, he wrote ones that we sang this morning.

Those are some of the ones he wrote. We need hope. The world that we live in today, we need hope. Let's have a word of prayer and then we'll talk about that.

Heavenly Father, I pray this morning that you would help us to understand the hope of Christmas. The hope that we have in Jesus Christ.

The hope that we have through his finished work at Calvary. His resurrection, his ascension back to heaven. We have nothing to do with our salvation. There is no way we can earn it.

Just like Charles Wesley tried to earn his way through his endeavors. It just doesn't work. It brings nothing but doubts. Lord, help us to fully trust in you.

[ 6 : 49 ] Help everyone here to know for sure the salvation that comes only through Christ. Lord, help us this morning to be encouraged, to be uplifted, to have hope as we go through this life because of Jesus Christ.

Lord, speak to our hearts through your word this morning. In Jesus' name, amen. It's been said that a person can live 40 days without food.

They can live three days without water. Eight minutes without air. One second without hope.

The hope that we have to have in our life. If we don't have hope in our life, you look at the suicide rates and things of our nation and around the world. Because people have no hope.

There's nothing to trust in for them. We need to get the message of Christmas out. It is a message of hope. True hope. You know, and I'm not talking about the kind of hope that makes you feel better.

[ 7 : 56 ] Things are going on around you and things are kind of tough and everything. But, you know, I can have hope in this or that or this might happen, that might happen. Not that kind of hope. I'm talking about the kind of hope that Jesus came that first Christmas and brought with him.

That we have a hope for all eternity. You know, and thousands of years before Jesus came, he was longed for. Thousands of years before Jesus came, he was expected.

God had promised way back in the Garden of Eden that there would be hope. Genesis chapter 3, verse 15 says, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed.

It shall bruise thy head, thou shalt bruise his heel. And that seed of a woman is understood to be Jesus Christ. Jesus was going to come.

He was going to come and he was going to bruise the head of the serpent. Jesus, God is talking to the serpent there in the Garden of Eden after the fall. Giving him his curse. And he says, there's going to be one coming.

[ 9 : 06 ] And throughout the millennia that followed, he kept giving promise after promise after promise. In Haggai chapter 2, verse 7, he talks about the desire of all nations shall come.

Charles Wesley was contemplating that verse in 1744 in the Christmas season. And he understood that verse was looking forward and waiting for the coming of Christ.

That that hope of the desire of nations was Jesus Christ himself. He says, Jesus is going to come. Would come.

And now, here's Wesley. The year is 1744. And he's still thinking about this time. And he says, look. England in the 18th century. What was England like in the 18th century?

Well, you've read Charles Dickens and other people. And it was a time where it was poor, poverty, hunger, orphans.

[ 10 : 10 ] All kinds of things were going on. Slavery was a big deal. So many people being held in slavery. And Wesley's looking at all this.

He said there was a hope that first Christmas that Jesus came. But he says, the Bible says there's a hope coming.

There's going to be a second coming of Jesus. And we need a hope in that as well. Do we place our hope there? And amidst all of this that he's thinking about, excuse me, he writes this song.

Come, thou long-expected Jesus. And he's talking about the fact that he was one who would come the first time. As the babe in the manger. But he was also looking forward to the coming the second time.

When he comes as king of kings and lord of lords. He gives the fact that he was looking for a baby who was going to set his people free. But he was also looking for the one who would bring in a glorious kingdom.

[ 11 : 19 ] He says, we need to be looking for Christ. We need to keep our eyes focused on him. Knowing that he will come. He's going to come.

He's going to defeat the antichrist. He's going to set up a kingdom on this world. He is going to reign over all. Come, thou long-expected Jesus.

You know, we as believers today, we live between the two. At those gap times in there. And, you know, we know that the promises were fulfilled about his first coming.

And because those promises were fulfilled, we know the promises about his second coming will also be fulfilled. He has a track record of keeping his promises to us all the time.

As you approach this Christmas season, there's a lot of uncertainty out there. There's a lot of, wow, what's going to happen?

[ 12 : 24 ] What's going to be the results? Once President Trump takes office, what's going to happen then? What's happening before he takes office? There's all kinds of things taking place.

I don't know if you heard this last week, but all kinds of his new appointees got death threats this last week. All kinds of things are taking place. We live in a really shaky world.

We could have a shaky hope like Charles Wesley did. But, you know what? We go back and we can look at the track record that God has set for us.

And he gave us Christmas proof. Christmas proof. He showed himself to be trustworthy. He showed himself to be good to the promises that he has given to us.

Christmas wasn't just some random event. God had been planning it for years and years and years. That first prophecy back in Genesis was almost 4,000 years before Jesus came.

[ 13 : 35 ] But yet, it happened. Let me show you some things this morning about why we should trust Christ and what he says.

First one, God would send a Savior from the seat of a woman. God would send a Savior from the seat of a woman. Again, Genesis 3, 15. He says it's going to happen.

There is going to be one who's going to come. And he's going to bruise your head, Satan. You may bruise his heel, but he's going to bruise your head. It's going to be a death blow to you.

I'll put enmity between thee and the woman. Between thy seed and her seed. Then he gets more specific. Through Abraham's lineage, all the families of the earth are going to be blessed.

Those of you who were with me in Sunday school, we talked about this a little bit. Genesis chapter 12, verse 3. I will bless them that bless thee and curse them that curseth thee.

[ 14 : 36 ] And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Abraham, there's going to come through you. Someone. All the families of the earth will be blessed through them.

Then he gets a little more specific. He says it's going to be through the tribe of Judah. Genesis 49.10. The scepter. You know the scepter.

The king holds the scepter. The scepter shall not depart from Judah. Nor lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come. And unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

He says it's not going to leave Judah. Until after the Messiah comes. More specific. He would be born of a virgin.

Isaiah 7.14. Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive. And bear a son and call his name Emmanuel. More specific. He'd be a descendant of David.

[ 15 : 37 ] Jeremiah 23.5. Behold the day come. Days come. Sayeth the Lord. And I will raise up unto David. A righteous branch. And a king shall reign and prosper.

And shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. He said there's going to be a king who's going to rule over the entire earth. And he's coming through David. More specific.

He would be born in Bethlehem. Micah 5.2. But thou Bethlehem Ephrathah. Though thou be little among the thousands of Judah. Yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me.

That shall be ruler in Israel. Whose goings forth have been from old and from everlasting. Every one of these promises. Was a promise about the Messiah.

Who was going to come. Every one of these promises in the Old Testament. Was a promise given by God. It wasn't some coincidence. It wasn't some happenstance thing. That all of these things came true.

[ 16 : 36 ] He arranged. God arranged for all of these things to happen. For all of these things. And sometimes he used. Rulers who were well known. Sometimes he used ordinary common people.

The prophets. Delivered these promises. And they didn't always fully understand. Everything that was going to happen.

They didn't always fully understand. What it was that they were writing down. And what was being said. But they trusted God. If you were with me in Sunday school. Again. That theme this morning.

Trusting in God. Trusting in God. Trusting in God. Matter of fact. It's going to come all the way up through. To the book of Matthew. And in Matthew chapter 1.

An angel is going to appear to Joseph. When that angel appears to Joseph. He's going to tell him things that are about to happen. Concerning Mary. And concerning him. And in Matthew 1.

[ 17 : 40 ] And in Matthew 1.22. It says this. Now all this was done. That it might be fulfilled. Which was spoken. Of the Lord. By the prophet. Everything that's going to happen.

Joseph. Everything you're going to see. Is going to be fulfillment. Of the prophecies. That these Old Testament prophets wrote. Every one of them. Wow.

You ever stop and think. I know I've mentioned it before. In years past. But. The chances. Of over a hundred. Different prophecies. Being fulfilled. In one baby boy coming.

And going to a cross. And rising again. Is just. Astronomically. Impossible. For all of those things. To happen.

You know. One of the great things. When we stop. And consider all those promises. That have been made. When we consider all those promises. That were filled. And Jesus coming to this earth.

[ 18 : 47 ] God has not forgotten you. God has not forgotten you. You know. One of the reasons. That hope sometimes. Kind of wanes a little bit.

Is because of the time. Between the promise. And the time of their fulfillment. That's what makes Christmas. So encouraging. There was a long time there. But God. Kept his word.

About every. One of those. Prophecies. Concerning Jesus. That first prophecy. Genesis 315. Was given 4,000 years. Before Jesus came.

That is a long time. And over the next. 3,600 years. Promise. Promise. Promise.

Promise. He keeps reminding us. That Messiah is coming. And did you notice. When I was going through those. Each one gets a little more specific. As to what's going to happen. Finally.

[ 19 : 44 ] The last prophet. Before Jesus comes. Is Malachi. And in Malachi. Chapter 3. Verse 1. It says this. Behold. I will send my messenger. And he shall prepare the way.

Before me. And the Lord. Whom you seek. Shall suddenly come. To his temple. Even the messenger. Of the covenant. Whom you. Delight in. Behold.

He shall come. Say it. The Lord. He says. There's going to be a messenger. Who's going to come. Before. The Messiah does. Malachi. 4.2.

But unto you. That fear my name. Shall the son. Of righteousness. Remember. I told you. Notice that in the hymn. The son. Of righteousness. Arise.

With healing. In his wings. And ye shall go forth. And grow up. As a castle. Stall. He says. There's going to be. A messenger. From the time. Malachi. Wrote that. Until Jesus came.

[ 20 : 39 ] There was a 400 year gap. 400 years. When there was nothing. And during that 400 years. Israel went through. Persian.

Captivity. They were overtaken. By the Greeks. And then they were overtaken. By the Romans. There was a whole lot of. Quietness. A whole lot of.

Misery. A whole lot of. Huh. But. After that 400 years. Israel.

Got to see. God. At work. In a marvelous way. Have you ever been there. Where you're like. I've been praying about this.

And praying about this. And praying about this. And I don't see anything happening. I've been asking God about this. I've been waiting for things. And you don't see anything happening. Israel went through a long time.

[ 21 : 33 ] Where they were waiting. You know. Maybe you've been praying for an answer. For something. And it's been delayed. Maybe. You've been waiting for. A prodigal child to return.

Maybe you've been waiting for. Reconciliation of a relationship. Maybe you've been waiting for. Something for your family. Maybe you've been waiting for God to. Just. In some way acknowledge.

The things that you're going through. But when God answers. He answers in a marvelous way. And he will answer. We always forget that.

Those promises. Those prophecies. He will answer. It may be a while. But he will. When you're ever going through a time. When you say. God. I just don't get it.

Why am I not hearing from you? Why are you not doing anything? Take your Bible. And open up to. Luke. Chapter one. Where you are right now.

[ 22 : 29 ] Luke chapter one. Because. It was an average day. In Jerusalem that day. And Zacharias. Is going about his duties.

As a priest. And he's doing the things. That he did every day. His routine. That he did every day. As a priest. Helping with the sacrifices. Doing the different things. And then.

In Luke chapter one. Look at verse eleven. It says. And there appeared unto him. An angel of the Lord. Standing on the right side. Of the altar. Of the inset. And when Zacharias.

Saw him. He was troubled. And fear. Fell upon him. But the angel said unto him. Fear not. Zacharias. For thy prayer.

Is heard. And thy wife. Elizabeth. Shall bear thee a son. And thou shalt call. Upon his. Call his name. John. He says. Look. Zacharias.

[ 23 : 24 ] You and Elizabeth. Been praying for a child. For a long time. And Zacharias. Is going. Yeah. Tell me about it. We're way too old. To have a child now. But here's an angel saying.

You know what? You're going to have one. And you're going to name him. John. What? We're way too old. To have a kid. You're going to have one.

You've been asking. God is about to answer. Six months later. Remember. It was 400 years. Six months later.

Gabriel appears again. And he appears to Mary. Look down at verse 26. And in the sixth month. The angel Gabriel. Was sent from God. Under the city of Galilee. Named Nazareth.

To a. What does that word? Virgin. Oh. Wait a minute. What was one of the things God said? Was it prophecy? Virgin. It's going to conceive. The virgin is supposed to a man.

[ 24 : 23 ] Whose name was Joseph. Of the house of. David. What was one of the prophecies? Going to come from David. And the virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel came in unto her. And said. Hail thou art heartily favored. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women. Verse 31. And behold. Thou shalt conceive in thy womb.

And bring forth a son. And shall call his name. Jesus. Jesus is coming. Finally. Finally. This long expected Jesus. Is about to come.

And to arrive. The Messiah is on his way. Israel rejoice. The promises that God has given you. Over the last 4,000 years. Is about to come.

To fruition. Rejoice. This is the first. Of our Sunday messages. So. You look at that. You say. Okay. That's good. That's good.

[ 25 : 18 ] Background for Christmas. And everything. What does that mean for me? Well. Notice the promises. For today. And hope.

For tomorrow. Promises for today. And hope for tomorrow. God gave them. All of these different promises. One of the verses. We usually hear at Christmas time.

Most often used. Is Isaiah. 9. 6. It says. For unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulder.

And his name shall be called wonderful. Counselor. The mighty God. The everlasting father. The prince of peace. Of the increase of his government. And peace. There shall be no end. Upon the throne of David.

And upon his kingdom. To order it. To establish it. With judgment. And with justice. From henceforth. Even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts. Will perform this.

[ 26 : 15 ] That promise. That prophecy. Part of it's been fulfilled. Partially fulfilled. The child was born. The son was given. But the government being upon his shoulders.

That part hasn't been done yet. Which tells us. There's more to come. God gave a promise. He fulfilled part of it. He's about to fulfill.

The other part. He's about to send. The one who shall have the government. Upon his shoulders. According to Bible scholars. There's like 300.

Prophecies. Concerning Jesus. In the Bible. 300. 300. Over 100 of them.

Were fulfilled. When Christ came. When he came. Lived his life. Died. And resurrected from the dead. Over 100 of them. Were taken care of.

[ 27 : 15 ] There's more to be done. Jesus is coming again. We can trust in it. You can take that to the bank. Because. He fulfilled. All of these promises. Why should we ever doubt.

That he's not going to fulfill. All the rest of them. He's already done. Over a third of them. But bring that to you and I today. What about today?

We're the. We're the in between crowd. We're in between the first. And the second. What does that mean to us? Well. There's other promises in the Bible as well.

He promises to help you. He promises to help you. Look at Isaiah. 41.10. Fear thou not. For I am with thee. Be not dismayed.

For I am thy God. I will strengthen thee. Yea. I will help thee. Yea. I will uphold thee. With the right hand. Of my righteousness. He says. I'm going to be there for you.

[ 28 : 13 ] I will help you. I will take care of you. I will give you the things that you need. Trust in me. See. As we live our life. In between the comings.

He says. I'm going to be there. I'm going to help you. I'm going to take care of the needs that you have. Which is the next one. He promises to supply our needs. Philippians. 4.19.

For my. But my God shall supply all your need. According to his riches and glory by Christ Jesus. He says. You have needs. Trust me. I will take care of him. He says.

Not only that. He promises to guide you. Promises to guide you. Psalm 32.8. I will instruct thee. And teach thee. In the way that thou shalt go.

I will guide thee. With mine eye. You know. So. So great. God says. I will guide you. Wherever you're going.

[ 29 : 09 ] Whatever you're trying to do. Whatever is going on in your life. He says. I will guide you. With mine eye. When I graduated from high school. The pastor.

There. In Heartland. At the time. Was a man by the name of Frank DeFalco. And he gave me a Bible. For graduation. And inside that Bible. He wrote this verse. That God will guide you.

In everything that you're going to do. Whenever I've talked about this verse before. I always use as an illustration. Larry Bird. Most of you know who Larry Bird is.

Heard his name somewhere along the way. One of the great basketball players of all time. Wasn't the most athletic person you ever wanted to watch. But he always got the job done.

And he was a great scorer. He was a great rebounder. And he did all these different things. But one of the things I used to love to watch him do. Was pass. The basketball. I didn't care if he took the shot.

[ 30 : 06 ] I wanted to see what he was going to do with the pass. Because Bird had this way. Of guiding with his eye. He could be looking at one of his teammates.

And they would be over here. And in about five seconds. They're going to be over there. And there's going to be a ball coming that way. Because he showed them with his eyes.

What was going to happen. And a lot of times. It would not be a normal pass. It would be around somebody. It would be over somebody. It would be behind his back. But he would guide them.

With his eye. And they would be there. Ready to catch a ball. And score a basket. Because he led them. Over and over and over and over.

Over the last 13 years. You've heard me say. Looking unto Jesus. Why am I looking unto Jesus all the time? Because he will guide me with his eye.

[ 31 : 03 ] If I'm focused on him. If I've got my eyes on him all the time. I'm watching what he's doing. He can guide me.

Where I need to be. Are we following him? And not only will he guide us. Not only will he instruct us. And teach us. It says in that verse.

But. He will do it all throughout our life. Because. He promises to never leave you. Hebrews 13. 5. He promises to never leave you.

At the end of that verse. He says. I will never leave thee. Nor forsake thee. I'm always going to be there. You talk about promises. I'm going to come.

I'm going to send the Messiah. Fulfilled. I'm going to come again. Waiting for it to happen. In between time. I'm going to take care of you. And he does it.

[ 31 : 57 ] Day. Day. After day. After day. One more. He promises grace. Equal to your need. 2nd Corinthians. 12.



9. My grace is sufficient for thee. For my strength is made perfect. And weakness. I don't know how I'm going to do this. I can't do this. I don't have the ability. I don't have the knowledge. I don't have the.

He says. My grace. Is sufficient. For you. Think about. The promises. That God has made. I don't have the verse up there.

But over in Titus. It says. Titus 1. 2. He's a God who cannot lie. It doesn't say that he will not. It doesn't say he does not. It says he cannot. He cannot lie to us.

And he's given us promise. After promise. After promise. After promise. What do you put your hope in today? Charles Wesley wrote.

[ 32 : 57 ] Come. Thou long expected Jesus. He says. The hope of the people of Israel. Was in Jesus. The hope of the people living in the 1700s. Was in Jesus.

The hope of the people living in the 21st century. Is Jesus. The hope for the. Future of the world. And the future of heaven. And everything. Is. Jesus. Is your hope in Jesus?

Take a look at God's word. Look at the promises. That are given. They're all throughout it. Look at those promises. Expect Jesus to come through.

Expect Jesus to answer. Expect that he is a God who cannot lie. And is going to keep his promises. Come. Thou long expected Jesus.

Have hope today. In him. Let's have a word prayer. Father. Father.

[ 33 : 58 ] Thank you. Father.