

Independence of Faith

Genesis 14

by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

We're studying the Old Testament and we've reached Chapter 14, so if you'd like to turn to Genesis 14 that's what we're studying tonight. You may remember that last Sunday we talked about the generosity of faith, and mentioned that Abraham had such certainty that God would supply every need of his, that when they came to a point where he and his young nephew Lot could no longer continue together because their herdsmen were fighting each other, Abraham, in spite of the fact that he was senior, did not say, "Okay, let me choose which land I'm going to have and you can take what's left." But he has such absolute confidence and rest that God, his God, would supply all his material needs from his riches in glory in Christ Jesus that he said to Lot, "You choose which land you want and I'll take what's left. And Lot took the land that eventually ended up as Sodom and Gomorrah, though it was the most fertile land, and Abraham took what was left.

We shared last Sunday evening that that is faith; faith in God brings about a generosity in you and me and a freedom from having to grab from others what little scraps we can, and a freedom from grabbing what little extra salary we can, or what good position at the table we can get, or what good car we can get. There's a great relaxation when you have faith inside your heart that is real faith. And that's one of the things that have come home to us; that faith in God working is not a worked up thing. I think a number of us think at times it's a worked up thing and we think, "Well I'm kind of depressed -- but I'm having faith." Well, the two are contradictory, you either have faith or you're depressed. But some of us say, "Well yeah, I'm a bit worried and apprehensive about this week ahead and about the job situation, but I'm exercising faith." No, you're not -- faith means your heart is light and you are confident that God has the thing under control.

So that's what we mean when we're talking about working faith. Tonight I would like to talk a little bit about the independence of faith, but it might be good loved ones, to state very plainly what faith is just once more. Faith is not confidence in what God will do. That's, I think, where we have real problems; we try and work ourselves up and we say, "God did it before so, yes, I think he'll do it for me. If I can find the exact same situation in the Bible, yes, I can persuade myself that he'll do it. Yes he will do it. Yes I know he will do it. Yes I'm sure he will do it." And we try to work ourselves up into a persuasion that God will do this. That's hope.

Hope is a sure confidence in what you believe God is going to do. Faith is a sure confidence in what he has already done. And I think this will bring the same life to you as it has done for me, if you'll just bear with me going through it again. Loved ones, the Old Testament is hopelessly ungrammatical and I'd like to prove it to you, and I speak as an English teacher: Joshua 6:1-2, "Now Jericho was shut up from within and from without because of the people of Israel; none went out, and none came in. And the Lord said to Joshua, 'See, I have given into your hand Jericho, with its king and mighty men of valor.'" That's anagrammatic!

I mean, "Jericho was shut up from within and from without," it was a fortress and God said, "See, I have given into your hand Jericho, with its king and mighty men of valor." He should have said, "I will give into your hand Jericho and its king and mighty men of valor." And yet he said, "I have given it into your hand." Remember when he said to Abraham in Genesis 17:5 when Abraham hadn't even one son of his own, he said, "I have made you the father of many nations" and it just seems

ungrammatical loved ones, “No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham,” Abraham is “the father of the peoples”, “for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.” And it’s just not grammatical -- because Abraham, at this point, had not a son of his own, and yet God says, “I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.”

Now why is the Bible so ungrammatical? Is it just that the Old Testament is using a past tense Hebrew expression perhaps when it really should be the future? Or is it poetic license, or the prophetic view point where he sees the thing as already done? The difficulty with all those theories is that you find it in the Greek New Testament as well and I’ll show you a verse that again seems ungrammatical. Paul is speaking to the people who are alive in Colossae there and he says this to them in Colossians 3:3, “For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” And they were alive, I mean, that’s why he wrote to them and yet he says, “For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

Some of us say, “Well, he just meant it spiritually. I don’t see how to explain the business with Abraham, I don’t see how to explain the business of Jericho, but here -- this is just he meant metaphorically -- if Christ died for you it’s like you dying with Christ.” But loved ones, he builds a whole theory of actual practices on this and I’ll show it to you in Ephesians 2:4. In other words, he uses it to such an extent that he seems to be making a foolish statement about actual facts. Ephesians 2:4, “But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses.” See, “Even when we were dead.” And if you know the Greek it’s actually the present participle, “Being dead when he loved us.” “Us being dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).” You may say he’s just using that metaphorically to talk about regeneration, but you see in verse 6, “and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” And you want to scream and say, “No. You mean, ‘will raise us up and will make us sit with Christ in the heavenly places when all this world is wrapped up and we are all brought together around the throne of God’ we will be made to sit. Paul, you’ve missed it; you’re saying “made” as if it’s happened already. It is ungrammatical and just does not make sense.”

The incredible thing is that he actually says repeatedly, “That is the case; these things have been done.” Indeed he actually says, “If these have been done, you ought to act a certain way.” So it’s not as if Paul is out with the lack of grammar. He actually builds a whole message on it as you’ll see in Colossians 3:1-2 and 15-20. It’s not as if he’s just making a metaphorical statement, he actually builds facts on this metaphorical statement which makes foolishness of logic if it’s not true. Colossians 3:1, “If then you have been raised with Christ,” we’re still saying, “But we haven’t. We haven’t we’re still here.” But he said, “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” Then in verse 3 he says, “For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you.” And he keeps on and on at this same thing.

You’ll see it again loved ones, in 2 Corinthians 5:14 because it is not just in one or two spots, it’s throughout the Bible -- God speaks of something as if it’s already done. 2 Corinthians 5:14, “For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died.” And he says, “We all have died. It’s already done. It’s already taken place. It’s already happened.” And actually Paul says it of a much more important thing. He says it in Galatians of the part of our lives that brings us so much trouble, if you’d like to look at it, its

Galatians 6:14. "But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world," and that's the "kosmos" in Greek; it's the financial world, the international world, your professional world, your family and domestic world, the lone world, the whole world system that works independently of God and wears us down day-by-day. "By which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." And he actually says, "That whole world system that wears in upon you and gives you headaches and strain because you're competing with all your colleagues, that world that creates so much strain and worry in you because of the loans that you have, that world and its power to create that strain in you has been crucified in Christ." And they keep talking about these things as crucified.

I was reading one of the biographies of Einstein that I've become familiar with, he writes to Bohr who was one of his colleagues in the scientific enterprise, and he says to him, "The end of our life is drawing near. But of course, to people like ourselves the past, and the present, and the future are all one, as we know." It's interesting that he says that from a scientific angle. He says, "For those of us who are engaged in this kind of relativity research, the past, the present, and the future are all one." And it's as if that's the situation, because this gets even spookier and I'll show you a really spooky bit.

Those that we've just read are places where in the New Testament they talk about things as having already happened in Christ because of his death. Here's a bit that talks about things as having already happened even before he's been crucified. Isaiah 53:4-5, it was written about 700 or 800 BC, 700 or 800 years before Jesus died on Calvary. Isaiah 53:4, "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded." You feel like saying, "Isaiah he will be wounded -- in 800 years he will be wounded." Isaiah says, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes," and its interesting isn't it, "we are healed." Not, "We shall be healed." But, "with his stripes we are healed." Any of you that know the Hebrew know the Hebrew goes right along this. It goes right along with these tenses.

Now that makes the whole thing utterly confusing. Here is this man Isaiah, 800 years before Jesus was crucified in Calvary, saying that these things have already happened. What is the explanation? Well its Einstein's really, you find it there in that great verse Revelation 13:8. It's just the truth loved ones, and there's no way getting around it. Revelation 13:8, "and all who dwell on earth will worship it, every one whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of the life of the lamb that was slain." And those of you that have heard me expound that verse before know that the adverbial phrase of time "before the foundation of the world" in the Greek does not follow the verb "written"; it follows the verb "slain". So the verse in the Greek reads, "And all who dwell on earth will worship it, every one whose name has not been written in the book of the life of the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world." And that's it, that's the fact of it all.

But our God is better than a Cray mainframe; better than an IBM mainframe computer, and our God was able to foresee all of us, even though he retained our right to be free agents, and you will do nothing but what you are free to do; he will not constrain you in any way, yet he foresaw what would happen to you in your life. And he foresaw the things that you would do, and he foresaw the sicknesses that you would come into, and he foresaw the difficulties and the problems that the world would bring upon you and he put them into his son and put all of us in his son and he crucified us there. Then he remade us, renewed us, and recreated us, and then he sent us here to earth to find what it would be like if he had never crucified us in Jesus. So that -- how good he is you know --

so that we'd still have a choice because free will was so precious, in order to have people who would love you and whom you could love.

But that's how good he is; he has foreseen the whole thing and he has already neutralized and negated and destroyed all the things in your life that will make your life other than what his will is. Faith is what enables his Holy Spirit to bring that miracle in eternity into time; because he will not bring it unless you will it. He will not bring it unless you have faith for it, and once you have faith for it, then he will bring it in a way that is just right for you.

So that's what faith is: faith is a great confidence that all these things have already happened. In a booklet called *Escape from Time* there is this phrase, "Faith is believing this gospel and living like Abraham and Joshua in the absolute certainty that every evil in ourselves or our circumstances has already been transformed by God in Jesus and that we are no longer bound in time and subject to the limitations of this fallen world, but liberated into the eternal life of Christ at God's right hand." And that's how we escape from time, and that's what faith is; it's an absolute confidence that God has done these things.

Now that's what Abraham knew about, and if you say, "Abraham couldn't know about it -- Jesus wasn't alive then." If you'd glance at John 8 it reinforces all that we've said; John 8:56, Jesus is speaking, he says, "Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it and was glad." The Jews then said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." Abraham, through the Spirit of God, knew what the Father had done in Jesus and he knew that this had happened, so he came into the situation in this chapter that we're studying where Ched-or-laomer, one of the kings who got tariffs, and duty and tax from the people in Canaan, decided to attack those people, and he actually attacked them with four other kings.

He attacked five kings in Canaan and took them prisoner and among those that he took prisoner was the nephew, Lot, who had settled in that land. And if you'd been Abraham you would have said, "This fellow has caused me enough trouble; he took the best land." But Abraham didn't think that at all, and in spite of the fact that nobody else was brave enough to go after these kings, Abraham had no doubt. Why -- because he had absolute confidence that God had already won this victory for him so he went out after these kings. Let's turn to Genesis 14:11 and you'll see what happened then. "So the enemy," because all of that is just a description of the battle with Ched-or-laomer and the other kings against the kings of Canaan, "So the enemy took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way; they also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. Then one who had escaped came, and told Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner; these were allies of Abram. When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and routed them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus."

One of the things that we said in our prayer time before service was if you see something that is a trouble in your life run towards it -- attack, attack, attack -- always attack. There's a funny little French General, Foch, in the First World War, and they said to him, "General, what will you do? The Germans are on your right wing, and the Germans on your left wing -- what will you do?" He said, "Attack, attack." In faith you always attack, you never fall back; if you see trouble ahead in your life or difficulty ahead this week, attack. Go for it with faith; don't for a minute fall

back. Don't for a moment fear it. Don't for a moment even hesitate. He who hesitates is lost. No, you go forward with absolute confidence that God in Jesus has crucified this piece of the world and I have victory over it; because that's your faith, you see. That's faith loved ones.

Don't ease into it; don't try to, "Well, yeah I'll try to work up my faith. Well, zippity do dah, zippity." Don't do that. Don't do it. Either God has done it or he hasn't. If he hasn't, don't you mess with it, you're finished. But if God has done it, there's nothing to fear. So you go in filled with confidence, right from the bottom of your heart. That's what faith is, you see; it's not something you work up, it's not a hope that you have, it's an absolute confidence that God has done this in Jesus, that God's word is true. That's what it is.

So that's what Abraham did in verse 16, "Then he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his goods, and the women and the people. After his return from the defeat of Chedor-laomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley)." And then an amazing incident took place. It's an incident that takes us into those primeval days when the original religion that was established in Eden was still operating. It takes us back almost beyond the patriarchs, this next verse, into that realm where people lived in relationship with God as they were meant to in the Garden of Eden, because this is an amazing verse.

Verse 18, "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said, 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!' And Abram gave him a tenth of everything." Now that was before there was tithing, before the law, before the Israelites had to give a tenth. And the only one to whom they ever had to give a tenth was God himself. So here is Abram, the father of all who believed, giving a tenth to this man Melchizedek.

Who is Melchizedek? Will you turn to Hebrews 7:1-10, "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him; and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything." And who is he? This goes into the mystery: "He is first, by translation of his name," because Melic is king and zedek is righteousness in Hebrew. "He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem," shalom, "that is, king of peace." And then verse 3, "He is without father or mother or genealogy, and has neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest for ever. See how great he is! Abraham the patriarch gave him a tithe of the spoils. And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brethren, though these also are descended from Abraham. But this man who has not their genealogy received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. Here tithes are received by mortal men; there, by one of whom it is testified that he lives. One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him."

Then verse 14, "For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become a priest, not according to a legal requirement concerning bodily descent but by the power of an indestructible life." Oh at least a theophany; at least the angel of God appearing as a great king and a priest, but many theologians say, Jesus -- an incarnation of Christ. One who is without father or mother and is without genealogy. One of those

appearances of Christ that occurred in the Old Testament that shows us plainly that of course he existed from before the foundation of the world and that he expressed himself and revealed himself in different occasions well before he was born in Bethlehem of Judea.

It really reinforces all that we're saying; that with God there is no time, it's all one great eternal moment. Then loved ones, the lesson that I think God has for us in this chapter and then we'll close, Genesis 14:21; it's the independence of faith. It's because Abraham was utterly convinced that his God would supply every need of his from his riches in glory in Christ Jesus -- absolutely confident. He had heard the voice saying, "Do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication let your request be made known to God and the peace of God that passes all understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

Therefore, this is what he did in verse 21, "And the king of Sodom said to Abram, 'Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself.'" In other words, "you take the spoils because you won the victory". Verse 22, "But Abram said to the king of Sodom, 'I have sworn to the Lord God Most High, maker of heaven and earth, that I would not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.' I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me; let Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share.'" That's faith. "I won't take a sandal thong from you lest you say you have made Abram rich. There is one who has made me rich and one who will keep me rich." That's the independence of faith.

Why I thought it was good is, we can check our own hearts. You know what we're like; we can check our own hearts -- do we say that, or do we say, "I have a right to this spoil. I have a right to this. I have a right to that. I ought to have it, it is my right." And we grab at it. Sandal thongs -- we take everything, everything we could, because we say "After all we deserve it. There is no harm in this." Abraham was all concerned about God's honor, so often we're all concerned about our security, and God knows that we don't have faith in him. But we have faith in the enemy, faith in other people, faith in our employers, faith in our stocks and shares, faith in our jobs, faith in our skills, faith in our cleverness, faith in our bank accounts, faith in the President, faith in the economy, faith in everything. We know our faith is in those things because when those things go up and down so our peace goes up and down.

Loved ones, there is a place to stand where our faith is in God and God alone. There is a place to stand in this life that is free from the recessions. There's a place to stand in this life that is free from what our employer does to us. There's a place to stand in this life that has dignity and independence. There's a place of faith where you have confidence in God and he knows you have confidence in him. Brothers and sisters, I think many of you are such as I was. I kept agreeing with everybody that faith was necessary but I did not exercise working faith. I had faith in all those things that I've told you about, and if you say to me, "Well, those are the world's ways." That's right they're the world's way of supplying what we need. They are. And if you say to me, "Well, won't God use those?" Sure, he'll use them at times, but you know in your heart when you have faith in God to supply you through those, or apart from those, and when your faith is in the thing itself. You and I know that. We know that.

How often have we given in on our beliefs or convictions because we needed the job? How often have we put up with all kinds of stuff not only from a boss but from our colleagues, because we needed the money? Loved ones, do you see what a -- I have to use the word because it is the word, what a sneaking, sniveling, crawling group of little insects we are? It's terrible, it's terrible. We

fear men. We fear our bosses. We fear our colleagues. We fear what other people will say to us. We fear what they'll do in the economy. We jump up and down when the interest rates go up and down. We have faith in everything but God.

It's what Fenelon said, "we depend on him for everything but we count on him for nothing." We count on him for nothing -- we count on everybody else. We'll bow down to them and we say, "There's no idolatry in us," but we don't just worship them, we don't say, "you're God" but we bow down to them, we please them, we think about how to improve our status with them. We do everything that you're really meant to do with God and that's why we have no freedom of working faith within us. Working faith is absolutely confident that God has done everything in Jesus that is needed for you and me. It's absolute confidence that God has sent you here to do a certain job in this world and that he will take care of you. It's absolute immediate faith that God will take care of everything.

I don't know how many of us here get under the business of preparing for the future. But it's tragic when you think of how much of our life we spend preparing for the future. It's the business of piling up the cash to make sure that we can see ourselves through those years, and God has something better for us. He may want us to do some saving, but it will be under his direction. And loved ones, isn't that the problem? The problem isn't the saving; the problem is that we take hold of that as if there was no God. We try to pile up those stocks and shares, those investments, as if there was no God. We really do, you know we do. We don't say, "God, what would you like me to do?" Or, "What do you want to do with my life?" We say, "The world knows how to make you secure; it will do it."

There's an incident loved ones, of a person doing this and it might light it up for you a little. It's in Genesis 32 and it's the life of Jacob. You remember he stole the birth right from his brother and then he had to return to that land, so of course he was scared of meeting his brother. So in Genesis 32 he decided to trust God, or pray to him, and he said in verse 11, "Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, lest he come and slay us all, the mothers with the children. But thou didst say, 'I will do you good, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'" So he lodged there that night, and took from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau." And so he prays and then he goes on with his own arrangements. "Two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams." He prayed and asked God but he thought, "Double insurance." "Thirty milch camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten he-asses. These he delivered into the hand of his servants." Then comes the old manipulation game, "Every drove by itself, and said to his servants, 'Pass on before me, and put a space between drove and drove.'" He instructed the foremost, "When Esau my brother meets you, and asks you, 'To whom do you belong? Where are you going? And whose are these before you?' then you shall say, 'They belong to your servant Jacob; they are a present sent to my Lord Esau; and moreover he is behind us.'" He likewise instructed the second and the third and all who followed the droves, "You shall say the same thing to Esau when you meet him, and you shall say, 'Moreover your servant Jacob is behind us.'" For he thought, "I may appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterwards I shall see his face; perhaps he will accept me." So the present passed on before him; and he himself lodged that night in the camp." And God could do nothing with a man like that.

He could do nothing with a man who had that kind of lack of faith. Jacob had to come to a crisis in his life, and here it is, "The same night he arose," and at last God had to get him to get rid of everything, "and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. And

Jacob was left alone.” Finally loved ones, you have to come to that place where you’re alone, “and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day.” Because, really, you are alone with God. “When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched the hallow of his thigh; and Jacob’s thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, ‘Let me go, for the day is breaking.’ But Jacob said, ‘I will not let you go, unless you bless me.’”

In other words, “Lord, I want to know you. I want to come into a place where I trust you alone, and not all the presents, and not all the gimmicks, and the manipulation and the sandal thongs that I get from others.” “And he said to him, ‘What is your name?’ And he said, ‘Jacob.’ Then he said, ‘Your name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.’ Then Jacob asked him, ‘Tell me, I pray, your name.’ But he said, ‘Why is it that you ask my name?’ And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel saying, ‘For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.’ The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his thigh.” He never stood on his own two feet again. He always limped; leaning on God strongly and heavily.

It seems to me that until you come to that place, you’re not exercising working faith. While you have your hand out for what the world can give you, while you have your mind working on how to manipulate a little more from the boss or the company, while you’re looking out for yourself God can’t come through; he cannot. Working faith is exercising faith in God alone. It is faith alone. It’s faith in God only. So I’d ask you about your own heart. I have no doubt about your beliefs, and I have no doubt about the fact that you’re probably in the same spot that I was; you want to exercise faith. But I’d ask you where you are in your own heart? Are you putting your faith in God, or are you putting your faith in God and all the other things as well?

Then let me tell you, as one who knows, you’re not putting your faith in God, you’re bluffing yourself and God knows that. You’re involved in syncretism, the Old Testament word for worshipping many gods. If there are no miracles taking place in your life that’s why, because you haven’t, finally, put your faith in God alone. When you put your faith in him alone, you’re the most independent, free soul in this whole universe. That’s why they called Oswald Chambers in that biography the “unshackled soul.” Then you’re unshackled at last, and you have the dignity that God meant us human beings to have when he put us up on our hind legs and made us walk tall and high. That’s it.

Loved ones, that’s God’s will for us. Working faith is complete confidence that God has taken all the things in your life, put them into Jesus, destroyed them all and remade them so that you have nothing to fear this coming week, nothing at all. You walk into the week knowing that it’s a prepared way that God has for you. It’s a charmed life that you’re going to live; a thousand may fall at your right hand and 10,000 at your left hand, but it shall not come close to you. That’s what it is. That’s the life. That’s the life which God has for you. Put your faith in him. Exercise your faith joyfully. Get up tomorrow morning when Satan comes in like a lion with fear, and resist him. Look at the verses “the world has been crucified in Christ.” Thank the Father that all things are well and go forward with a heart that is lifted, that’s God’s will. Only when your heart is lifted are you exercising faith. Get that clear, don’t mix it up; you’re only exercising faith when your heart is lifting and you’re storming into that difficult interview with complete confidence. That’s working faith -- then you see the mountains lowered and you see the valleys filled in. Then the crooked things are made straight and the rough places are made smooth. Then bodies begin to heal and lives begin to be changed through your faith.

Let us pray.

Dear Father, we thank you for the wonder, and the might, and the miracle of it all. We thank you that it comes home to our hearts as true and right. Father, we now lay ourselves before you and ask you by your Holy Spirit to search our hearts out and clean us out, and reveal to us any alloy, any mixture of faith in ourselves and faith in you. Any alloy of faith in you and faith in other people. Lord, reveal it to us. We want to walk the way of the princes and princesses of God. Father, we'd rather go down in defeat with our faith absolute in you, then go into success with our faith in the world and its methods.

So Father, we commit ourselves to you with joy because we see this week ahead as experimental. We see it as an opportunity to see this work. So Father, we intend to live in this faith and to live on the basis of it, and we intend to make our behavior and our actions match our faith. Thank you Father. Thank you for such a week ahead. Thank you for such a confidence that you've already done it all. All we're doing with our faith is enabling that victory to be manifested here, it's already done. The boss is already dealt with, the money has already been gathered, and the payables have already been arranged suitably, the sickness has already been dealt with. Now Lord, as we exercise faith, you will manifest that in whatever way pleases you, but it will be a way that will bring victory and glory to you and to us. Thank you Lord.

Now the grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of us throughout this coming week, every day in victory.