

**WE JUST NEED TO TRUST WHAT GOD SEES**  
**2 Corinthians 5:7**

**April 11, 2020**

On a number of occasions, I would ask my father for advice. My father was a wise man and the 'go to' person for the family and extended family. Often, the advice my father gave to me did not make sense to me at the time. Often, I could not see how taking my father's advice would accomplish the outcomes I was seeking. At times, I would admit to my father, "I do not see it." My father would respond, "You do not have to see it. I see it. You just need to trust what I see."

Paul shared with the church in Corinth that there would be times when they would not see what God was doing. There would be times when they would not understand why God was doing what God was doing. During those times, they would need to walk by what God said versus what they saw.

Similarly, we do not always understand why God is doing what God is doing. We do not always have clarity regarding God's methodology and cannot see how following God's plan will accomplish the outcomes we are seeking. Paul's advice to the church in Corinth is the same advice he gives to us on today, "We walk by faith, not by sight." During these times, we need to walk by what God said versus what we see. Is this easy to do? No, because we are accustomed to acting on what we see. During these time, we must trust that we do not have to see it. God sees it. We just need to trust what God sees.

**FAITH IN GOD COMES FROM HEARING GOD**  
**Romans 10:17**

**April 12, 2020**

I have counseled many couples for many years. One question that has been commonly asked over the years is, "What can we do to strengthen our faith and trust in each other?" My answer to them is, "You need to spend time with each other, speaking to each other, and more importantly, hearing each other." The time we spend with each other hearing each other is what assists us in getting to know each other so that our faith and trust in each other may be strengthened. Faith in each other comes from hearing each other.

Paul tells the church in Rome that faith comes by hearing – that is, hearing the word of God. Paul was very clear that if they were not hearing the word of God then they could never have faith in God.

The word of God is God's primary way of revealing Himself to us. It is through the word of God that we are introduced to God, we witness multiple expressions of the love of God, we receive revelation of the will and purpose of God and we are instructed in how to establish a personal, intimate relationship with God. Therefore, the time we spend hearing the word of God assists us in getting to know God so that our faith and trust in God may be strengthened. Faith in God comes from Hearing from God.

How would I define my relationship with God? Would I say that my relationship with God is sound and stable or is it wobbly and weak? When I start hearing from God, I will start strengthening my faith and trust in God.

**PILGRIM REST MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH**

**2020 LENTEN DEVOTIONAL**

**April 6 – April 12, 2020**

**JESUS STILL SPEAKS TO THE CHURCH**

**WE ARE CHILDREN OF THE DAY, NOT THE NIGHT** **April 6, 2020**  
**1 Thessalonians 5:5-8**

My parent often shared "There is nothing good that happens out in the streets at night." Although at the time I felt that my parents were old fashioned and out of touch with reality as I saw it, I later in life discovered that they were right and clearly knew what they were talking about. I later discovered that those who spend a lot of time out at night have something to hide.

Paul gave a similar warning to the church in Thessalonica, and expanded upon it by telling them that they were children of light and children of the day; and not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore, they had a responsibility to live like children of the day versus children of the night. Children of the night are not vigilant. They are not aware of what is occurring around them. Children of the night are asleep. They lack spiritual usefulness. Moreover, children of the night are like those who are drunk. Even when they do awake, they are so inebriated that they too lack spiritual usefulness. Paul's charge to them is to be as children of the day – awake, sober, alert and ready for work.

We are likewise charged to be children of the day. We are charged to wake up, sober up, guard up and get ready for work. The devil would prefer that we were lounging around in an ineffective sleepy, drunken stupor. However, God desires that we are awake and sober – suited in the armor of faith and love, and wearing as a helmet the hope of our salvation.

**MORE PRODUCTIVE AND USEFUL TO JESUS**  
**2 Peter 1:5-9**

**April 7, 2020**

If you have ever heard an adolescent tell a story, they have a unique way of building up suspense and transporting you along with them on their journey. They begin by sharing the initial events that took place in the story followed by, "And then..." After they share the next segment of the story,

they again pronounce, “And then...” They continue using this rhetorical device to hold us in suspense until they finally resolve the story with a resounding, “The end.”

As Peter shared what it took to grow in faith, he used a similar rhetorical device. Peter told them to add to their faith virtue. And then, to virtue knowledge. And then, to knowledge self-control. And then, to self-control perseverance. And then, to perseverance godliness. And then, to godliness brotherly kindness. And then, to brotherly kindness love. Each one of these qualities build upon the previous one and transports us on a journey towards growth in our faith. Peter resolved that if they continued to grow that way, their knowledge of our Lord Jesus, the Christ, would make them more productive and useful to fulfilling the gospel of Jesus, the Christ.

Most Christians desire to grow in their faith in Jesus and start out well. However, along the journey we lose the excitement of the suspense that we once had and ultimately fizzle out. May we allow the rhetorical device of “And then...” to excite us and motivate us to continue to press forward along this journey, continuing to expect that the attainment of each quality is not an end, rather, it causes us to pause in suspense of the next quality that we seek to add as we continue on our journey. As we continue to grow that way, we look forward to our knowledge of our Lord Jesus, the Christ, making us more productive and useful to fulfilling the gospel of Jesus, the Christ. The end.

### **PHILADELPHIA: THE FAITHFUL CHURCH** **Revelation 3:7-13**

**April 8, 2020**

**Commendation:** Jesus shared with the church in Philadelphia that they has a little strength, had kept His word and had not denied this name. Jesus not only commended the church in Philadelphia, He also pronounced a blessing upon them for their strength, having kept Jesus’ word and having not denied Jesus’ name. The blessings they would receive included: providing an open door that no one could shut, making the imposters worship before their feet, knowing that Jesus loved them and, because of their perseverance, keeping them from the hour of trial that would come.

**Condemnation:** Jesus did not give a condemnation to the church in Philadelphia

**Recommendation:** Jesus recommended that the church hold on firmly to what they already had. It was important that the church continue to do what they were already doing. By doing so, Jesus promised that no one would lose their crown.

**Today:** Many of us have felt the frustration of doing the right thing, yet not getting the best outcome from it. During those times, our human emotions and feelings desire to give up and quit. Although our strength may be little, Jesus encourages us to keep His word and resist denying His name. Jesus is still speaking to the church, **“Hold on firmly to what you already have.”** Jesus is still telling the church that what we have is good because what we have is His word and His name. Hold on... we already have what we need.

### **OUR DESIRE IS TO PLEASE OUR GOD** **Hebrews 11:6**

**April 9, 2020**

There are many stories that have been shared that have reflected the faithfulness of dogs. To that end, dogs have been called “Man’s [humans] best friend.” After being mistreated and abused, a dog will return the mistreatment and abuse with faithfulness, and faithfully give its loyalty back to the humans, seeking only to please them. Examining a dog’s interaction with its owner displays a clear correlation between faith being given and a desire to please the one to whom the faith is given. Simply put, dogs have faith in their owners to feed them, provide for them, shelter them and in every other way meet their needs, and in return, dogs will seek to please their owners. A dog’s primary desire is to please its owner.

In verse 5 of Hebrews Chapter 11, the writer draws a correlation between Enoch’s faith in God and his desire to please God. Pause for a moment to consider how many people you seek to please in whom you do not have faith. It is probably not many at all if any at all. We tend not to seek to please those in whom we have no faith. On the other hand, those in whom we have faith we tend to seek to please them.

It is impossible for us to please God if we do not have faith in God. When we have faith that God is real, and when we have faith that God will feed us, clothe us, protect us, provide for us and in every other way meet our needs, we will, in return, seek to please God. Our faith in God will reveal our primary desire to please our God.

### **OUR FATHER WILL ONLY SAY WHAT HE SAW** **Matthew 25:21**

**April 10, 2020**

I received a call from an attorney a few years ago asking me to write a letter of recommendation for her client. When she told me who her client was, I laughed to myself because I had not heard from that person in 20 years. I thanked the attorney for calling, then told her that I do not lie on recommendations; I only say what I see. I continued to tell her that what I remember seeing from her client 20 years earlier was a man who abused drugs and alcohol, and abused his wife. I then asked her, “Do you want me to say what I saw?” She withdrew her request, thanked me for my time and hung up.

Jesus shared a picture of what it will look like when we stand before our Father. All of us desire that we will receive a glowing recommendation and anticipate our father sharing positive comments regarding the ministry we provided, the money we gave and the service we offered. Many expect to stand boldly and confidently before our Father to hear Him say, “Well done...” The reality is, our Father will not say, “Well done,” if we have not done well what we are called to do. The Father will only say what He saw.

If we desire a good recommendation to be spoken by our Father in the end, the components of a good recommendation must be lived now. Our Father will not lie; He will only say what He saw.