

## “IF YOU BELIEVE...”

In Hebrews 11, the inspired writer tells us that “*faith is the substance of things hoped for*” (Heb. 11.1). To word translated as “substance” is a word that means, “to stand under.” Our faith is what stands under the things hoped for. This passage establishes the principle that hope is supported by our faith. We hope because we believe. In contrast, a lack of faith will rob us of our hope.

In 1 Thessalonians 4, we find that principle in action. In this passage, individuals had died as Christians. It is possible that their death was the result of persecution (1 Thess. 1.6; 2.2; Acts 17.5-9). Because of their death, Paul was concerned that brethren in Thessalonica would “*sorrow as others who have no hope*” (1 Thess. 4.13). It is important to note that Paul was not concerned about their grief. He was concerned that they were grieving without hope. He did not want them to grieve thinking that they would never see their brethren again. Instead, he wanted them to have hope that one day they would be reunited with their brethren.

What was the foundation of their hope? Paul goes on to write, “*For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again*” (1 Thess. 4.14). If we turn back to the book of Acts, we will find Paul in Thessalonica “*explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead*” (Acts 17.3). Earlier in his letter, he wrote about their conversion “*how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God..., and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead*” (1 Thess. 1.9,10). These were people who had been taught about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and had come to believe.

Our passage goes on to say that, “*even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus*” (1 Thess. 4.14). Their belief in Jesus and His being raised from the dead is what gave them hope that one day those who died in Jesus (Christians), would be raised from the dead. There will come a day when we will be reunited with those who have gone on before us (1 Thess. 4.17). And it is our faith in Jesus and His resurrection that gives us that hope (cf. 1 Cor. 15.20-22).

Our lives need to be filled with hope. It is this hope that sustains us knowing that there is something better to come (Rom. 5.3-5). It is this hope that comforts us (1 Thess. 4.18). But the only way that hope can exist is with faith. Faith is the foundation of our hope. Therefore, hope comes only “*if you believe...*” (1 Thess. 4.14).

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“*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*”  
-Mark 16.15

**February 1, 2026**

### MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS : 9:00 AM  
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP: 9:50 AM  
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP: 6:00 PM  
WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS 7:30 PM

## Truth is in Jesus

Jesus said that He came to bear witness to the truth. He also said that “*everyone who is of the truth hears My voice*” (John 18.37). Pilate responded by asking rhetorically, “*What is truth?*” (John 18.38). Of interest, Jesus used the definite article, “*the*” making reference to the gospel. However, Pilate did not use the definite article and so referred to truth in general. While Jesus came to validate the gospel message, Pilate remained skeptical believing that what is true is relative.

In Ephesians 4, brethren were living “*as the rest of the Gentile*” (Eph. 4.17-19). He then tells them, “*But you have not so learned Christ*” (Eph. 4.20). This kind of behavior is not what they were taught. The passage goes to remind them that “*you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus*” (Eph. 4.21). It is like a parent observing the misbehavior of their child and saying, “I didn’t teach you to act that way. I brought you up better than that.” These brethren were living like the Gentiles. And the writer tells them, “This is not the kind of behavior you have been taught. You have been taught the ways of Jesus which are true.”

Of interest, the original Greek does not include the definite article, “*the*.” It simply says that “*truth is in Jesus*.” Everything that is taught by Jesus and about Jesus is true. Pilate implied with his question that truth is relative. But the Holy Spirit confirms that everything related to Jesus is factual. Christianity is not a matter of opinion or personal preference. It is based on fact that Jesus died, was buried and rose again. (1 Cor. 15.3,4). CLP

## THE FORK IN THE ROAD

### JOSHUA 25:15

#### INTRODUCTION:

1. Jesus describes two roads on which we must choose to travel.
  - a) The road that is difficult, but leads to life. (Matt. 7.13)
  - b) The road that is easy, but leads to destruction. (Matt. 7.14)
2. From Joshua 24 we can gain some direction that will help us make the right choice. [Read Josh. 24.14-28]
3. Joshua issues them three challenges.

#### I. JOSHUA CHALLENGED THEM TO DECIDE

- A. **JOSHUA 24.15:** *"And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve,*
- B. Joshua gave them three choices.
  1. Serve the false religion of their family. (v. 15; Ex. 3.13)
  2. Serve the false religion of the world. (v. 15; Deut. 8.19)
  3. Serve the one and only God. (v. 15)
- C. Those are the same choices that are set before us. It is a decision we must make. (Matt. 6.24)

#### II. JOSHUA CHALLENGED THEM TO TAKE A SIDE

- A. **JOSHUA 24.19:** *"But Joshua said to the people, 'You cannot serve the Lord...'"* (cf. Josh. 24.16,18)
- B. The kind of God they are choosing. (v. 19)
  1. *"He is a holy God"* (v. 19; Lev. 19.2)
  2. *"He is a jealous God"* (v. 19; Ex. 20.3-5)
  3. *"He will not forgive..."* (v. 19; Num. 14.18)
- C. We also must choose a side. To take one side we must forsake the other. (Luke 11.23)

#### III. JOSHUA CHALLENGED THEM TO ABIDE

- A. **JOSHUA 24.21,22:** *"You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord for yourselves..."*
- B. Three things are needed to help us stay the course.
  1. Put away foreign gods. (v. 23)
  2. Make a note of your decision. (vs. 24-26)
  3. Create a reminder of your choice. (vs. 26,27)

**CONCLUSION:** It is a serious choice that will affect you for all eternity. Make sure it is the right choice!

## The Power of Showing Up

We often feel unqualified to help others, because we don't always know what to say or what to do. However, the way we help others is not in making significant contributions. It is not by always having words of wisdom readily available. It is not in solving their problems or making their pain go away. Often the best way to be there for someone is to simply be there for them. In other words, there is power in showing up.

Think about the blessing of having the presence of God in our lives. Moses told God, *"If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here"* (Ex. 33.15). In Hebrews 13, God promises us that *"I will never leave you nor forsake you"* (Heb. 13.5). Of interest, God never promised that He would solve all of our problems. Paul himself asked the Lord three times to remove his infirmity. God refused to fix his problems, but told him, *"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness"* (2 Cor. 12.9). How many times have we wondered, *"Where is God when I hurt?"* (cf. Ps. 13.1,2). Though our hardships persist, there is a great sense of comfort and peace of mind knowing that God's presence is with us.

You can be a blessing to the lives of others simply by being there. To the Corinthians, the Holy Spirit made reference to God, *"who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God"* (2 Cor. 1.4). We are able to comfort one another in the same way that God comforts us.

Think about the suffering of Job. After his three friends had learned about his tremendous suffering, it says that *"they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great"* (Job 2.13). Isn't it interesting that the help and advice offered by his friends made Job feel worse (Job 12.4; 17.2). But the best support that his friends gave him was when they sat with him saying nothing. Their presence was enough.

Think also about the suffering of the apostle Paul. He wrote about trouble coming from the outside in the form of persecution. He wrote about trouble coming from the inside in the form of fear (2 Cor. 7.5). He then wrote, *"Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus"* (2 Cor. 7.6). Through the presence of Titus, Paul was comforted.

How many times have you felt distress and worry and suddenly you get a phone call or a visit? They may not even know that you are struggling. But it is that friendly voice or that friendly face that lifts your spirit and comforts your heart. You don't have to solve all their problems. Your presence means more to them than you know. Maybe that's why we are told not to forsake the assembly. (Heb. 10.25). CLP