

## **The Faith of Jesus**

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Today I would like to talk about something that is very important to those of us who are approaching the very difficult times associated with the end of the age. As I speak with more and more brethren who have made the decision not to finish the walk they started in Christ, I see a key element missing in the commitment they once professed in Christ and that is what we are going to focus on today. It is vital to our spiritual survival and can be considered vital to our physical survival as well, as the bride of Christ.

Let's turn to Luke 17: 20-37;

“Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom Of God would come He answered them and said (keep in mind we are seeing a specific question being asked by a very specific group of people, the religious teachers of that time), the Kingdom of God does not come with observation nor will they say, see here! Or see there! (Remember the Jews seek for a sign and they had a very specific idea or teaching as to what that kingdom would be. In essence it would set them, the Pharisees, over the Gentiles, and in particular, the Romans. That is what they were looking for in a Messiah who would bring them their take on a kingdom. Now Christ knew that so look at His first response, the Kingdom of God does not come with observation. His emphasis was not on the physical. It can obviously be manifested as such but it is not “physical” in nature.) For indeed the Kingdom of God is in your midst. Then He said to the disciples, the days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see. And they will say to you, Look here! Or look there! Do not go after or follow. For as the lightning which flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. (He makes it very clear here that He is not coming secretly. When He comes everybody is going to know it. It will be as obvious as lightning flashing across the sky. You can't miss it! And that is one of the signs of the day of Pentecost as scripture so boldly tells us.) But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man. They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. (So life went on and they were having a great time. The point being, they were going about business as usual, even though there will be horrendous things taking place all around them) Likewise as it was also in the days

of Lot; they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built, but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed all. (Christ is making it very clear here how all of this will come about and it is in direct relationship to a question asked by the Pharisees, “when would the kingdom come?”) Even so it will be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lots wife. (Lots wife turned back and suffered the consequences. Remember the example of Lot as well. He wanted to tarry and turn back to see if his sons-in-law were coming, his daughters, the whole bit. He was not supposed to tarry but get out fast not to delay, not to yearn for what he was leaving) **Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.** I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed; the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two will be grinding together (this is a very clear reference to the time of year this will be taking place. Barley and wheat are ground after they are harvested) the one will be taken and the other left. Two will be in the field; and one will be taken and the other left. And they answered and said to Him; where Lord? So He said to them, wherever the body is there the eagles will be gathered together. (Now what body do we think He is talking about here? He is talking about the body of Christ at His return. Remember He is the head and the rest of the body is going to be where the head is. This is all going to come together.)

Let’s look at chapter 18 now with all this in mind for this is all a continuous statement of events from Christ as to a chronology of events, a sequence of events.

1; “Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought (#1) **to pray** and (#2) **not lose heart**, (This is the focus of the parable) saying; there was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him saying, avenge me of my adversary. (She had no legal defender. A widow seeking relief is very important to this context) And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her lest by her continual coming she weary me.” (He decided to give her what she wanted because she continually pressed forward for what she wanted. Keep in mind there is no mention here as to whether her request was just or not. That is not the lesson being taught by Christ in this parable. He is going to give it to her because of **her zeal in pursuing it** with him to the point it was wearying him because of her steadfast pursuit. No matter how unjustly we are treated we must not use that as an excuse, an out, to stop coming before our God and Judge, and praying to Him. We must not let the actions, or for that matter, the lack of action of others to be reason for us to lose heart and thus our zeal.) Then the Lord said, hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? (Brethren, we have been and will be tested over and over on this point. So was

Christ. So if a judge who cared absolutely nothing for this woman would grant her relief how much more will our loving Father do for us! We must not lose heart; we must not throw in the towel. He tells us here we always ought to pray and not lose heart. We must pray for relief from this world and the prince of the power of the air which are both in defiance of God. We must continue in petitioning our God and bear long with the injustice which surrounds us. Remember our study in the past; God is not "fair" He is just? Christ is leading us to a very important lesson.)

8; "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. (When our relief comes it will come in a flash as He told us and it will be entirely in His time not ours) Nevertheless when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

Remember the context of Luke 17 which we read earlier about he who was on the housetop and he who was in the field. Many events in our lives do not take place according to our time frame or our liking for that matter. We had better not reply, "Can you just give me a minute so I can..." Two in one bed and two grinding at the mill but only one in each circumstance will be taken. It reminds me of the parable of the 10 virgins. Two can be together and seemingly, functioning the same. But! None of this can be separated. It all goes together. When Christ comes will He find faith on the earth or will He find people who have stopped praying, stopped turning to Him, and who have lost heart. Their focus will not be on Him for they are preoccupied with their daily grind and associated troubles, thus we see the example of a widow. Many in society today, as in the past, prey on and trouble widows. He is pointing out to us that we must not lose our focus as to who gives us our relief and how it comes. We will be tested and troubled greatly at the end of the age as to whether we will keep the faith. That is a very simple fact spoken about and patterned in scripture. Some today have walked away from what they started in Christ because of self-fulfilling desires. How completely meaningless is that! How cheap is that! That is in part what Christ is talking about here. Where is the zeal to pray and not lose heart? What a sobering question to the body of Christ. This is not a statement but a question He possess to each of us individually. The Greek word for faith here is #4102 pistis. We have covered it extensively in the past. Strong's says of it; from #3982, persuasion; i.e. credence, moral conviction, a religious truth, the truthfulness of God, or of a teacher, a special reliance upon Christ for salvation, abstractive; constancy of such; etc.

If we do not understand what this Greek word encompasses and stands for we will fall short of its purpose as used by God. Vines says of it; pistis, primarily; firm persuasion, a conviction based upon hearing (not a sign) akin to peitho to persuade is used always in the New Testament of faith in God or Christ or things spiritual. Vines goes on and says a lot more about this word. It is obvious that trust is a primary ingredient of faith, a trust which encourages us to endure and

persevere when all else seems hapless, hopeless, and helpless. Yes it is a firm persuasion, a firm conviction in the word of God. It is a very deep trust placed in Him.

In Hebrews 11:1 we read; “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” No one else’s definition of faith counts! To a lot of people this definition makes no sense. Let’s analyze this a bit, “The evidence of things not seen.” One will ask, how can you have evidence of something you can’t see? How can you have substance of something that is only hoped for? Those questions are the grounds for the Pharisaical way. But God says it is faith!!! The Pharisee says that is foolishness. When was the last time Christ came and sat on the end of your bed in conversation? It has never happened and it won’t happen. Yet you believe without ever having seen Him in the flesh. You believe He did come in the flesh and that He existed prior to it and still does now. Faith is very important, of utmost importance in our personal relationship with our Betrothed. It is also of great value to God for it gives glory unto the Father through Christ.

John 20:24-30, “But Thomas, called Didymus, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, we have seen the Lord. But he said to them, unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe. And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, peace to you! Then He said to Thomas, reach your finger here, and look at my hands; and reach your hand here and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving but believing. (Christ is offering him the very terms in which he said his belief would be based on) And Thomas answered and said to Him, my Lord and my God! Jesus said to him, Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. (Of course he did for he knew first hand that Christ had died and had been buried before his very eyes but he needed a physical sign to believe.) Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed. And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book.”

The Greek here for believe and believing is #4100 pisteuo. Strong’s says it is from #4102 (which is pistis) to have faith (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing) i.e. credit, by implication to entrust (especially ones spiritual wellbeing in Christ).

Vines says of pisteuo; “to believe, also to be persuaded of, and hence to place confidence in, to trust signifies in this sense of the word, reliance upon not mere credence or mental acceptance.” In other words it is not just mental acceptance but it must show in our actions or outward expression, or better put, in our works.

Let’s look at John 6:26-29; “Jesus answered them and said; most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do

not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him. Then they said to Him, what should we do that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said to them, this is the work of God, **that you believe in Him whom He sent.**" (We will be tested on that point brethren.)

John 3:16; "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life."

These two Greek words we are looking at here are intricately tied together. Pisteuo "believe" comes from pistis, "faith." Remember back in Luke 18:8 where we read, "Nevertheless when the Son of Man comes will He really find faith on the earth?" This brethren, is a very special faith, a firm conviction and belief, an unending trust in God almighty. It is not founded in any man or organization of men. It is very special to the body of Christ, the Saints, and is required for us to complete our walk in our commitment to Christ and the Father.

Matt 24:13 tells us; "But he who endures to the end shall be saved."

Jesus Christ endured to the very end. Everyone else around Him deserted Him. They feared what man could do to them. Many of us may have had a small taste of that already when we would not deny His name when others were fleeing from it and we will go through it again in more intensified situations. Let there be no mistake or doubt about that. Just look at the time frame which is being addressed here. It is established throughout verses 1-9.

Matt 24:10 says, "And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another."

There are many who have had to endure a taste of that when they were persecuted, and ousted in some case from the organizations of men they once fellowshiped with. It's going to get much worse, for that was not imprisonment let alone unto death, even though the great ones tried to intimidate them by telling them they would be spiritually dead if not under their governance. Verse 11 instructs and warns us, "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound the love of many will grow cold." That is rampant today. We have false prophets, false apostles, and every kind of deceit imaginable turning brethren against brethren. Some false apostles/prophets, command their followers to not even have contact with mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, who are not in their clutches, or as they call them, churches.

Well don't be soon shaken by such things for Christ sat before many accusers. I'm sure many of them had at one time followed Him to hear His words and works of hope. Now they paraded before Him accusing Him of many, many things. They twisted His words to make it sound like

He was a blasphemer. And through this everyone deserted Him except His Father. False accusations were brought against Him because many were offended by His words. That is something we all need to consider. I know for a fact that many of the words I speak offend people in church organizations as well as people who are not affiliated with any church organization. In fact they also offend some very large factions in society who function contrary to scripture and to that what is patterned in nature. Christ tells us His words were His Father's words. I have heard people chastising what they hear from some because they use too many scriptures. Delusional thinking like that can lead to insane activities caused by offense. I have looked at the hate in the eyes of those who call themselves members of the body at such times. And yet through all that we must pray. That's the only way through it. We don't cower down, we don't throw in the towel, and for that matter we don't smack them in the mouth. We pray for them and for ourselves while giving testimony of the hope which is in us. That can be a difficult thing to do being flesh and blood. Christ certainly knows that for He experienced it in the flesh. Christ could have fought but He chose not to. By that I am clearly stating that when being falsely accused and slapped and kicked around for the sake of the word of God He did not retaliate with striking back or having a legion of angels appear and do it for Him. Which is actually comical to a point, for a single holy angel could wipe out everything if God permitted. Christ was very cognizant that He was to die on the cross. He chose to do so. If He or His servants had have fought to prevent that, we would not have had a Savior. He didn't try to save His life. That's the whole basis for what Christ told His disciples in the garden at the time of His arrest. I hear preachers use that incidence to proclaim we must never defend ourselves; that Christ forbid us from doing so. Let's just touch on that delusion for a moment. In Luke 18 we can read about this account in the garden. Christ was being arrested according to the plan established since the foundation of the earth. In verse 10-11 we read, "Then Simon Peter, having a sword (imagine that!), drew it and struck the high priests servant, and cut off his right ear. The servants name was Malchus. Then Jesus said to Peter, (you dirty murdering fool throw that sword away. Not quite) put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup My Father has given Me?"

Do we get the point He is clearly making here. If He or His servants were to fight and prevent Him from being crucified and shedding His blood we would all be in a heap of trouble and He would have broken the pattern of His death established so long ago. He could not defend Himself here for He was to be as a lamb going to the slaughter. Look how Christ details this in simple to understand language in Matthew 26:52-54; "Then Jesus said to him, put your sword in its place for all who take the sword will die by the sword. (Christ had to die on the cross) Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father. And He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? **How then could the scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"**

**That is the point of the exercise. Not some emasculating example of negating ones responsibility to defending his loved ones!**

Hebrews 13: 8 tells us, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday (first covenant), today (second covenant), and forever (the Kingdom)." This is the same Being who commanded Israel in many instances to kill every man, woman, and child. David was a man after His own heart! He was surrounded by killing by his own hand and through command to others. Now somehow we are not allowed to defend ourselves. If someone attempts to hurt or kill our loved ones we have a moral obligation to prevent that with any means possible. However if we are attacked because of our beliefs and walk in Christ then we are to go forth as a lamb to the slaughter in that we can't use any deadly means to prevent it. Two very different and clearly defined sets of rules based on the situation. Unlike Christ who went in silence to fulfill the scriptures, we on the other hand, are able to use the sword of the spirit and wisdom of God in such instances to defend our faith. This is not real deep stuff brethren. It is all recorded for us in simple scripture. 1 Peter 3:13-17 is just one very clear example of it as we will see later.

I have also heard preachers quote Revelation 13:10 to support their premise that we are not allowed to use force against one who would do us bodily harm. That is taken so far out of context it too qualifies as delusional. The context could not be clearer. We have the Beast given authority to do what? Verse 7; "And it was granted to him to make war with the **saints** and to **overcome them**. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation." Yes we the saints will be overcome by the beast physically, just as Christ was overcome to fulfill the scriptures in the time and place of Gods choosing. He laid down His life for the scriptures to be fulfilled and to be our Savior. We will also have to follow suit as to the scripture. Look what verse 10 actually says. "He who leads into captivity (that certainly won't be the saints doing the leading) shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword (not the saints doing the killing) must be killed by the sword. **Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.**"

We the saints will be enduring and suffering all this; being led into captivity and being killed by the sword; **with patience and faith**. That is the same patience and faith which Christ exhibited during His being led into captivity and being killed. God tells us here that He will have the vengeance on those who do so to us. We just need to be patient and faithful through it all even to the point of being killed. None of this applies to a rapist, murderer, or demented individual seeking to harm and commit violence to us or our loved ones. Yet there are preachers who would emasculate us in the name of Christ. My only response to them is, "get behind me Satan."

Yes when we are confronted with an extreme outcome to our works or outward convictions in Christ and our Father we need to be patient and faithful and wait on them. We are to follow Christ's example in such times and circumstances. We must be instant in prayer and not be

anxious for our desired outcome, but be an example that will make our Father and Brother happy, even proud of us. That is the future which awaits us brethren. Not very pretty if we focus on the physical, but a thing of beauty to God if we hold fast and are used as examples for others just as Christ was for us. If we can't endure the little amount of pressure put on us by organizations of men and societal norms today, how will we endure what awaits us in the future? These are the easy times of testing for us. We are in training for the difficult times to come. Think of these as the years of plenty, for the opposite is coming on us quickly. We do not need to fret about it, but build up our oil reserves to withstand the onslaught of the days ahead. We need not practice what we will say or rehearse what we will do when we are brought before our accusers, for we have stored up the treasures of the scriptures in our spiritual sub conscience and our Father will bring them to remembrance when it is time. So do not sell yourself short. Keep reading the word of God from cover to cover. It is our nourishment not only for today, but for the times to come. Many who once walked with us have been diverted from this path and unfortunately in some cases fallen over the precipice. We must not give up!

In Hebrews 13:5 Christ says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." The apostle Paul continues in verse 6 by encouraging us, "So we may boldly say; the Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" I hope we write in there; "only what God permits." That's the answer to the question just posed. Do we believe that through thick and thin? Please remember we are talking about religious persecution here. Are we, or are we not, developing an enduring faith based on trust in God which will stand against the evil and unjust times and society we are sojourning in? Faith as in belief and trust in God is always accompanied by supporting actions. It does not stand separate from what we do. We are to be instant in drawing on it and exhibiting it.

We have been given the biblical definition of faith in Hebrews 13:1. Now we are going to study its components and the actions surrounding them. We are not going to waste our time on cute little stories of heroism or anything like that. We are not going to focus in detail on any of the outstanding examples of faith displayed in the scriptures of those who have lived in faith, to see faith in action. We are going to be focusing on the components of faith and their source as taught to us by God.

Without the epistle of James it would be more difficult to understand what faith is. There are men and organizations that despise this epistle. It teaches us the components of faith like no other. It completely clears up the relationship between works and faith.

James 2:14-26; "What does it profit my brethren if someone says he has faith but he does not have works? (a straightforward question) Can faith save him? (Another question asked) If a brother or sister (in the faith) is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them,



Depart in peace, be warmed and filled, but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? **Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.** But someone will say, You have faith and I have works. Show me your faith without works and I will show you my faith by works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe and tremble. But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? (or useless) Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered (up) Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect (or complete)? And the scripture was fulfilled which says, Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works and not by faith only. (Oh boy! let the screaming start from the birds which chirp out; "there are no works in faith") Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? (Here is a harlot being justified through her actions of faith. How can that be? Because she trusted and believed, and her works proved that beyond a shadow of a doubt.) **FOR AS THE BODY WITHOUT THE SPIRIT IS DEAD, SO FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD ALSO.** Can that be made any clearer brethren! No tricky language here. No hard to understand word or example. When we read this verse our thoughts should go back to Luke 18:8; "Nevertheless when the Son of Man comes will He really find faith (displayed and confirmed by works) on the earth." Tie these two verses together brethren. Never separate them or be allowed to separate them by men, or demons, or anything else. Do not let yourself be deceived by those who would throw their standard line of confusion "you are not justified by works" in your face. Respond to them with, "no kidding." We clearly know that Jesus Christ is our justification. It is He who justifies His body through His shed blood. We have been sanctified (set apart) by the Father and Jesus has continued that sanctification, that setting apart, process of growth in us. We grow in sanctification as we grow in His grace (gifts) and knowledge (how to use them) in the body.

Brethren, faith is going to be something that brings the body together at Christ's return. Remember the context we covered in Luke 17 and 18. It will not bring it all together now for it is not God's timing yet, for we are fulfilling prophesied events which must come to fruition. We are scattered all over the face of the earth but at His coming we will be gathered together, those who have died in faith and those who are alive in it. It is that very faith, the faith of Jesus Christ, which will bring His body together. **We as well as God will know that faith when we see it because of its associated works.** Talk is cheap but works are of value, and of profit to God! God places great value on faithful works and do not let anyone cheat you out of that understanding. For only you can manifest your works in faith. No one can do it for you. But you can be deceived by others to believe your workings of faith are not of great value to God and then lose out as to the reason of your calling at this time. That calling is to be the Bride of Christ!

Revelation 13:7-10 clarifies what faith we will need to display in the difficult times ahead. We read this earlier, which is the patience and faith of the saints. It is an identifying as well as recognizable pattern for us.

Revelation 14:12; "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."

The keeping of the commandments of God are the outward works of the faith of Jesus! Let's see some of these faithful works in action as defined by Christ to His body.

Revelation 2:2-3: "I know your works your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil; and you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My names sake and have not become weary."

Rev 2:9-10; "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty; and the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan. Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."

Rev 2:13; "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells."

Rev 2:19; "I know your works; love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first."

Rev 3:8; "I know your works. See I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name." (We are not embarrassed of Him before others)

Now let's see a clear example of a part of the body which does not understand what the faith of Jesus is.

Rev 3:15-19; "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will (am about to) spew you out of my mouth. Because you say, I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing, and in fact you do not know you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, I counsel you, to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint

your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.”

I have walked in those specific delusions in the past with the encouragement, and deceitful teachings, of men and organizations of men calling themselves the “Church of God.” I, as well as many others have refocused and now understand the error of such delusions and are in effect repentant Laodiceans.

We have just read from scriptures in Revelations chapters 2 and 3 many of the conditions we are and will be living in. These are all things and circumstances that have, are, and will confront brethren who keep the faith. All of this is present today, every bit of it. Do not be fooled. We have just read about fellow brethren who have, are, and will keep the faith of Jesus through horrible times. When we review the scriptures which talk about the conditions on earth, and in society, and in the body of Christ, at the time when He will return it is not difficult to understand the question which was asked in Luke 18:8 is it. We could and probably in fact would be discouraged at every turn today if it were not for one thing. That is the faith of Jesus dwelling in us! Our faith alone could not do it by itself. Christ clearly showed us that our faith can make us well when it comes to healing. We can read about that all through the scriptures. But when it comes to endurance and perseverance against this world and its ways it isn't enough.

We are instructed that faith is a fruit of the spirit. Let's see that in Galatians 5:22-23. “But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness (pistis), meekness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” In verse 5 he tells us, “For we by the spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”

Yes, we only receive this strength from God. It is given to us by our Betrothed.

1 Corinthians 12:7-9; “But the manifestation of the spirit is given to each one for the profit of all; for to one is given the word of wisdom through the spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same spirit, to another faith by the same spirit...” There is no doubt that faith is a gift from God through the spirit.

Hebrews 12:2 states; “Looking unto Jesus, the author (originator) and finisher (perfecter) of faith (“our” does not appear in the original text), who for the joy which was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Ephesians 2:8-9; “For by grace you **are being saved** (the correct translation) through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of (one's own) works lest anyone should boast.”

Our works can't do it alone. We need His works to complete it. Our faith does not muster the completion of what He has started. He will finish it in us. Do we believe that?

Verse 10; "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus (if we are of His body) for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." If we do not have the spirit of God in us, and Christ strengthening us, we will be incapable of maintaining, let alone finishing His work. We could stumble around in our own, but there is no value in them to our calling or to God.

I personally feel some of the most inspiring verses in all scripture are found here in the epistle to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 3:14-19; "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith: that you; being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height, to know the love of Christ which passes (on) knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." These are incredibly personal and inspiring verses. They were written to us, and for us, for our encouragement.

When Christ asks will He really find faith on the earth He is asking will He really find His faith working in us when He returns. There will be lots of faith in other men and such things but that is not the faith He is talking about. Remember it is a gift of the spirit. The times will be very difficult for those who are called saints. His question should cut to our hearts in a very personal way. Will we endure, hold fast, and grow in His grace and knowledge? Will we cower before men, before accusers, or will we stand straight yet humbly in the shadow of our Christ?

Christ told us men ought to "always pray and not lose heart" and "faith without works is dead." As men go, we have had a lot of excuses to stop praying and lose heart. But they are feeble in the eyes of God.

Matthew 24:25, "See, I have told you beforehand."

Do we believe Him? If we do, it will be demonstrated through our actions and not by lip syncing words. Are we about our Father's business? Are we preparing ourselves? Are we making ourselves ready even though so many we started this walk with have gone dormant or in some cases fallen away? We are to be yoked to our Brother. Do we do works which demonstrate that? Are we bold in them, not brash, but bold as Christ was bold? He is our Husband to be, He is currently our Betrothed. The apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 1:24 that no man has

dominion over our faith. That's because it does not come from man. Christ is the originator and perfecter of faith.

Romans 11:20 tells us we stand by faith.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5; "And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."

We do not look to men for justification of our faith, that being the faith of Jesus. We should not care what they think. The moment we let those thoughts of faith originating from men in we will stumble in the faith of Jesus. Our focus is in what God the Father and Jesus Christ think.

Romans 5:1-5; "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (the flow here is sequential) through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory in God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces endurance, and endurance character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the holy spirit which is given to us."

Philippians 3:7-11; "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. But indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as dung, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, **not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;** that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."

We will walk in the same trials, and testing's, and sufferings, as Christ unto death. We can't falter or veer off the course! We will only do this if we hold true to our trust, hope, belief, our faith in Him, to finish the work in us which He started after the Father called us to Him. He will bless us with His faith when we are confronted by difficult times. They are direct assaults, designed to sway us from our ability to hold fast. Even while accusations, threats, and such demeaning activities accost us we must have complete trust in what our Savior has told us even unto death. Faith is an enduring trust, an everlasting way of life, and an inward as well as outward expression (works) of that firm conviction. Of every word that proceeds from the mouth of God regardless of what is going on all around us.

Galatians 3:1-11; "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? (There were some teaching otherwise with a clear agenda in place) This only I want to learn from you:

Did you receive the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the spirit (through Christ), are you now being made perfect by the flesh? (Or the teachings of men contrary to scripture and the example set by Christ. So many today are turning in that way of deceit). Have you suffered so many things in vain, if indeed in vain? Therefore He who supplies the spirit to you, and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? just as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness! Therefore know that those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the scriptures foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, preached the Gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying; In you all the nations shall be blessed (not through genetics or lineage, **but faith**). So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them. But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, **for the just shall live by faith.**”

Please recognize faith goes hand in hand with works, but not the works of the law, rather the works of Jesus Christ. The spirit apart from the body would be dead. If we are apart from Jesus; that is from being a part of His body, we too are then dead to His works and His faith! We can't attain righteousness through the law under the terms of the second covenant, it can't happen. If convinced that we can, then the deceivers of such doctrines will infect us with ridiculous teachings such as; we need to go through them to have contact with God, or we must pronounce His name a special way to be acceptable to God, or to be saved we must be subject to them in all things, and oh yes give us all your money for it is rightfully ours. Complete foolishness!

1 Timothy 6:11-12; “But you O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. **Fight the good fight of faith**, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”

Oh yes there are works involved but they are not of men or organizations of men. They are very personal and individual to each and every one of us. They are not about great oratory, great tithe payments, or any such rubbish. They are about a way of life as described in the resume of the bride of Christ found in Proverbs 31:10-31. All of her attributes are generated by faith, by an everlasting hope, and trust, and belief in her Husband in spite of what anyone else says or does. She will be able to say the following when brought to judgment, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (2 Timothy 4:7)

Philippians 3:12-16; “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not

count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.” What mind is that? The mind of Christ! We do not doddle in looking back and perhaps letting deceit and doubt creep into our hearts and thoughts. Christ has set us free through His simple instructions. We are of His body and He is our head. He loves His body and He will keep and nourish us. We are to move forward towards the prize that awaits us. We do so by growing in His grace (gifts) and His knowledge (of how to use them, clearly visible works) and not the trickery of Satan through the doctrines and teachings of men. Yes we are to believe every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, not a surrogate or wantabe.

Hebrews 10:38; “Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.”

Yes we are in and will be further exposed to intense times of testing. We do not look back and we do not fall back. We move forward in every way we can. When all seems lost we must shine even brighter. Look to Paul when he was thrown in jail for the gospel. He started singing to God for all to hear. He did not wilt, he did not cower, but he humbly represented the faith that was entrusted to him by Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:13-18; “But since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written (once delivered), I believed and therefore I spoke (repeated), we also believe and also speak (repeat), knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace (gifts of Christ), having spread through the many (body of Christ), may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen, eternal”

Ephesians 3:12-13; “In whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.” Faith is a way of life. When we see someone else suffering because of their desire to follow Christ we should be emboldened and not be timid. If we thus act, it will be granted to us as our glory. Do not confuse such moments of heartache, with losing heart. They are not the same thing! Yes our heart does ache for another member of the body who is persecuted for their

walk in Christ, but that in no way results in losing heart. If our heart does not ache for our loved ones and the injustices surrounding us we would not be of God.

Hebrews 10:22-23 says, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance (entire confidence) of faith, having our hearts sprinkled (cleansed) from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful."

We walk side by side with our brother Jesus. We are yoked with Him. We thus do the works worthy of Him for He is guiding and teaching us. We move beyond the milk of the word and the dependence on another other than Christ, to solid food, as mature members of His body knowing good from evil. We are taught, and fed, and led, by our Brother one on one. Christ tells the Laodicean mindset that He will knock at the door. If we show the desire to open that door to let Him in, He will feed us one on one, no longer with the food of children, but with food which will nourish us into maturity and the fullness of His stature. It is at that time that we will receive an infusion of His faith and then be given the ability to keep His commandments in earnest which is to have and display the true love of God.

Let's look further at the process. We are called with a purpose in mind. The Father is looking for a bride for His Son. **That is what it is all about at this time in the plan of salvation.** We must be after His kind, after His kindred. We must be one of His children before we can marry His Son. Those are His rules as laid out in scripture by example from Genesis and depicted in the relationship of Abraham, Isaac, and Rebecca. That is the pattern being followed. After repentance and baptism we are begotten. Our Father places His spirit in us, and we become His children, His kindred. We show Him through repentance that we want to be a part of His family. We have not made a marriage vow with Christ at this point. Many do not understand this. Did Israel enter into a marriage covenant with her Savior at the Red Sea crossing? The scriptures tell us it was a type of baptism. Israel's marriage vow came later after a time of testing and trials while under her Saviors care. At baptism we become a babe in Christ, not a child bride! We are not at the age of consent at that time. We must be fully cognizant of what a marriage vow is before we can legally enter into it. We do not at that time possess the spiritual maturity to make such an everlasting decision. We must go through a process of conversion, or growth in Christ. There does come a time when our Husband to be will look upon us and see we have become of age. Look at Him talking about His bride back in Ezekiel 16:7-8; "I made you thrive like a plant in the field; and you grew, matured, and became very beautiful. Your breasts were formed, your hair grew, but you were naked and bare. When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine, says the Lord God."



If we accept that covenant of marriage being offered to us, we are then taught directly by Him. We dine together on solid food. We become one with Him in our desires. He takes us under His wing!

Ezekiel 16:9 says; “Then I washed you in water; yes I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil.” Yes Jesus Christ personally makes this happen. We pass beyond the bottle of the elementary things of Christ for the solid food of being yoked with Him. No longer are we just discussing the things of God, we are living them to the fullest. From infancy, to puberty, to maturity. It is the pattern we see all around us in creation. That is the same pattern God the Father uses and purposes in His calling of us. When we open the door, which our Husband to be is knocking at, which is the door to our heart and mind, He picks up the task of finishing us, He washes us clean so we can be presented to Him in the presence of His Father. He anoints us with oil. In other words He gives us His strength, His gifts, so that we can be true to our commitment to the covenant of marriage we have entered into. Yes we walk forward with our eyes opened and not as an infant whose focus is just on self, always wanting to fill its belly with anything it can put into its mouth.

Hebrews 6:3 tells us, “And this we will do if God permits.”

**Christ said to us, “Most assuredly I say to you, He who believes in Me, the works that I do He will do also, and greater than these he will do because I go to My Father.”**

We must believe that. There is no false humility in any of it. We have all heard it before; oh I only want to be a janitor in the kingdom, a door opener, I will be satisfied with such things. That’s not what we are called to at this time in the plan of salvation. We are called to much more. There comes a time in our calling when we become mature enough to dine with Christ ourselves, and taste of the good word of God, and not only this, but of the powers of the age to come. Faith becomes the key to understanding and growing in oneness with our Husband to be. Yes we will do great works through Him because He went to the Father and the next phase of the plan is being completed and we, (yes us), are the focus of it. That is God the Father and the Son displaying Their faith in us!

Hebrews 11:3; “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.”

From the beginning it has been a continual theme of faith. Do we believe that? Do our works display that?

2 Timothy 3:15; “And that from childhood you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 3:16-21; “that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height, to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge (once again not surpasses knowledge but passes it on); that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen”

Ephesians 4:13-16; “Till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God (the knowledge He passes on to us) to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working, by which every part does its share, causes growth in the body for the edification of itself in love.”

We are told in Hebrews 11:6, “But without faith (displaying the works of Christ in us) it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

We have seen that the composition of these two words, faith and belief, are inseparable from the works that are brought about by them. One does not exist without the other. If you think so, you are beating your chest to no avail. Believing in God just isn't a thought in our minds. It is verified by our actions. It is evidence of something unseen! Displayed by the way of life we are striving to live and a total commitment to it no matter what confronts us. No one else can do it for us. It is very personal, Christ's yoke only accommodates two, He and another. If we rely on another holding the bottle to our mouths we will never receive the faith of Jesus. It is given to those who desire to eat solid food one on one with our Savior before He will empower us to go on to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Himself. It is at that moment that we each make a willing as well as knowing everlasting commitment, vow, and covenant with Him as our Husband. He then gives us what we will need to keep that vow, He gives us His faith, His pistis, His persuasion, which strengthens us and allows us to hold fast, endure, and persevere until the very end. His faith becomes a breastplate when combined with His love. That is faith and the commandments combined together. “Here is the patience of the saints, here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12). Why patience in this context? Because they stand fast and have not worshipped the beast or his image, and in fact

reject his name. That is very bold in Christ. They do this by using the shield of faith (Ephesians 6:16). Their patient endurance is of great value to God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:8-9 says; “But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Our physical deaths will not be our end. The wrath we will endure is part of the process we must participate in, just as Christ did. We need to come to grips with this beforehand so we are not dismayed and shaken when it arrives.

Yes God has a purpose, it starts for us individually when the Father calls us, and then continues on growing when Christ joins with us and delivers to us His fullness of faith. We must never lose sight of this biblical teaching which is patterned in the scriptures, for it helps us to understand what is happening in the churches today, as well as in times past. The faith of Jesus becomes our shield and we become skilled in its use. I often read Revelations 2-3 to get a foundation of sanity in both the insane secular and religious world which surrounds us. These messages to the churches are Christ telling us about the conditions we will be existing in prior to His coming. Christ has told us these things beforehand so we will not be easily shaken in mind or troubled by anything around us. We must keep our focus in His faith which is given to us once and then we are to grow in it, in Him.

Ephesians 6:16 says, “Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”

All means all! Its faith which does that! The faith of Jesus! Without this shield of faith the devil would wound us, maybe unto death. It is so true when Christ says He will never leave nor forsake us. Can we promise the same to Him? Peter did and failed miserably. Why? Because He did not have the faith of Jesus. He had His word and example, but not the strength yet that he would need to do so. In time he would stand fast to his firm conviction and persuasion in Christ, even unto death. It is a pattern of growth.

We can often hear or read of folks reciting 1 Peter 3:15. In almost every instance they do not quote the scriptures prior to it or after it. Those scriptures make the context very clear. Let's read them and see a clear lesson in the faith of Jesus.

1 Peter 3:13-17; “And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you suffer for righteousness sake, blessed, do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you (just as they did Christ) as evildoers, those who

revile your good conduct (works) in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.”

That fulfills every point we have been talking about today. When we are put in a position to profess our faith in Jesus we must do so with meekness as he did and with fear (total respect and belief) in His determined outcome no matter what it will be. It is not a time for self-defense physically. It is our time to glorify the Father through Jesus Christ. These can be simple trials with outcomes in which we are kept intact or times when we will be thrown in prison or killed. As members of the body of Christ we all have work to do. Some more general in nature and some more specific in nature, but the outcome is to be the same for it is to the edification of the body, to its total health and functioning in Christ.

Let’s look to what Christ said to Saul as he journeyed to Damascus. Acts 26:16-18; “But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the people, as well as the gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, to turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan, to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who **are sanctified by faith in Me.**”

We are sanctified (set apart), separated from the ways of the world. We are certainly in the world but we are not to be of the world. As such, we will be singled out. Do we overcome it? Even if we stand alone as our Savior did? Where are our thoughts as we see loved ones walk away from the way of life we are committed to? We need to pray inwardly and outwardly that we do not lose strength of heart. Our hearts have been broken often in the years which are behind us and they will be again. However we must not let such things be an excuse to lose heart, to draw back from our vows to our Father, which we made at baptism and to our Brother, who is to be our Husband, our Head, whom we committed to when we answered His knock at the door and let Him in. Our faith which was in those things which were made, now becomes and matures into His faith. The faith we now display is not ours but His, the faith of Jesus. We become one in faith so that His works are displayed through us just as the Fathers were through Him. As this faith grows in us it will be tested.

1 Peter 1:3-9; “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. **In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, you love. Though**

**now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith; the salvation of your souls.”**

Jude 1-4; “Jude a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ (there is the format and sequence once again) mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. Beloved while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace (gifts) of our God into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Yes there are many who deny there is only one Master, one Head of the body. They put themselves over us if we let them. They will pervert our faith in Christ as our Master. They try to turn us to the perverted satanic system of masters of this world who seek dominion over us and our trust in Jesus. Darkness has truly encompassed the world and now is blotting the light out of much of the church. We should seek comfort in Christ’s messages to the churches in Rev. 2-3. He clearly tells us beforehand what these times will be like. Yet in all of this He encourages us for He tells us; “to him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life, he who has an ear let him hear what the spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden mana to eat, and I will give him a white stone and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it, but hold fast to what you have until I come, and he who overcomes and keeps my works until the end to him I will give power over the nations, he shall tend them with a staff of iron, as I also have received from my Father and I will give him the morning star. He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments and I will not blot out his name from the book of life but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. Because you have kept My command to persevere I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold I come quickly, hold fast what you have that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God and he shall go out no more and I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God the New Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven from My God and My new name. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

Yes brethren, faith is a way of life to our God and should be to us. We are to walk just as our Brother has, we are to follow His lead, and we can only accomplish this by being yoked to Him. This takes our efforts, combined with His strength of faith, to shed the burdens of the great

ones, the supposed benefactors, and the lies and activities of the satanic societal system surrounding us. We are to learn from our Husband under His yoke for He is meek and lowly in heart. And then we will find rest for our souls. He says My yoke is able to be used and My burden is light.

Let us take the lesson of Luke 18 personally brethren. Without the faith of Jesus we will not be able to overcome and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must abandon confused and docile teachings of men. They will take us off focus and try to prevent us from not only achieving the goal we are called to, but also pervert our understandings as to our physical responsibilities to the safety of our loved ones. There is a big gulf between dying in vain and dying for the gospel. If and when our time comes to lay down our life for the sake of the gospel of Christ just as He did, then we must follow His example and put aside any violent physical means available to us from keeping that moment of trial at bay. We must be humble and meek as He was to His Fathers will, even though we could function otherwise. However, we must be bold and strong in the faith of Jesus and the commandments of the Father and They will put whatever words we are to speak in our minds and in our mouths as a witness to Them and Their purpose.

Be strong and of good courage!

Our peace we give to you

Brian