

Trusting and Depending on HIM!

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[0:00] please take your Bibles and turn to Matthew's Gospel. Matthew's Gospel, chapter 17. If you're visiting with us, that black Bible in the chair in front of you, you can pull that out, go to the back of that black Bible.

They renumber the New Testament. So if you go to the back of that black Bible, you'll find page 14 to find Matthew, chapter 17. Matthew 17.

We're gonna do verses 14 through 20, or 21. Matthew, chapter 17, verse 14. Let's start there. Let's read, please. And coming to the multitude, a man came to him, falling on his knees before him, saying, Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic, and he's suffering severely, for he often falls into the fire and often into the water.

And I brought him to your disciples, and they were not able to heal him. And answering, Jesus said, O unbelieving and crooked generation, how long shall I be with you?

How long shall I bear you? Bring him here to me. And Jesus rebuked it, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was healed at that hour.

[1:39] Then coming to Jesus privately, the disciples said, why could we, ourselves, not cast it out? And he said to them, because of your small faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith as the mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, move from here to there, and it shall move, for nothing shall be impossible to you.

And then verse 21, the questionable verse, which we'll talk about later. But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting. I mean, well, I just got started.

Does that mean I'm supposed to stop? That's my timer? One time, I was preaching.

My mom, the phones are so smart, you don't know how to deal with them. They're smarter than us these days.

Anyways, my mom, you can hear she whispered to me, turned to the other person, she says, it's past 12 o'clock. It's funny. Anyways, that just reminded me of that. I don't know why, but anyway.

[2:51] My mother, geez. Anyways, I looked up imperialism in dictionary.com and defined imperialism like this, quote, quote, the policy of extending the rule or authority of an empire or nation over foreign countries or of acquiring and holding colonies and dependencies, unquote.

Another definition that it gives in dictionary.com, which is, of course, it's the right meaning because we know everything on the internet. It's true. You should be laughing a very long time after that statement.

Anyways, quote, advocacy of imperial or sovereign interests over the interests of the dependent states. Obviously, our society sees imperialism in the negative light with no benefit at all and in many cases we understand why.

It is linked with, quote, unquote, exploiting other countries. Although, I was rather surprised by what Folly said about his country when he was here because he says many want still the effects of imperialism upon their country and they like the, quote, unquote, as he said, the handout.

It was shocking when he told me that, when he said that out loud to all of us. But anyways, politically, we tend to view dependence, like in this case, imperialism as something negative.

[4:24] In some cases, rightly so. All the while, people disregard nationalism too, which is the opposite extreme. But when you think about it, we don't like the phrase dependence at all.

Especially us as Americans. We're not dependent upon anybody. I mean, Google's definition, which is, that's the right definition, right? To be controlled by someone or something else, do you want to be controlled by someone or something else?

Synonyms that Google gives. Helplessness, weakness, subservience. Well, who wants that?

Who wants to feel helpless? Who wants to be considered weak? Do you want to be in a position where you're subservient?

Nobody wants to be seen like this or regarded in this way. Which I believe is a reason why many people resist the gospel.

[5:39] Because this is the exact way we need to present ourselves before God. bow down and worship Jesus, the Messiah, Son of God, King of Israel.

This is the driving theme of Matthew's gospel. He's calling his readers to respond. Somebody calling him to respond. And then specifically here in our passage, trusting him or depending on him. Trusting Jesus. Depending on Jesus. What are you doing when you're bowing down and worshipping Jesus? You're trusting him.

You're depending upon him. That's what this part of Matthew's gospel is calling us to respond in this way.

Some statements for you, we accomplish nothing unless we sincerely trust or depend on Christ. We stagnate unless we say, thy will be done.

[6:54] You know, and this is not just for us as Christians. If you're here and you're not a Christian, this is for you because you need to come to a place where you begin your relationship with Jesus in this way with these four words, thy will be done in my life.

I'm tired of living life the way I want to live. I submit myself to you. I follow you. I turn from my sin and I trust Christ.

I depend on you, Jesus. That's how you need to respond today. Thy will be done. I trust you. I depend on you.

Oh, and yet, this is not just for someone who doesn't know Jesus. We're talking about this in the first hour, about trusting Christ holistically, but then there's different areas in our lives where God challenges us to trust Him.

Events, circumstances, situations transpire in life. God challenges us where we say, okay, I have to trust you in this and depend on you in this.

[8:14] You know what I'm talking about. What does God want most from us? Trust. Dependence. Why?

Because by His very definition, it denotes subservience, subordination, reliance, need. You say, what matters most is you. Lord, not me.

And it's humbling because you're acknowledging your weakness. You're acknowledging that you're helpless. It's very humbling.

And when we come down from the mountaintop experience, that's the catch phrase, right? Or no, the catch phrase is, so you can come have a worship experience, right?

But then when life hits you, when you get back to real living, that is when the true attitude of our heart is going to be clearly revealed.

[9:26] God wants most from us that trust, dependence, in a relational, loving way, where we say, what matters most is you, not me.

And it's a heart that says, what matters most is you. Is it a heart that says, what matters most is you, Lord, I trust you, or is it a heart that takes matters into your own hands, your own power?

Because we can narrow this passage down to one word, trust, or depend, dependence. That was the problem with these disciples.

The problem was their lack of faith. And not just them, but also the crowds. And that lack of faith in the disciples was what contributed to their inability as opposed to Jesus' amazing ability.

I mean, here you have these guys, the foundational authority in the church. Remember we looked at that in Matthew chapter 16? They needed to be ready to do actions in the absence of Jesus.

[10:54] they were going to be the foundational pillars of the church. And yet they were missing the most important ingredients.

If you're going to make chocolate chip cookies, my friend, why did you forget the chocolate chips? Are you crazy? If you hand me a chocolate chip cookie with no chocolate chips, I'm going to throw it back in your face and say, how dare you?

I'm just kidding, I won't do that. No, I probably will. No, the most important aspects of everything is the foundational authority of the church.

It was not chocolate, but it was them trusting Jesus. Jesus was preparing them for what they would be able to do when he left.

Strong faith. Not necessarily amount, the extent, the strength.

[11:55] I mean, you have such a, what a contrast from last week's message. Last week's message, glorious, heavenly experience to difficult earthly suffering. Jesus in all his glory.

Peter like, oh, should we make three tans? This is my beloved son, obey him. Then they come down from the mountain. Back to life.

Back to reality. Back to the here and now as the song goes. From glory and conquest to frustration and defeat. And unbelief.

May we keep our eyes on Jesus. You know, did you notice the theme in the songs that we were singing? Faith, faith. I'm not as dumb as I look, huh?

Notice the first point. The lack of faith in disciples, verses 14, really 14 through 20, starting verse 14. Coming to the multitude, a man came to Jesus, falling down on his knees before him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic.

[13:09] Kneeling down before him, bowing down, the right response to Jesus, pleading for Jesus to show mercy to his son, his son, who would have these epileptic seizures, which occurred, notice, he says, he's suffering very much, she often falls into the fire, and into the water, a sinister dark action by the demon, demonizing him.

The word there, lunatic, etymologically, is where they get the word, moonstruck. Interesting. In ancient times, people who were epileptics were said to be moonstruck.

Struck by the moon in a crazy way. And notice how this boy suffered a great deal from these attacks, which we could see, it's not just that he had epilepsy, physiological issues, but there were spiritual issues as well.

The demon would use the disease that he had in a sinister dark way to try and get the child to kill himself. So two issues, physiological and spiritual.

Keep heart, verse 16, and I brought him to your disciples, and they were not able to heal him. what was most striking was that the disciples were not able to heal this boy.

[14:46] It's confusing given Jesus' commission, the responsibility he gave to them. Remember chapter 10? Cast out demons, and they were not able to do this.

That's striking. Odd. we find out later why this was the case. They were not trusting God, but their own ability.

And look how Jesus responds. He responds in exasperation. Verse 17, answering Jesus said, O unbelieving and crooked or perverted generation, how long shall I be with you?

How long shall I bear you? Bring him here to me. Not only a lack of faith, unbelieving, but also perverted or crooked or distorted.

Those are different ways you can translate that word. But to whom did Jesus say this? Was it to the Father?

[15:58] Was it to the crowds? Was it to the disciples? Was it to everybody? Who did Jesus mean when he said this generation?

Well, usually, it's all people alive at that time. Which people? Which ones? Well, let's narrow this down, shall we?

Given the lack of faith Jesus described, would describe about his disciples in verse 20, it seems that this statement was directed at them. But how would they be distorted?

That's kind of weird. thought of the word. Maybe, though they believed Jesus to be the Messiah, they resorted to a formula. We follow this formula.

Well, that was the wrong F word, not formula, it's faith. faith. But, it seems like he was talking about the disciples. But then also, given the lack of faith in the crowds, and the Father, and the fact that the people expected miracles without understanding Christ's true identity and purpose or mission, he was exasperated with them too.

[17:16] Because remember, all throughout Matthew's gospel, the crowds, they just want to be wowed. They wanted to be amazed.

And even reference to the religious leaders, they wanted, demanded a sign, make something, we didn't believe you, Jesus.

So we know this to be true from the crowds. So it's like Jesus was exasperated, not with just his disciples, not with just the crowds, not with the Father, with everyone. How long shall I bear with you?

So even this father did not recognize Jesus' identity, though he believed Jesus could heal his son. I mean, Jesus was full of compassion and mercy, yet here we see him become exasperated with their lack of trust in him, and their desire for miracles and or a good show without humbling themselves before him.

One writer put it like this, as the cross approaches, Jesus had quote unquote prophetic exasperation. one writer was interesting about this, that one writer that was doing my study, he brought up a passage, it reminds us of Yahweh's reply to Israel in Numbers chapter 14 verse 27. [18 : 55] You don't need to turn there, but I will because I want to read it. A little history, 12 spies, they go into Canaan, they check it out, two spies, Joshua and Canaan, they come back, we can take them, we can trust the Lord, yes, they're crazy, huge people, massive, but we can take them, but the other 10 spies are like, no, no, no, we can do that.

So then the people rebelled, they said, that's it, we're done, we're going to elect a new leader, we're going to go back to Egypt, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And listen to what the Lord says, Yahweh says this in Numbers 14 verse 27, and he was speaking to Moses and Aaron, from verse 26 verse 27, how long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against me?

I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel which they are making against me. Amen. Amen. Yahweh practically asked the same question of Moses and Aaron as Jesus asked here in Matthew chapter 17.

So this means the Father, the crowds, even the disciples were almost complaining, grumbling. Where's their trust?

Where's their faith? it can become exasperating to God when his people don't listen to him and lack trusting him and what he's given to them.

[20 : 44] They disbelieve his promises, his faithfulness, his goodness, and his grace. Grace. And yet brethren, this is why Jesus had to die.

Because our unbelief is sin that needed to be atoned. And that's why faith is a gift that's given to you.

Because you will not conjure that up on your own. Daniel, in your prayer, you prayed this, and that's kind of been resonating with me for the past few weeks.

I don't know if you noticed. I've been saying this, praying this, help our unbelief. Have you heard me say that? It's been in my head a couple months, whatever, weeks.

Help! Help! Help! My default is not to trust you. Help our unbelief.

[22 : 08] Notice what Jesus, how he acts here in verse 18. And Jesus rebuked it, not him, not the son, I believe he's talking about the demon, and the demon came out of him and the boy was cured at once, literally at that hour.

Throwing it out of the boy, he was healed that very hour when Jesus threw the, which means that he cast out the demon, it's true, but he also healed the boy of his epilepsy.

He did both. He healed him of the epilepsy and threw out the demon. In the midst of this, Jesus still showed amazing mercy, even though the people toward whom his compassion consistently tested and doubted him.

Even though the people toward whom was his compassion consistently doubted and tested him, he still showed his amazing mercy. Praise God, he keeps showing his merciful compassion, grace towards us.

Yet be careful not to test him in his grace. Hebrews chapter 10 verse 26 to 27 and verse 30 to 31 tells us this, for if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries, the Lord will judge his people.

[23 : 43] is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The Lord knows those who are his.

2 Timothy chapter 2 verse 19 may we not spurn or take advantage of the merciful graciousness of God but say God help my unbelief, my faith in you is weak, I lack it and I know it, be merciful to me. This bothered the disciples, verse 19. Coming to Jesus privately the disciples said why could we ourselves, emphasis, why could we ourselves not cast it out?

What did we do wrong? I mean we follow the right formula come on but that was the problem.

It wasn't about following a formula or doing this or doing that. It was about dependence. They ended up lacking the most important quality to everything. If the ingredients call for a certain amount of

salt, like a teaspoon of salt, salt, and you put a cup of salt in, that's going to make a big difference with those chocolate chip cookies.

[25 : 16] Ew. They missed the most important quality to everything, faith. Notice what Jesus says, verse 20. He said to them, because of your small faith.

faith. They were weak in how much they trusted God and Jesus. We are weak in our belief. We must admit our weakness.

We must cry out for mercy. We must fight for faith. faith. I keep picking on Daniel.

I didn't plan on this. This one I did. Daniel, I think it was like May or June or July, something like that. We were conversing email and then he gave this phrase, we're fighting for faith.

Remember that? That stuck with me too. Fight for faith. It's like you have to fight for it. Because it comes naturally to us.

[26 : 24] We have to go after it and make it for effort to trust God. We must fight for faith. We're weak in our belief. We must admit our weakness and cry out for mercy.

God, help my unbelief. I'm going to fight to trust you. Even though everything else is screaming at me, that God is an idiot and doesn't know what he's doing.

Which leads us to the second point. There's two points. Lack of faith and then Jesus called to faith and its striking results. There again, verse 20. Truly I say to you, if you, excuse me, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say, this mountain move from here to there and it shall move.

Here's Jesus call to faith and its striking results. Christ used a hyperbole to challenge their lack of faith, to call them to trust him. It's about true, real faith, even though it's small.

Because it's not about amount, it's about extent. Though small in size, if it's true and real, it has great, amazing potential.

[27 : 40] potential. So the question you should have is, how much potential? So we'll try this again. If it's small in size, excuse me, though it's small in size, if it's true and real, it has great, amazing potential.

You're supposed to say, how much potential? How much potential? I'm glad you asked. Able to move mountains. mountains. That's pretty good.

This is a common phrase among the Jews to describe how you can accomplish something that's impossible. Difficult. Very difficult. Funny, when I was a kid, I tried moving a mountain.

You ever tried that? When I was a kid, I heard this verse, I believe that mountain is going to move. I was disappointed it didn't move. Although the next day we had an earthquake.

No, I'm just kidding. It's because you live in California. See, it happened. No, just kidding. How much potential? Able to move mountains.

[28 : 51] Jesus used this figure of speech to help them understand if they trust him, God would through them. These guys, the foundational authority of the church, they would fulfill his commission to build his kingdom and perform compassionate miracles, but they had to look to him and act in humble trust.

And that was the one thing that you guys were lacking, he said to his disciples. I'll touch on briefly, verse 21, it says, but this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.

It's most likely was added by scribes to assimilate with Matthew 9, verse 29. Did I say Matthew? I meant Mark, sorry, thank you. Mark 9, verse 29.

It doesn't mean Jesus didn't say this, but probably wasn't in Matthew's gospel. Usually, not always, usually the shorter reading is the original. But still the point is being driven home.

The point is this, we must be mindful of the influence of our culture, which exudes spiritual and moral values contrary to God and his kingdom, i.e.

[30 : 13] lacking faith and trust in God. Everything in our culture shouts at you to distrust in this.

Everything. One writer puts it like this, faith's power, quote, is in the person to whom is directed.

So true. Do we really believe God that he is who he says he is? Yes, the disciples had weak faith, but it was weak, and for obvious reasons on this occasion, it was not strong, it was not real.

Christ challenged them to have real faith, even if it was small, because again, it's not about amount, it's about extent. It's about extent. And the problem was they took their eyes off of Jesus and looked at all the obstacles that laid before them.

Huh. Well, that sounds familiar. Do you remember seeing that anywhere else in Matthew's Gospel, where someone took their eyes off Jesus and started looking at the obstacles that was laid before them?

[31:44] Remember Peter? Just like Peter did when he stepped out of the boat into the storm tossed sea, and he started looking at all the obstacles and he began to sink.

It still rings true here. And this is what we do too. We take our eyes off of Christ, and we look at the obstacles.

It's so easy. It's our default position. At times it can be. We take our eyes off of Jesus, and we look at our obstacles, we look at the circumstances, we look at the events laid before us, and then we just sink.

We looked to their own abilities, their own self-sufficiency, their own power, simply themselves, which is all contrary to faith.

No matter the obstacles, the circumstances, or the events that come our way in life, God calls us to dependence, to trust, to lean on Him.

[33:21] Notice the last phrase Jesus gives in verse 20, and nothing shall be impossible to you. Ah, people use this, nothing's impossible to me, I'm going to jump off this building.

that's not exactly what Jesus had in mind. It's not about getting God to do whatever we want Him to do.

That's not what that verse means. Only a fleshly, crooked, perverse mind would think that. It's not about God doing what we demand according to our will.

John Calvin says this about this verse, quote, he does not mean that God will give us whatever comes heedlessly into our minds or mouths.

In fact, since there's nothing more contradictory to faith than the foolish and unconsidered wishes of our flesh, it follows that where faith reigns, there is no asking for anything indiscriminately.

[34:27] End quote. John Calvin got it right. another writer says this, we trust God to quote, empower us to extend his kingdom through word and deed, not to do whatever we want or get whatever we want.

Faith is believing God will do what's best for his king, his kingdom and for us. trust is about us doing what he wants us to do which is trust him.

What does God want most from us? Trust. Dependence. Because by his very definition it denotes subordination, reliance, I need you.

Lord, what matters most to me is you. You being more to me than anything. So I was in relationship, there's love and there's putting myself underneath him and saying I trust you, I love you, therefore I will trust you.

And it's humbling because you're acknowledging your weakness. You're acknowledging that you're helpless. And I mean I don't like doing that, do you?

[36:01] That don't feel good? We accomplish nothing unless we sincerely trust or depend on Christ. We stagnate as Christians unless we say thy will be done, trust him, depend on him.

towards the end of my study for this passage. What came to my mind was a song by Hillary Scott, thy will be done.

She says, I'm so confused. I know I heard you loud and clear, so I followed through, somehow I ended up here. I don't want to think I may never understand that my broken heart is part of your plan.

When I try to pray, all I got is hurt, and these four words, thy will be done. Thy will be done.

Thy will be done. I know you're good, but this don't feel good right now. I know you think of things I could never think about. It's hard to count it all joy, distracted by the noise, just trying to make sense of all your promises.

[37:27] Sometimes I got to stop, remember that you're God, and she says, I am not. So, thy will be done, thy will be done, thy will be done, like a child on my knees, all that comes to me is, thy will be done, thy will be done, thy will.

I know you see me. I know you hear me, Lord. Your plans are for me, the goodness you have in store.

Let's pray. God, Father, we don't want this moment to go away.

We're having a nice mountaintop experience, being together, singing together, hearing your word. we feel the conviction of your word, thank you, and then we have to go outside, and get back in our cars, and live the life that you've called us to live.

and the action that you bring toward us, a way for us to respond, the way to respond, thy will be done.

[39 : 17] I trust you. We don't know how things are going to happen, blah, blah, blah, blah, but we're going to make this decision, and trust you, and move forward.

That's all we can do. Thank you for your word, the wisdom that we can take from your word, and yet when it's all said and done at the end of the day, may our trust be found in you.

Help our unbelief. If you would, take these few moments. You know, we do this each week. let the word of truth penetrate deep into your soul.

The circumstances, events, situations that you're facing today, this past week, past month, bring it before the Lord. Lord, in these things, help me to trust you.

let your mind ponder these things just for a few moments, and do giving, sing, pray. Let this be a time between you and the Lord to focus, ponder, and pray.

[40 : 50] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.