

Sermon: Faith in God

Intro/

Read the story of Blondin.

I wonder what sort of things you trust – what do you put your trust in – what can you rely on?

Because, you see, we use our faith every day for all sorts of things.

For example – we expect the lights to come on when we press the switch,

Or we trust that the chair we sit in won't break,

Or we trust that the bus or train we get on, is actually going to the place it says it's going to,

Or we trust doctors, or surgeons, or anaesthetists, or paramedics when we need to, don't we?

There are lots of things that we get to know that we can trust – but there are other things that let us down aren't there?

Sometimes the car might break down – or sometimes the tools we use might break – or the bus that is supposed to come at a certain time, doesn't turn up –

So there are also things that might let us down –

But there is always someone we can trust – through and through – and that's God!

So we're gonna spend a few minutes this morning looking at what faith in God is and how it might affect our lives.

1/

So what is faith?

The writer to the Hebrews says this, 'Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.'

So, faith in God is about believing what God says and trusting that what He has promised will actually happen.

And we see faith like this in the life of Abraham don't we?

Abraham was prepared to launch out into the unknown simply because God told him to.

He had no idea where God was asking him to go –

# But Abraham's faith was the kind of faith that was ready for adventure!

God's call meant that he had to leave his home, some of his family perhaps, his friends and his work – and it meant he had to go into the unknown –

Yet Abraham went – there was no thought of 'but I don't know where I'm going' or 'I don't know what will happen out there,'

You know, a lot of work in churches gets held up or not done because there are always people who want to know every detail before they do anything and so churches get caught up in all sorts of discussions and negotiations –

But to have faith like Abraham means that we're ready for adventure – not meetings and detailed risk assessments –

Did you know that someone once said that FAITH is spelt R.I.S.K?

# Abraham's faith was also a patient faith!

He did actually reach the Promised Land that God had told him about, but he was never allowed to possess it – he had to wander in it, like a stranger, and live in a tent.

Abraham didn't actually see God's promises fully come true, but he never gave up his faith – he waited patiently.

And that's sometimes hard for us to do, isn't it? Especially in this day and age where everything is almost instant – we don't like waiting – we want it now –

# Abraham's faith was also about looking beyond this life –

The writer to the Hebrews says that Abraham was 'longing for a better country – a heavenly one.'

And this is kind of where we're at I think – deep down we're all longing for a better place – for that heavenly kingdom that the Bible tells us about – where there is no more war, no more death, no more pain, no more sickness – and where we will see the face of God –

2/

And then in our reading from Luke's Gospel, Jesus is also talking about Faith –

In the verses before our reading, Jesus says to stop worrying about what to eat or drink or wear, because God has all of that in hand – but to have Faith – faith in God – Faith that God will do what He says he'll do –

And Jesus then goes on to talk about having faith that He will one day come back.

But Jesus says it's not only about having the faith that this will happen – it's also about the waiting – how we're to live while we're waiting for Jesus to come back –

He says, there in that reading, about 'being ready' – because no-one knows when that time will be –

Jesus often talks about 'being ready' and He does it through different parables – but here, in Luke's Gospel, He says that people who are ready are

# Not hypocritical, but sincere – do you remember how He so often calls the Pharisees 'hypocrites' because their faith was more of a 'pretend' faith – they went through all the rituals of worship but their lives didn't reflect a true faith in God?

# Elsewhere, in the Gospels, Jesus reminds the people about Noah and how at that time, Noah and his family, were the only ones who were ready when the floods came –

And He also tells a parable about the Wise and Foolish Virgins and how some of them kept their oil lamps in working order, and so they were ready when the bridegroom came back, but that some weren't ready at all –

You see, 'being ready' is about how we wait and about what we do while we're waiting –

Do we just carry on as before – or are we meant to live differently?

Abraham's faith shaped how he lived – and really, it's the same for us –

The Christian cannot be someone who says he has faith in God and then goes on living in ways, or supporting ways, that are perhaps deceitful, or corrupt, or unjust, or unloving, or unaccepting, or in ways that bring glory to themselves instead of to God.

The Christian is someone who has faith in God and who lets God work in them and through them – because, you see, faith leads to action –

James, in his letter, says that faith and actions go together.

You see, our actions prove that we have faith

And it's only because we have faith, that we will attempt to do the actions –

Does that make sense?

In other words, faith overflows into actions, or is worked out in our actions –

While actions begin when we have faith –

And James goes on to use Abraham as his illustration and this is what he writes, 'Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.' So James says that Abraham's faith was proved by his willingness to obey God – unless Abraham had faith he would never have been able to do that. By obeying God, the faith of Abraham was proved to be real.

End/

I wonder what all this says to us today?

I mean, where is our faith really? Is it in God or is it in our own abilities?

It's quite challenging, isn't it?

I mean, does our faith flow out into our actions – into the way we live our lives?

Both as individuals and as a church?

And do our actions prove that we have faith in God?

Again, as individuals and as a church?

I'll leave that question with you

But I think, I want us to be encouraged by Abraham, who saw his faith as being ready for an adventure with God –

So, let me leave you with another question –

Are we ready to go on an adventure with God?

Again, both as individuals and as a church?