

A Formula For Living

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Preacher: Harry Robinson

[0 : 00] The archway, well I've built a little arch like this to make sure that you all have adequate fuel so that our flight will get to where it's going to go. And this machine is the way of testing.

Do you know what kind of fuel it is? Well, that's the thing you're going to find out today as to what kind of fuel it is. Now, this is the machine, sorry, and in the middle here is this, you see.

And when you go under this, if you have an adequate supply of fuel, you'll find that the bell rings.

And if you haven't, then we won't let you on the plane.

Now, you may not know what I'm talking about, which is possible. So in order to help you figure out what I'm talking about, I want to tell you what this fuel is made of.

And if you want to figure out what the fuel is made of, you turn to page 216 in the back of your pew Bible. And there you find Peter's first letter.

[1 : 12] Now, this is a bit of a question that I want. Do any of you think you know what the fuel is? Any of the children in the congregation think they could guess what it is?

You've got to have this, because if you don't have this, we don't fly. And if we don't fly, then you're all wasting your time. So it's important that we all have it.

And I want to show you what it's made up of. Now, it's important that you don't read this whole verse. Just read up to the part where I say stop, because if you read the rest of it, you'll know the secret.

And I don't want you to know the secret. So you promise not to look at the rest of the verse just yet. All right. Chapter 1, verse 8 of the first letter of Peter.

And it says there, Without having seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him.

[2 : 17] And stop there. I don't want to tell you what the rest of it says. But what it does say, in effect, is that this fuel is made up of three ingredients.

And I want you to be sure that you all have them. Now, the first ingredient you become aware of, if you look at that verse, the clues to it are, Without having seen him, you don't, you've never seen him.

It emphasizes that by saying it twice. Do you see how it says it twice? Look there carefully. Chapter 1, verse 8. Without having seen him, you love him.

Though you do not now see him, you believe in him. Now, the first thing that you have to know about that verse is that there is somebody who's spoken of all the way through it as him.

And who is the him that it speaks about? The him that it speaks about is the Lord Jesus.

[3 : 25] And you haven't seen him. You don't see him now, and you haven't seen him in all of your lives. Not with your eyes, as you can look out and see one another. You haven't seen him.

But in spite of that fact, you love him. And without ever having seen him, you believe in him. Now, so he is, in a sense, the source of this fuel, whatever it is.

And there is something that he teaches us to learn to believe in him and to love him without ever having seen him.

What would that be, do you think, that would help you to do that? Do you know what it is?

Everybody that ran into him reacted to him one way or another.

We were studying last Saturday how when Zacchaeus met him, he came clamoring down out of the tree, and he just had a great time. And then another lady who was a very unhappy lady and having a miserable time with herself, she met him, and it just changed her whole life simply because she met him and talked to him.

[4 : 40] And another sad, sad lady was walking out of the village where she'd lived all her life, and her husband was dead, and her only son was dead, and they were walking out of the village to go

to the cemetery to bury her only son.

And she met Jesus, and Jesus raised her son from the dead. And that made her extremely happy, as you can imagine. So that the hymn in chapter 1 in verse 8 is very important, a very important person indeed.

And he is somebody who, without having seen him, and without ever having seen him, you're given something with relationship to him, which is hope.

And that's the first part of the fuel. You've got to have hope. All right? Now, Paul tells us that if you can see the thing that you hope in, then it's no longer hope.

It's got to be something that you don't see. You don't fully understand. So one of the things that him, that is the Lord Jesus, is able to do is to give you hope.

[5 : 54] Now, if a person has hope, one of the things that that means is that you haven't got all your eggs in this little basket right here.

That is, you have something that you're hoping for, something you haven't seen, and yet it can inspire faith in you, something that you haven't, someone you have never seen, and yet you find you love.

Now, that's what hope is. It's in something which is beyond our sight, and yet is the most important thing to us. So the first ingredient in this fuel that we've got to have is hope.

Have you got it? Where does it come from? It comes from him. And he teaches us to hope.

A lot of people figure they don't have to hope. They got it all made right where they are right now.

And they don't have to worry about the future because it's all here right now. Well, Jesus says you've got to learn to hope.

[7 : 07] And what we've got to do, if we're going to get this plane to fly, is we've got to hope in him whom we've never seen and whom we can't see right now.

So that the difficult thing is, if you happen to be here this morning, you may wonder who we're talking about. You may not know him.

And how can you hope in somebody you don't know? So it's terribly important to get to know him.

When you get to know him, the thing you learn is to love him.

You can't really get to know him without loving him. Is that right? That doesn't always work, does it?

Lots of people come along to lots of happy wives and say, my, your husband's a wonderful man.

That's only because you don't know him. That's the kind of answer you get.

[8 : 16] Or they might come along to a proud mother and say, you've got such lovely children.

Yeah, that's because you don't laugh to live with them. But wouldn't it be wonderful if there was somebody who, the better you got to know him, the more you loved him.

And that's who Jesus is. He's someone, the better you know him, the more you love him. Not the less, but the more. And that's why it's important to get involved in going to Monday Church Club, and it's important to get involved in Bible study, and it's important to pray, and it's important to do things, simply because in that way, you come to know him, and as you come to know him, you come to love him.

So that to your faith is added, to your hope is added love. So an ingredient of this fuel that we have to make to fly the plane is first hope in someone we have never seen, and it's love for that person, whom though we have never seen, yet we have got to know him.

And he is the one who invites you to come to know him. In the most gracious invitation you will ever receive, even if you got an envelope with gold all around the outside, and Buckingham Palace etched on it, and everything was beautifully printed and embossed, and it said, you are invited to a garden party, or something important like that, by Her Majesty the Queen.

That would be a very important invitation, and you would no doubt put it among your treasures, and probably go to the garden party, no matter how far you had to go. But there is a much lovelier invitation, which the Lord Jesus gives to us.

[10 : 25] And it says, he says, come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. And he says, learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.

And so, as you learn of him, you love him. The difficulty is that you can't love somebody you don't know.

And so, part of the problem is coming to know him so that you can come to love him. To talk to people who know him. To pray.

To read the Bible. To do all the things by which, coming to know him, you will come to love him. Then, in the fuel, you will have two of the essential ingredients. The first one is hope, and the second one is love, and the third one is faith.

Have you ever said, I faith, you faith, he faiths? You don't say that, do you? Because there's another kind of word which you use for faith. Do you know what it is?

[11 : 41] Faith is a noun, but what's the verb? If you're using it, well, it's believe, and without having seen him, you believe in him.

Can I look at my notes to find out what I know about this? Because, I know that I know a lot about it, but I've forgotten all that I know about it, and so I have to be reminded, which is the same thing with you, you see.

You know a lot of things, but you need someone to remind you about them, in order that you might know who it is that you believe, and know what it is that you believe.

And that's why I have to tell you about it, and I have to look at my notes, because they say, well, tell them, remind them, that this kind of believing is not something that you do, say you were traveling along here, it's not something you do here, and then maybe again here, and then maybe again here, but it's something that you do all the way along.

That's what believing is. It's trusting in him, and believing in him, all the time, and in all the different circumstances of your life. Even when people ask hard questions, you learn to believe in him, and these people were compelled to believe in him.

[13 : 13] They knew that they couldn't turn away from him. And you see, one of the reasons people don't like going to Bible study, and lots of people don't like going to Bible study, and one of the reasons that people don't like going to church is that they know that if they come to know him, they will love him.

And as they come to understand him, they will come to put their faith in him. And once they've put their faith in him, they're going to find it a bit costly, as the lesson that Sue read us this morning tells us about.

So let's just avoid the whole thing and live in the bliss of our ignorance. And of course, you can do that, but the plane won't ever take off because you won't have the ingredients and the fuel that make it fly because there's got to be hope and there's got to be love and there's got to be faith or belief.

And when you get them all together, mix them up and something altogether different happens. Now, the thing you've got to discover about yourself is whether you've got it.

And the thing I need to know is whether you've got it. Because if you haven't got it and you get on board this airplane, we might get up in the air and suddenly everything depends on you and you haven't got it and we're done.

[14 : 44] So we've got to have this test. So what happens now is that if you've got it and walk under here, the bell will ring. Would anybody like to try and see if they've got it?

Step right up. We're going to have it up here. We're going to have it here every Sunday now and everybody that comes to church has to go through this machine.

Would you walk under? I'm sorry because I would have thought you had it. See, when I walk under it rings. What's the trouble with you?

Try again. Well done. You know, don't you, that this is all a lot of silly nonsense?

I didn't mean to fool you into thinking it was real at all, but the way that it's talked about in Peter, if you go back to the sixth chapter, you'll see that God is interested in running a test on you as a Christian because he says this thing that you have is much more precious than gold.

[16 : 01] And he said even gold is put in a fire to see if it's good or not. and he says the thing that you have is going to be tested too.

And you're going to find yourself in all sorts of quite different things. You're going to find you to find yourself in all sorts of quite different things.

You are going to find you to find what you are going to find