

# **9 Sermons on Romans 1-16-17**

**16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.**

**17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.**

## **Contents**

Sermon 1	3
Growing Stronger in Faith	3
Sermon 2	6
All are Welcome into The Kingdom of God	6
Sermon 3	9
Protecting Our Journey in Faith	9
Sermon 4	12
Epistles in Faith	12
Sermon 5	15
The Bible as the Living Guide	15
Sermon 6	18
Gods Child - Following the Command to Love	18
Sermon 7	19
The Wisdom to Thrive Among Non- believers	21
Sermon 8	24
Following Christ Faithfully	24
Sermon 9	24
Faith and Transformation	27

Sermon 1

## Growing Stronger in Faith



1. Quote

Faith does not eliminate questions. But faith knows where to take them.

Elisabeth Elliot

### **Power Truth**

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, “The one who is righteous will live by faith.”

Romans 1:17 NRSV

### **Trouble in the Text**

The Apostle Paul is a real icon of faith to all Christians. After he preached the good news, he always tried to remain in touch with the believers.

One of his best ways was to write letters of encouragement. The book of Romans is one of them. By writing, he sent out hope, encouragement, and a feeling of togetherness. His words revived and kept the Church alive.

When Paul wrote to the first churches, he ensured continued communication. He contributed to the growth and establishment of young missions. The intercession of the Holy Spirit was critical in that process. The present church needs great hand-holding, sowing hope, faith, and love too.

### **Trouble in the World**

The life in Christ is a long journey. When we heed to his call, we are candidates in faith.

Our faith passes through various tests in our daily lives. The ways of the secular world are not for the faithful. The secular lures keep trapping us.

When we overcome the sinful lures, our faith perseveres through the temptations. We emerge stronger in our faith in Christ. Our strength in faith matures up over time. Our hearts learn and we become more and more faithful servants of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

As long as we are alive here on earth, our faith remains under tests. It's our duty to stay strong and vigilant all along.

### **Grace in the Word**

The Apostle Paul lived in strong faith in salvation. When I recall how Paul got converted into service by Christ, my weaknesses melt away.

Before his conversion, Paul was a sinner, a persecutor of Christians. He did not believe!

On his way to Damascus,<sup>1</sup> Paul got blinded by a flash of light. When he confessed and accepted Jesus, Paul did a wonderful job. I can say that he remained faithful to Christ.

After Paul renounced the sinful life, he lived as a true follower of Christ. Living as a Christian by his actions and preaching. The main encouragement comes to us as Christians when we uphold justice.

This reminds us of the unrivaled connection between confession and living in faith. Paul got converted and the Kingdom of God wrote off all his sins. That is the righteousness that we seek for.

Each of us has a calling that is unique. Our callings happen at different times in our life. The great point is how we heed to that call. Some of us hear the call while very young, old, at whatever age! Living in faith and receiving the graces that come with it is a gift from above.

If I put in other words... aspiring to live a life that is faithful to Christ, then I must travel on the path of the justice. I have to believe before I find the justice both for self and society. If a Christian lives in faith, then pursuing justice is part of their duty.

## **Grace in the World**

Salvation transformed me into a Christian. I cannot behave as I used to before accepting Jesus into my life. So, I cannot call people names they do not deserve. I view them as brothers and sisters. Even for them that do not deserve, I still view them as part of the Kingdom of Christ. My faith rocks in me and I take pride in the knowledge, faith, hope, and exalting God.

A new life begins with the knowledge of the truth. The truth in Christ dawns upon a soul as a new day. Then, one's viewpoint is transformed from sin to righteousness. I find treasure in the deep connection with Christ. That comes through the power and presence<sup>ii</sup> of the Holy Spirit.

If I am transformed, I find value in the promises. That's the hope of the Kingdom, through faith. The physical and instant manifestation of my faith may not be seen physically. But over some time it becomes evident, it takes other inherent planes. Deep in my mind and soul, I treasure his company. Even when I walk in fear, the physical presence of Christ is not there with me, but that of the Holy Spirit is.

And, should I be afraid to confess Christ as my Savior?

No!

Let it live in you, let it speak out of you, act out of you. The absence of the physical Christ is the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit manifests the eternal presence of God among us. So, when I live in faith, my praise and worship of his holy presence is the way to commune with him. My faith in the ultimate salvation is a process of releasing one-self to his will, still in faith.

## **What Now**

1. What is the best age to heed to the call of Christ?
2. From which mission was Paul coming from, on his way to Damascus?
3. What are some of the sins that we must cease upon salvation?

## Sermon 2

# All are Welcome into The Kingdom of God



## 2. Quote

Worrying is arrogant because God knows what He's doing.

Barbara Cameron

### **Power Truth**

Look at the proud!

Their spirit is not right in them,  
but the righteous live by their faith.

Habakkuk 2:4 NRSV

## **Trouble in the Text**

Jesus preached salvation to all people in the world. Although Christ was born in Nazareth, he was not accepted there, in his hometown. The Jewish community remained quite skeptical about his teachings.

Christ welcomed all the nations of the earth into God's kingdom. The Jews were not receptive to the fact that the Gentiles were also welcomed.

The Gentiles were people from other nations, other than the Jewish community. Most of the Gentiles did not perform male circumcision. A point which not only distinguished but separated them from acceptance by the Jews.

The Greeks were among the Gentiles. The Jewish community was under the rule of the Roman Empire at the time of Christ. So, due to the Roman rule and then here comes Christ, preaching and teaching forgiveness! It was a bit hard for Jews to accept him at their time.

## **Trouble in the World**

Our world is a place of many cultures. Each of us has habits too. To some extent, the beliefs and habits determine how we accept others. Especially, when we accept Christ into our life.

As an individual, I may feel that others are not worth. Not worth my time, my resources or even a conversation. This is where the call of Christ comes in.

All over the world, we all have our cultures. It's our duty to study them. To weigh them, and see how best to blend them with our faith.

With the immaculate guidance of the Holy Spirit, I will grow from one level to another. My faith will grow in Christ and I will embrace and never discriminate against any soul. That's what Christ planted in us, as Christians.

## **Grace in the Word**

When I talk of faith, I refer to the fruits<sup>iii</sup> of the Holy Spirit. In my life in Christ, one of my aspirations is to be righteous. Now, can I be righteous without the faith? Nope, I have to live and believe in his teachings.

Looking at it in a simple way, I have to live as a temple of the Holy Spirit. Then, when the Holy Spirit finds a home in my heart, I'll be plenty in all the fruits of the Holy Spirit. I become a fountain of every fruit that comes from his presence.

My life in the Holy Spirit will be strong in faith. Beyond that, I will bear forth a fountain of joy, kindness, patience, and self-control.

My flowing with the fruition of the Holy Spirit is an achievement. That blends with my belief in Christ's teaching and also his promises. There is no point I can claim to be patient yet lack in self-control.

Faith is the very first step. I'm transformed when if I have the faith. When I'm transformed, I transform others too. When I transform others, I bear forth good things for the church. That will get real meaning if I'm plentiful in the Holy Spirit and his fruits too.

### **Grace in the World**

When I heard Christ's call, I listened and heeded to it. I believed. My faith in his teachings and promises are not physical. It's by the wisdom released by the Holy Spirit, that I remain doubtless.

Faith is the power to believe in the impossible. In the Gospel of Matthew,<sup>iv</sup> Jesus walked on water to the boat that was ferrying his Disciples.

The act of walking on water caused panic among the disciples. Even today, seeing someone walk on water is a rare occurrence.

Why did the disciples panic? They did not believe Christ could walk on water.

Peter braved the panic and tested out Jesus's actual appearance. Though, when he saw a huge wave, human panic invaded him and he lost the faith. He cried out to Jesus to save him, which he did.

Our world may lack in faith, even to the depths of our hearts. We too can cry out to Jesus to come to our aid. Even when it's hardest in life, let's believe in God, and in the helper, the Holy Spirit.

### **What Now**

1. Can a Christian be kind and lack of self-control?
2. As Christians, is it okay if our faith tested in life?
3. Why did Peter start to sink as he walked on the water?

## Sermon 3

# Protecting Our Journey in Faith



### 3. Quote

He said, "Love... as I have loved you." We cannot love too much.

Amy Carmichael

### **Power Truth**

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:1 NRSV

### **Trouble in the Text**

Christianity is a mutual relationship with Christ. When we accept Jesus into our life, we are subject to his guidance. When we have faith in him, then the faithfulness takes precedence. Then the way we talk, act and treat others all change.

The faith in us keeps growing with time. It's not instant. With the help of the Holy Spirit, our trust in Jesus grows. The faith to trust in him multiplies and yields even stronger trust.

What we should learn from the epistle of Paul to the Romans, is the world-wide invitation. Christ invites us all, without reservation to our origin or former faith. If we accept and renounce our sinful nature, that's it, faith! Our duty is to protect the faith in our Christian living.

Paul reassures us to cultivate the faith. When we mature in the faith, other provisions will yield from that. Our faith in Christ calls for us to uphold justice. We should be fearless. When our faith calls for justice, and we live by that, Christ will provide for our avenues to live by that.

### **Trouble in the World**

Spiritual nourishment flourishes as faith does. As a believer, it may be tiresome to uphold justice. That's where we need encouragement. The encouragement can be internal or external. At a personal level, I should encourage myself. Within the community, we should encourage each other within the path of faith.

All around the world, we do get frustrations. Frustrations come from our members of the family, friends and even strange people. We must learn to overcome this in faith.

The burdens we carry deplete our faithfulness in Christ's promises. When we analyze the burdens, there is a leeway in how we handle such. By sowing faithfulness, God will guide us in a unique path of an unending relationship with him.

When one thrives in faith, it's not hidden from others. This is a point we can explore into attracting others into conversion. The joy, faith, and tirelessness in serving Christ serve to encourage others. It's even best when our faith speaks for itself. We do not need to explain things to aspiring believers.

### **Grace in the Word**

There are many gifts from the promises of unending faith for us as Christian believers. The reward for faithfulness to God is life. Lot<sup>v</sup> got saved from the destruction by fire and brimstone. That's when God destroyed the cities Sodom and Gomorrah, for his faith in God. Now, how did Lot display his faith?

Lot protected the angels from sinful men who were already assembled at the door to his house. He pleaded for their well-being, even offering his two daughters to the vengeance of the sinful men.

Lot obeyed the voice of the Angels, to flee from the city before dawn and never look back. By fleeing, he acted as told without asking too much of questions. The point about listening and obeying is an act of utmost submission.

One more thing that we must learn about faith and obedience is, little or no questioning.

For Lot, he had the opportunity to ask many questions. Lot could have asked why, what time, and many questions. He remained silent and took action. When our faith gets supported by actions and not mere words, we excel in it. Faith is more of action and not talking or questioning.

Questioning too much about faith yields doubt. Doubt is an enemy of faith. If I trust in God, my trust rests upon the mightiest of powers. I trust in Him as the giver of life, creator of the universe and all that's in it. I'm free from doubt. I have run out of alternatives and reserved my faith and hope in God. Then, my life takes the path of God's will, in which justice prevails.

## **Grace in the World**

The life of a Christian on earth gets riddled with many instances of doubts. If we know our temptations, we can then transform the weakness into pillars to our faith. When Christ had fasted for 40 days,<sup>vi</sup> the devil knew his weakest points. That's the need for food for the nourishment of our bodies.

And the temptations of Satan are very smart. That, we must be aware of at all times.

Jesus refused to bow down to the devil. He did not worship the evil one. That stood out as proof of his faith in God the father himself.

Satan also knew it very well that Jesus could turn stones into bread. Although Jesus was hungry, he did not bend to the power of hunger. He remained strong in his address to the temptations. He did not put a test on God himself, and that too was a manifestation of his faith in God.

The temptations that Jesus was confronted with are not so much different from ours today. Every Christian must understand and overcome the trials. Some of us are in positions of authority which they abuse. They abuse that by treating themselves with utmost superiority. That tests their faith, and they fail in that by engaging in corrupt ways. Corrupt ways both for money or in-kind tempts our faith. When one fails in faith, their judgments' become subjective.

We can learn something critical from the way Jesus overcame the temptations. Although he had every reason to remain human and fail in faith, he persevered. For us to remain faithful to his calling, we must be willing to sacrifice. The sacrifices could be our precious time and resources. The sacrifice is also in form of other avenues through which we offer kindness to others.

## **What Now**

1. What can you say about faith and corruption? Can one be faithful and corrupt at the same time?
2. Are you able to cite the temptations of the devil to Jesus while he was in the wilderness? How many times was Jesus tempted?
3. What is the connection between faith and unquestioned obedience?

## Sermon 4

# The Epistles in Faith



### 4. Quote

We never grow closer to God when we just live life. It takes deliberate pursuit and attentiveness.

Francis Chan

### Power Truth

but my righteous one will live by faith.

My soul takes no pleasure in anyone who shrinks back.”

Hebrews 10:38 NRSV

### Trouble in the Text

The Lord's apostle Paul was a critical player in the formative periods of the church. During the formation, the new Christian communities did not have references as we do. They had accepted Jesus, but they struggled to come to terms with the changes in their lives in Christ.

The Apostles took it as their duty to teach the new church communities of the new ways. The Apostles, led by the Holy Spirit, did wonderful works. By writing, they provided references for the new converts and their communities. The Epistles got into various matters at depth. Offering Christians the best practices in aspects of working, living, and worshiping together.

Paul embraced every Christian, as a brother or a sister. To him, being Jewish or Greek had no meaning. For the early Church, Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Emmaus were under the Roman authorities. The question of injustice was also prevalent then as it is today. For instance, Jesus himself got crucified in place of Barabbas, a thug by then.

My emphasis is, faith and justice go alongside each other. My faith in Christ lets my eyes not be blind to wrongs committed within my knowledge, to self and others too. The promises of upholding justice got elaborated by the Lord's apostle Paul. If I cultivate justice and believe, then justice will follow my life in faith.

### **Trouble in the World**

Faith is truthful and seeks justice. If I'm to pursue justice, I must believe in the course of it. Sometimes, the society is punitive and disregards individual innocence. And even in instances when the society itself is wrong, we have a duty to stand up and talk for the truth.

Injustice is an error by itself. It means that someone bears the punitive burden of another. When a wrong party gets awarded truth, the rightful party suffers, for a wrong not committed by them.

### **Grace in the Word**

The Christian faith started on the Jewish soil. From there, it spread to all the nations of the earth. The main factor that led to the spread is the courage induced by the Holy Spirit. After Christ's death, the disciples got terrified. But Jesus fulfilled his promise,<sup>vii</sup> by sending the Holy Spirit.

The Apostles did not maintain daily contact with the new converts, the Holy Spirit did. He was the fountain of inspiration and unity for the young church communities.

All if this were matters of faith. All Christians start off the journey with Christ by believing. Paul as an Apostle was very instrumental in shaping up the new churches. After his initial preaching, he maintained contact via letters. His letters were inspirational and encouraging. Christ too promised to multiply our faith and communion with him. If we keep focusing on the Holy Spirit, we are able to discern great things for the benefit of our faith.

What comes out is the importance of upholding justice. If I have faith in the ways of Christ, then hypocrisy and every wrong should not be anywhere in my actions.

Whatever I do definitely should speak louder than my words. The calling I received from Christ is to serve him. I have to be aware that I cannot be everything. I have to believe that I'm talented in my own special way. And I can serve God in my own capacity within a church, according to his gifts, within me.

### **Grace in the World**

God rewards the faithfulness of his people without reservation. If one takes upon it to believe God, he himself will pour out great blessings. I want to refer us to Abraham,<sup>viii</sup> our father in faith. Abraham walked with God through all his life. Through his son Isaac, God told him to count the stars of the sky at night. If he were able to, such a number will be his descendants. In other words, God promised many descendants from his offspring.

Living in faith is an immeasurable gift from God. God fulfills his promises to us through faith. Among our church communities, his message is for us to put our request to him in faith.<sup>ix</sup> It is our duty to pray, but also to fasten that with faith. Faith adds to the quality of prayer and praise that we offer to God.

My emphasis also goes to righteousness. The fountains of God's holiness calls for us to embrace the leadership of the Holy Spirit. By heeding to the call of Jesus, we get crucified with him, away from sin. So one cannot take pride in one good thing and commit sin through another. We have a call to travel along that one route, that of righteousness. We are not to look back or revive our desires from our past sinful states. By maintaining righteousness, our hearts are home to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's presence is synonymous with that of God the father and Jesus as his Son, who is our Lord and Savior.

### **What now**

1. How much can we achieve with our faith in Christ?
2. God made promises to Abraham, What are those promises exactly?
3. How can we show faith best? By writing, singing or in our actions?

## Sermon 5

# The Bible as the Living Guide



### 5. Quote

Always, everywhere God is present, and always He seeks to discover Himself to each one.

A.W. Tozer

### Power Truth

Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law; for “The one who is righteous will live by faith.”

Galatians 3:11 NRSV

### Trouble in the Text

As a Christian within a community, I have a duty to strive for righteousness. A righteous one stands on a solid moral ground and their deals are full of justice.

For me to meet righteousness, it's not a walk in the park. But in faith, it's achievable. Through walking with the Holy Spirit, I can. The Holy Spirit will move with me from one level of faith to another higher one.

Our God does not fail. The Bible is an affirmation of his voice for us. So, when he says that we live in justice, that's it. We have much to question or leave it that way. God himself will make your path enough for your righteousness

### **Trouble in the World**

The word of God acts as a compass for the living. Every aspect of our life gets addressed in all the Books of the Bible.

One of the best ways to live a Biblical-led life is to read, many times. Keep meditating seeking a closer and closer relationship with God.

Sometimes, I may not be able to understand what is the meaning encoded in a verse. Do not shy off. Ask your fellow Christians, ask your church leader. More seek God's voice in it through the holy presence of the Holy Spirit.

It's also a wise approach to pray shortly right before and after reading the verses. It invites the holy presence to help us. The help is in interpreting the deeper meanings and revelations.

### **Grace in the Word**

The faith we have grows in us and surpasses all our doubts. At that level, my faith struggles with enormous challenges, yet I prevail over them. As the faith matures, so should our pursuit of truth both for self and others in the community.

One of the best examples we can offer to others is ourselves. Jesus<sup>x</sup> offered himself that way for our salvation.

The apostles of Jesus too followed his calling. They traveled far and wide preaching the good news. Their faith took the lead and other things followed.

It was a selfless ambition for the sake of the Kingdom of God. They laid forth great examples for the new churches and for us today.

The same examples of life led by the apostles are what we are to follow. Of course, there are challenges at our times. That is the order of life.

During the early church, the apostles too overcame much. By then, no fast or electric cars were there.

Following the true will of God will lead us to overcome the challenges ahead. We must overcome them too, for us to be worthy of the kingdom of God.

### **Grace in the World**

When I talk about the matters of faith, I have no choice but to follow the path of righteousness. Righteousness will bear forth more faith and justice within us.

One fact that we must understand, the earth that is our road to heaven. The earth is a cursed place. Cursed on account of the original sin<sup>xi</sup> by Adam and Eve.

For every one to eat and live, we must live by our sweat. Now because that sin happened, that's our order. Let no one among us sleep too much hoping for something to fall from the heavens. No!

Taking charge, waking up and seeking work is the way to go. If you work, you get assured of your basic needs. God too will bless the work of our hands.<sup>xii</sup>

So the fountain of righteousness will come forth from the stems of our hearts. It is a gift we must work for, in humility.

Nothing comes easy. We have to gear ourselves with the right attitude. We have to work for the good things. And there is a secret to it. If I pray, fast, offer thanks and praise then God will open up heavens gracious bountifulness.

Utmost, the world is not a happy place, it is our role to yield change to it. That's joy for us and the Christian communities around.

### **What now**

1. Why must every man eat of his sweat?
2. In what way is Jesus the best example for our Christian living?
3. After Christ, his apostles achieved much, where did they get help from?

## Sermon 6

# Gods Child - Following the Command to Love



### 6. Quote

Our anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows, but only empties today of its strengths.

Charles H. Spurgeon

### **Power Truth**

for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith.

1 John 5:4 NRSV

### **Trouble in the Text**

The living in our communities includes every type of person. There are those who take it upon themselves to water down the Christian life. Given an opportunity, they would execute all Christians!

So some of us want to follow Christ, but in a very shy way. That is not the way. It is our faithful life and we have to live by it. I should not get ashamed to proclaim my salvation.

I serve a powerful God whose unseen hand of justice prevails in powerful and invisible ways. As his child, I will live in the protection from the unjust maneuvers of the evil one, all days.

### **Trouble in the World**

In the Bible, God is the God of Israel. It may raise the issue about why should I call myself a Christian in that context. But Christ set out the table of the Kingdom open to all.

The point about whether I'm a gentile all not does not count! What matters is my will to follow God and his commandments. The point is, anybody who is willing to hold on to the simple rule, love for others as one's own self. Christ's offer has qualified us to be his brothers or sisters. And in the larger picture, we are all God's children.

Jesus talked about it in simple words, Love. That I should love myself as my neighbor. That's it.

### **Grace in the Word**

The shadow of righteousness covers many virtues. For one to be righteous you have to be kind, you have to believe in it with no doubt. As a righteous one, I take my time in managing my shortcomings. I have to understand that I'm human. Now, being human has its own weaknesses. The weaknesses go against my path to righteousness.

The key element stands in my ability to overcome the weaknesses. I have to excel where I could fail as an ordinary human being. Temptations bombard my life from every angle. My duty is to live strong, even at times when I'm weakest; I surrender to the mercies of the Holy Spirit to take me through.

If I take it from an ordinary human angle, being clever is being foolish for the Kingdom of God. The catch here is to be wise in all steps that we make. Although Christ has set us free,<sup>xiii</sup> we must be keen to observe the limits to that freedom.

The freedom to be a son and daughter of God is a wonderful gift. In all this, God is to get all the exaltation. The God we serve is a God of justice. He pursues justice up to the fourth generations.<sup>xiv</sup> So, it should not be anywhere for us to commit the injustices at any one point. The word has put it clear, that the Lord in heaven, who sees in the darkness, will never let an injustice unsettled. The consequences will arise upon one's future generations.

In a unique way, God also opens up blessings to future generations. I take for example the generations of Abraham. God's pleasure with Abraham's trust earned him the blessings. That's the blessing of many descendants and a father of many nations.

### **Grace in the World**

Jesus was very basic in his preaching. I would say, he ensured that there was no much of doubt to whoever wished to follow him. The doors of the kingdom of God were open to the peoples from all the nations.

One injustice I have to rid myself off is living without prayer. Christ simplified that to the Lord's Prayer.<sup>xv</sup> We may have busy schedules or facing too much in life. That is not reason enough not to offer prayer to God in heaven.

The Lord's Prayer is all-inclusive. It exalts God in heaven and request for provision with our daily needs. It also requests for forgiveness of our iniquities. More so, the Lord's Prayer requests his Kingdom to exist here on earth as per his willing.

The Kingdom of God is plentiful with justice. That is why we seek forgiveness for our sins. The powerful justice of the God in heaven understands our weaknesses. He treats our forgiveness with the original intentions or staying away from sin. The sins that we have committed are our sins already. A more sinful act is sinning while knowing that one is sinning

God allows us the freedom to act as per our will, with a leeway to always follow his wish. Since God is slow to anger<sup>xvi</sup> and that is not to mean that he will not punish us for wrongdoing. He allows us the time to go through it and repent for the wrongs we've done. A true confession is genuine and it justifies the act of forgiveness of the sin.

What now

1. Why do we say that God is slow to anger?
2. Which is a greater sin, a sin committed without the knowledge or one committed with knowledge?
3. What does the Lord's Prayer ask for, for us and others?

## Sermon 7

### The Wisdom to Thrive Among Non-believers



#### 7. Quote

What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.

A.W. Tozer

#### **Power Truth**

for we walk by faith, not by sight.

2 Corinthians 5:7 NRSV

#### **Trouble in the Text**

It's only through allowing myself wholly to Christ that I can be a truthful believer. The point about living in fear has no place in our hearts. When Christ got crucified, there was silence; there was fear among the apostles and believers. But then, the Holy Spirit came. Since then, a fire was lit. The believers talked in tongues of different nationalities.

There was a complete turning point from the time the Holy Spirit took over. The authorities acted with injustice, persecuting Christians. But, the Church thrived through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to this day.

### **Trouble in the World**

The living of a Christian on earth can get complicated. That's the case especially when the community around has several religions. Atheists too complicate the matter more when they are in authority.

It's my role to ensure that I remain aware of the surroundings. Being aware of the enemies around keeps me alert. I can, thus, make wise decisions about my engagements with them.

All injustices remain so, whether committed by believers or non-believers. This is also a critical point where a church comes in to support individuals. Advocacy aimed at restoring justice may be well handled by a communal body. Individuals too can do well in it

### **Grace in the Word**

God is a God of Justice. He will not allow those who are righteous for his name to suffer without remedy for that. The Book of Proverbs<sup>xvii</sup> offers caution to evildoers. Performing any evils sets you far from the truth. God also rewards those who seek the truth. In special ways, God reveals the truth to those who follow in his will.

As a Christian, I 'm a candidate to the many graces of the Lord. The path to pursue that is by justice and righteousness. A person who is righteous is bound to love, respect and listen to all people.

The path to righteousness starts at one point, love for others as one's own self. If I fulfill this simple yet complicated commandment, I become one with Christ. And I am more confident in my relationship with God. The love for fellow human beings is the basis for the love of God.

If I'm able to love fellow human beings, then I stand a better chance of loving my God. Why? As a human, I can love another person, whom I can see. That builds on my faith to love God, whom I cannot see but believe in his presence.

This is where our faith has to be without doubt. Though God is in heaven, his presence among us is forever. The Holy Spirit is the representative of God the father and the son, here on earth.

### **Grace in the World**

The presence of God in the Holy Spirit among us is a key element in our lives. Our pursuits of faith cannot get separated from those of justice. If my society is unjust, I have a duty to change that, right from individual levels to the communal level.

During the time the Messiah lived on earth, injustices too existed. More so, the injustice may get committed by those authorized to ensure its performance. The ruthless judge<sup>xviii</sup> had no reservation on withholding justice. I'd say he considered himself as finality in his judgments. The persistence of the aggrieved woman made him dispense justice.

We can learn several traits from this story, as Christians. Persisting in our faith. Our faith must not become limited in any sense. More to this is the pursuit to the conclusion of matters to the very ends.

In our journey in faith, we must never tire down. Let's know it very well. It's a journey beyond our lifetimes on earth. So, let's be very ready for everything that comes our way.

There are many hopeless instances, but God's ever present with us. He will see us through the rough and calm sections of it. God's love is timeless<sup>xix</sup> and condition-less. So my prayer is for us to be faithful, in all our pursuits, ever without losing hope, till the end of times.

What now

1. How best can we be ready in our Christian faith and journey here on earth?
2. Are there instances of injustice during the time Christ was here on earth?
3. Can I love God dearly and hate fellow human beings?

## Sermon 8

# Following Christ Faithfully



### 8. Quote

Forgiveness is unlocking the door to set someone free and realizing you were the prisoner!

Max Lucado

### **Power Truth**

So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

Romans 10:7 NRSV

### **Trouble in the Text**

Most of the times, when a Christian takes up the new life, they get confronted by injustices. Pessimistic friends know that you have changed. They try you out, even if it's out of malice.

If I take up the yoke of Jesus Christ, I'm not to let it down. My path is already drawn. I have a duty to carry my cross, as Christ did for us.

Through Paul's letter, we get assured of justice that is enough for us to walk along with Christ. Although Christ suffered blemishes, he did succeed in his mission of salvation for us. We have to believe in his providence to succeed in life and to be worthy of his promises.

### **Trouble in the World**

God knows a heart that is after him. In his own truth, he must guard those whom he loves. The trials and tribulations of the world will never end, but his promises will come to our consolations with time.

The best way to wait for his promises is to be ever ready in our hearts. Injustices may cause harm to us, but they are not strong enough to pluck us away from the gifts promised to us.

If we renounce our sinful nature, the Holy Spirit will guide us to thirst for him. Our thirst will get quenched in our obedience and communion with him.

### **Grace in the Word**

God gave us different gifts. In an amazing way, all the gifts are useful for his sake. When each of us participates in worship, we fulfill his wish. With all our different gifts, we compose up a united church. That church is the community of all us with a common goal, to worship God.

The letters written by apostles served as useful blueprints. Remember that the church during formative years only relied on the Gospels. Although all the four gospels preach one Christ, different people interpret them. Thus, the need for communal living. A community where we can help each other out.

Christ envisaged a church that remained united in his fellowship. To the Church in Corinth,<sup>xx</sup> Paul emphasized against disunity. Unity comes from respect and love for each other.

The aspect of righteousness is more holistic. I see it as one word for many. One that is righteous is worth more than gold and silver. They are worthy of the Kingdom of God.

Righteousness will see heavens speak on our behalf. During the baptism of Christ,<sup>xxi</sup> the Holy Spirit affirmed that. God got pleased with his Son and descended from heaven in the form of a dove. A dove symbolizes peace, gentleness and such, so should we as Christians.

### **Grace in the World**

If I belong to a church, the duty on my side is to guard my presence. My presence should not yield discord into the community of Christ. In Proverbs,<sup>xxii</sup> the point is to check one's self. Every action and word is a product of our thoughts.

The strength in the tongue is marvelous. It can build or destroy. Here, wisdom should take charge of whatever we do. We should care for all our contributions to the community of Christ. More, by taking responsibility for all our actions and words at all times. That's for the sake of ourselves, fellow believers and for Christ too.

Today, we may have many churches, worshiping one Christ. Someone may ask, which is the best church? The best church starts with your soul. Invite the presence of the Holy Spirit at all times. Then proceed to find yourself a good community of worshipers whom you can share with.

In every step, one must be keen enough to radiate righteousness and justice. If a friend or enemy suffers, let us stand in truth with them.

But someone may feel aggrieved and want to inject pain to a wrongdoer. In his words, we should act in a way we wouldn't want to get treated. Think of it as the wrongdoer. Would I want forgiveness, yes or no? Then I should forgive and create the worth<sup>xxiii</sup> in myself to receive the forgiveness too.

What now

1. How can my tongue be a blessing to others?
2. Which is more valuable between righteousness and gold or silver?
3. Paul's emphasis was on the unity of the church. Why?

## Sermon 9

# Faith and Transformation



### 9. Quote

God's definition of what matters is pretty straightforward. He measures our lives by how we love.

Francis Chan

### **Power Truth**

Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have received a faith as precious as ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

## **Trouble in the Text**

The righteousness of the Apostles of Jesus yielded to the conversion of many people. Some of them include Paul, a persecutor of Christians. In fact, he is the very writer of the Epistle to the Romans.

Salvation transforms us, from evil to cleansed ones. Salvation does not count on our sinful past. Paul got uplifted from a sinful state of a non-believer. He surpassed the expectations to become a vessel for Gods missions.

Whatever Paul attained was a revelation of faith multiplied by faith. Of great transformation were the miracles he performed. His individual righteousness became a blessing to many. He is a light that disperses darkness, for him and for us too.

## **Trouble in the World**

Our journeys of faith are all different. As believers, we all qualify to be in Gods Kingdom. What matters are our transformations from accepting Christ. We are all called from various stages in sinfulness. Jesus' call for us to righteousness is a call to follow him and renounce our past.

God does not count on our past if we confess. As weak human beings, we struggle with sin and lack of faith. This is where communion with others comes in. If we live with others with aspirations to reach out to Gods best ways, we become stronger together.

## **Grace in the Word**

The power in righteousness drifts us away from evil. My sinful habits do not die instantly, but I have an obligation to display a radical shift from it. I have to seek confession for my wrongdoing and change from sin to righteousness.

There are several ways that I can explore towards my path to righteousness. Reading from the Bible enlightens me more about my relations with God. Praying keeps my communion with God alive. Fasting uplifts my desires to seek divine intervention on many fronts. It also facilitates an understanding of the different mysteries in life. That includes those hidden to my human eyes.

When we seek Gods interventions, we must work for it. We have to remain vigilant<sup>xxiv</sup> in prayer. If I can share this with friends, the better, or even our entire church. Communion brings wonderful powers together. That's especially if we are able to pray, fast and give thanks to God as a church.

We all have different levels of understanding; the Holy Spirit brings us together. We get formed into one united and winning team. It's through the different manifestations that harmonize our abilities to communion with God. I can lead in song; someone else can lead in prayer. And all this comes together to form our church community. It's as Christ wished, through the presence of his helper.

The community of a church is stronger than me as an individual. It's a collection of individual strengths for the sake of Christ.

### **Grace in the World**

The measure of the degree of righteousness is unidentifiable. For me, as a single believer, it's not simpler either. I would compare it to the flame from a candle.

Now, how many candles can one flame light up? Many, too many.

So the righteousness of one person can be a blessing to many. That's how a minister of God can bless the lives of many followers. The burden heaped upon our ministers<sup>xxv</sup> is great. Our ministers are our fathers in faith and teachers too.

We as followers have a duty to respect and accord the relevant obedience to them. They intercede for us, guide us and link us to the presence of God. As ordained members of the Church on earth, they have extra duties to act as shepherds.

Christ led the way of good<sup>xxvi</sup> shepherds by his ultimate example. If we follow his way, we sure will be righteous and worthy as the heirs of the kingdom of God.

As an ordinary worshipper, I have the duty of praying for the church. That's a duty on my shoulder, praying for its divine leadership. I have a duty to support the mission through ordinary and extra-ordinary tithing. If I give out to the church, it's in the faithful will that God's providence will pour forth from his house, the church. The minister's presence is that of direction, through the powers of the Holy Spirit.

My support<sup>xxvii</sup> for the church and its leadership is the support to the causes of righteousness. And God will open up the gates of heaven to our riches

- 
- i Acts 9
  - ii Matthew 5:3-10
  - iii Ephesians 5
  - iv Matthew 14:22-33
  - vv Genesis 19
  - vi Luke 4:1-13
  - vii Acts 2
  - viii Genesis 26:4
  - ix Mark 11:24
  - x Matthew 26:17-29
  - xi Genesis 3:17-18
  - xii Psalm 90:17
  - xiii Galatians 5:1
  - xiv Exodus 34:6-7
  - xv Matthew 6:9-13
  - xvi Psalm 103: 8
  - xvii Proverbs 28:5
  - xviii Luke 18:1-8
  - xix Romans 8:31-39
  - xx 1 Corinthians 12:1
  - xxi Matthew 3:13-17
  - xxii Proverbs 4:23-27
  - xxiii Zephaniah 2:3
  - xxiv Acts 1:14
  - xxv James 3:1
  - xxvi John 10:11-18
  - xxvii Malachi 3:10