

To Believe – 2022-03-17

Pastor Mac

Good evening, and on behalf of Pastor J.D. Farag, we'd like to welcome you here to Calvary Chapel Kaneohe, a livestream service on this Thursday night where we're normally in the Old Testament conducting our line-by-line teaching, but tonight we will have a topical study. But before we get into the Word of God, please join me and bow our hearts for a word of prayer.

Loving heavenly Father, oh, how we need You. And Lord, if I could be so selfish, I need You right now, the power of Your Holy Spirit in order to speak and teach Your Word of truth.

So I ask humbly that You would meet us here and go before me now in the strength and power of Your might so that Your Word may be preached and taught so we all can hear, all of us and learn what You have to say.

So Lord, thank You for that which You are about to do. We love You and we indeed praise You in the mighty name of Yeshua, Jesus the Christ, we pray. Amen.

So for tonight, our study is titled 'To Believe.' And with that one word "believe" comes the most powerful command from God for the will of man. Believe: It's the one word that either places us into eternal life or eternal damnation, "Believe."

To me, we have a lot of signs that we can look within ourselves to see if we really believe or not. And it takes one to know one. I remember those days walking around, I believe. I believed in Christianity, but not so much Jesus. And it was evident.

You know why? There was no excitement. Jesus is coming!

My response was: Jesus is coming, yay.

That was my experience until I really believed in the Lord. And I thank the Lord for that eye-opening experience by the power of His Holy Spirit. And, you know, many people behind the pulpit also say that they believe and don't.

You realize that, right?

Yeah, just like many professing Christians say that they believe, but they don't. They come out later with some indifferences, things that you know go against the scriptures, and you're like, what?

Or act in a way that's completely contrary too, calling it all biblical. One of the things they always point to and try to say and try to put on many Christians is that Jesus Christ is not the only way.

How many professing Christians and including those behind the pulpit say that? Many of them. But I'll tell you what: Whatever they are believing, if they don't believe in Christ alone, all that belief is in vain.

Now, before we get into this teaching tonight, this teaching is not about judging someone's salvation. God does that. He knows the heart of man. But this teaching is about judging our fruit.

Are we tracking?

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We ought to judge. The Bible says judge righteous judgment, and that righteous judgment is contained within His Word. That's how we can see the fruit or the lack thereof.

And I also believe that we've come to a point in human history we need to challenge ourselves. We need to challenge each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. All those who claim to believe but display overwhelming signs of disbelief.

Far too many professing Christians love the idea of a savior, but they doubt the very same saving power that comes from Christ alone. They believe in aspects of the Word of God but reject it in its totality.

That's a major problem because the way I see it is that you believe all of it or reject the whole thing.

Now, that's not to say that we're going to clearly understand all of it. But it is to say that we know it's the word of truth. That I believe therefore, I trust in all of it, even the parts that I do not clearly understand.

Anything else will lead to compromise, and compromise often leads to our demise, wouldn't you agree?

So the first thing that I want to do is take a look at the word "believe" in the Bible and define it from the biblical standpoint. And when we do so, this is what we find regarding the word "believe."

The word "believe" in the Hebrew means wearing or an action of proving to be firm, reliable, or permanent. In other words, believing or believe was established by proofs and those proofs were able to be verified and trusted and are so sure to be due to the fact the previous ones who believed it were all confirmed.

And when we think about it, we can see how this word "believe" ultimately ends in trust.

In fact, being a believer comes by way of a triune process, if you will, believe, faith, and trust, and none of them can be separated. It's all together when we believe. That's what makes us believers. And this is where we get into it because it's so important to know.

Now I'm going to look at the scriptures regarding the first time that we see the word "believe" mentioned in the Bible. Now that is not to say that they did not believe prior to this word being used in the scriptures. That's not what it is because we know they did believe.

But I find it very interesting where we find this account where the first time we see the word "believed" used exclusively.

Turn now in your Bibles to the Book of Genesis in Chapter 15. Genesis, Chapter 15. What we are about to read is dealing with the promised son that God would vow to Abraham. At that time, he was called Abram, as you know. And what I want to do is read verses 1-6 and then expound on them. This is going to tie in to our topic tonight, and I really believe it's meant for our understanding today.

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The Word of God reads beginning in verse 1, "**After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."**

But Abram said, "Lord God, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!"

And verse 4, "And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them."

And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And verse 6, "And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."

Now, let us expound on this and see the glory of the true and living God based on His Word. First, let's take a closer look at verse 1 because prior to the word "believed" being used, something happened first.

And notice what it says in verse 1, "**After these things the Word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."**

Did you catch that?

So we have the Word of the Lord first. And this is seen throughout the scriptures, "**the Word,**" but I find it so amazing that it's captured here in this way in this account.

The Word comes first from the Lord, promising a great reward. And when we apply that concept today, is it not true that within the Word of the Lord is a great reward? And to be specific, exceedingly great reward.

Again, the reward is in His Word. That's where the reward is at.

And I make that a point regarding all this because absent His Word, belief cannot be generated. And that's why scripture-less teachings are powerless.

Do you hear me?

Those orators, great speakers who stand behind the pulpits and use little-to-no-scripture, there is one thing that you can believe: The power of God is not there. It's of their own strength.

The Word of the Lord is where the power is. These scripture-less teachings: They don't convict. They may be convincing. They're filled with emotion and hype.

And you know them; I won't name them today, but you know I will.

They don't address sin. They don't promote godly wisdom, they're self-serving. When they speak about God, it's only about His mercy, never about His judgment nor a call to obedience.

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And I'm not talking about some forced obedience or being legalistic. No, that's not it. This is that obedience that comes by way of believing in the first place. It's a natural process to a believer, and sadly, many professing Christians cling to these popular life coaches, philosophical gurus, they love them. Oh man, they give them that instantaneous high.

Oh, did you hear what so-and-so said?

But it doesn't last. And it does not add to Christian growth; it takes away from it. And for a new believer, oh my goodness, or somebody who's on the fence, after having this type of scripture-less teaching, they have to be deprogrammed in order to have any belief to germinate in their heart, being caught up in that garbage which leads to worldly knowledge that means nothing absent the knowledge of the true and living God.

Look around today: God has taken the knowledge and wisdom of man and bringing it to nothing. Every expert looks completely idiotic. But what's sad is so many people follow the wisdom of nothing.

Moving on, verses 2-3 of Genesis 15. The Word of God reads, "**But Abram said, Lord, what would You give me seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?**" Then Abram said, "**Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!**"

Now, what's amazing about this account is that the Lord already told Abram that He would give him descendants as numerous as the stars, captured back in Chapter 12 when He told him to leave his kindred.

Remember that account?

And he did, but now, after many years, Abram, still no son, and he assumes this Eliezer will be that offspring. Now stay with me. Abram did exactly what the Lord said back in Chapter 12 by leaving.

But here, we have Abram basically questioning God. And what God said to Abram in order to get Abram to leave his kindred in the first place, He already told him, same exact thing, right? The promised child, meaning a son.

So Abram followed the command of the Lord, but Abram's belief in that son that was promised, hmm, was in question.

Now we all do the same thing, and none of us, I would think, would say that we have more faith than Abraham exhibited. I don't think we're that bold. But what's being displayed here is a vital lesson for all of us because following God to a degree does not mean people fully believe in the promises of God.

But the unseen promises of God are still promises from God.

Are we tracking?

Once we are called of the Lord and set out on that journey, the time will come, maybe several of them, in fact, when God has said something, and we don't see it.

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And it seems like it's not going to happen, and we question God. God seems distant. And then our loving God does what? He reminds us that He will do exactly what He said He's going to do. And just like with Abraham, God tells us about those promises. He gives us glimpses.

The question is: Do we do like Abraham did and continue to move forward?

Do we?

That's the mark of a believer. And we should strive for that and pray for that. And it might take a moment. We may trip up and fall. We may have more questions, but we must keep moving forward. That's belief.

And again, that belief was generated by the Word.

Do you hear me?

When in doubt, "Word" it out. That's what we need to do.

We talked about on Sunday those so-called Christians that renounce their faith, never believed in the first place. It was a faith of convenience. And that's why they never got a reminder from God. Because God knows their heart. They don't get that privilege.

Those who believe get reminded of God's promises. That helps us continue to move forward. Even during the times we have doubts and stumble and fall, Jesus is still faithful. And knowing this, our beliefs and our heart should remain wholehearted towards the Word of God.

Of all the people, Sir Isaac Newton will be quoted saying this: "He who thinks half-heartedly will not believe in God, but he who really thinks has to believe in God. And that's not just that there is a God.

No, this is believing in the true and living God, the God of the Word. And when we seek God, He knows exactly what we need in order for us to continue.

And with Abram, we see this in the next few verses, but before we get there, I want to point something out, just a minor detail. The name Eliezer means "God is help." And within the scriptures there's 11 people that hold that name.

This one is the first one captured in Genesis 15. And while Eliezer would go - this is "God is help" - would go find a wife for the promised son, Isaac, God himself found a wife for the promised son, Jesus, the son of man, I just think that's a little nugget there, look into it yourself.

Now, verses 4-6 of Genesis 15. Once again, we read, **"And behold, the Word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.'"**

Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."

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This is very important. In verse 4, we see once again that the Word of the Lord came to Abram. This is that continued reinforcement. This is what we need, that Word. It came to him again, confirming God's Word. That's why we need it so often, to confirm it.

And in verse 5, God shows Abram, which He once spoke about already, and then He speaks again with Abram.

And then in verse 6, Abraham believed. He believed, and it was accounted as righteousness.

Oh! This tells me it is indeed a fact that genuine belief in the Lord will be accounted as righteousness.

Do you hear me?

We are clothed in His righteousness once we believe.

Catch this one.

Come on, saints, because remember, after that, his name was changed, correct? And he still tried to help God by having that Ishmael, right?

Now ask yourself a question: Did God take back his righteousness?

Do you see the point here?

Once we believe our salvation is secure. It is accounted as righteousness, God's righteousness.

Are we tracking?

I pray that we are.

Genuine belief will produce genuine repentance. And also, it should produce genuine fruit. And this is our challenge and takeaway for tonight: To enhance our fruit based on our belief.

So now Abram believed in the Word of the Lord that he would have a son, his heir will live on after him. And for us today, we need to believe in the Son of man so that we can rule and reign as heirs with Him throughout eternity. This is about our walk in faith because we believe. That's the reason why Abraham is called the "father of faith" because faith itself is what anchors the word "believe."

Now, this is where we're going to get a little technical. When we talk about faith according to the Bible, we should see that it encompasses what some call the five pillars or five fundamentals of faith.

Now, some have seven pillars, some have four and three. Look, we're going to stick with five tonight just to make the point. And those five fundamentals of faith, again, stem from the word "believe" in that word "believe" is a verb, meaning action, as we all know, that now folds into the noun "faith," which is possessive.

Do you follow me on that?

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And then we're going to see some unique things happen with it because the noun translates into an adjective and then back into a verb of "believe." It just keeps it close-looped.

You can't have one without the other. And this is what I hope that really helps us understand "faith" and "belief" and these terms are not just used loosely.

Remember, this is all a part of how we are to believe. So the first pillar of faith as it pertains to the Word of God is that faith is factual and not based on feelings. So many Christians or professing Christians, what they do is they "feel" their way through the Bible accepting the parts that make them "feel good" and reject the parts that doesn't make them feel so good.

Oh, I don't believe that part. That was written for that time only.

And the excuses are endless. The bottom line is this: When the Bible says what it says, it is what it is, and there's enough in there to convict us all. Join the club.

But it seems that many people don't have this aspect of faith when they view the Word. They look at it as inaccurate.

What?

The Word of God reads in John, Chapter 17:17, "**Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth.**"

That means the entire Word, not bits and pieces, all of it. And because people are missing this fundamental of faith, God's glory is tainted or completely removed. And that stunts the actions that would follow. It's all disconnected because the glory is tainted. It's a shame how - think about these movies, right?

These "biblical" movies that they produce. I mean, the Word of God speaks what it says, and that gives Him so much glory. Here's one example. Sampson: In every movie made about Sampson, this guy is like 6'5", 260, all buffed up, right?

The scriptures never indicate that. In fact, it's the opposite. They couldn't figure out why he was strong. You take God's glory away producing garbage like that. It's like,

Oh, don't be so picky.

I am going to be picky when it comes to the Word of God.

[Audience saying "Amen."]

You want to watch it, go ahead. Yeah that's you.

I'm not spending two-and-a-half-hours watching something so inaccurate and all it does is make me mad. I already got high blood pressure. But in other words, I mean, absent this pillar of belief, I mean, God's Word is sprinkled with doubt.

Do you get that?

Those stories get out and it's like, That's not what I saw.

But this is what the Word of God says.

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Now we got to retrain the mind.

And it's so sad. It's not long before many of those people who lack this pillar come to reject the Word. And it's sad that it's not even taught in faith. It's taught in skepticism, especially when they do this Q&As. You know, right?

They know who to pick and put on the networks. So let me ask you a question, Reverend So-and-so.

So do you believe that Jesus Christ is the only way?

Well, there's many things in the Bible, in the scriptures that speak to us.

[Laughter]

You've seen them, right? Tap dancing up there, blasphemous. I better keep going.

The next pillar of faith is that faith is personal. Each and every one of us must decide to know the true and living God and His redemptive plan for man. It is a personal choice. No one can do it for us.

Also captured in the Book of John, Chapter 17:3 the Word of God reads, "**And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.**"

A personal connection. This is not a group-like acceptance. Knowing the true and living God is about spiritual intimacy and not just an idea of who God is. This is important for our faith, knowing God.

And knowing God leads to eternal life by knowing the gospel of Jesus Christ. In other words, respecting God does not lead to eternal life. Acknowledging God does not lead to eternal life. Even hanging around God does not lead to eternal life. Think about Judas Iscariot. Three years and some change, and what happened?

No, we have to know God, believe and accept the gospel of Jesus Christ in order for these promises of eternal life and all the other promises to be made true. That is an aspect of our faith that stems from belief in the first place. It's a personal relationship and knowing God.

Third component or pillar of our faith is the fact that faith is expressed in words. We all profess our faith by calling out to the Lord. Words are spoken. Our Lord is acknowledged in this aspect of faith.

This is an expression of ownership. I own this faith. And it really aids in making it evident that we possess the faith that we claim to believe in. The Apostle Peter would express this claim captured in the Book of Acts in Chapter 2:21.

As the Word of God reads, "**And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**"

The Apostle Peter quoted from the Old Testament. And we hear it every Sunday in Romans by the Apostle Paul. This is, in fact, a confession of faith regarding the lordship of Jesus Christ, and it makes perfect sense. calling out to the Lord is a requirement and a critical fundamental of our faith.

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Now, this fourth one is where this noun "faith" transitions into an adjective "faithful", which demonstrates that verb, "belief." "Belief" does so by showing how those who live their lives faithfully regarding what faith that we claim to believe in, in the first place.

And what this is speaking to is the fact that faith is applied in our lives. As believers, faith is hands-on, and it is practiced.

Faith is acted out. You can see it. It's made known even to the degree of how much faith we have in a way.

I mean, think about it. If you never saw what I claim to believe in, then how much of that faith do I have in that thing, whatever it is, right? You never saw it.

That's the way we need to think about this.

If I truly believe in what the Word of God says, especially today, the coming promises, the prophecy that we're seeing unfolding, wouldn't my life reflect it?

If not, then how much faith do I have, if any, at all?

We are told that faith is, **"The substance of things which is hoped for, the evidence of that which is not seen."**

If we have faith, people would see it, some way, at some point.

Consider these words also captured in the Book of Acts in Chapter 6:7, as the Word of God reads. **"Then the Word of God spread, and the number of disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith."**

In other words, being obedient to the faith is faithfully demonstrated. Why? Because they believe. Why would I do something that I did not believe in over and over and over and so rigorous?

Oh, it will come out at some point, it will.

But here, it's a lifelong, lifelong - once we believe, lifelong. Yeah, we backslide, yeah, we still sin, but we're going to know.

Brothers and sisters will see. And those who love us will challenge us. That's missing today, right?

People get all hurt, feelings get hurt.

What? I love you. Your feelings are secondary. It's my love for you first.

And if we knew that about one another, we could take it. I mean, there's a way to say it. I'm probably not the best guy to do it.

[Laughter]

But you get the point.

And this ties into conducting those good works that the Bible talks about. And those good works, or can I say godly works, are a by-product of the faith that we have because we believe.

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In the Book of James in Chapter 2:24, a well-known verse, the Word God reads, "**You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.**"

So much controversy comes up with this verse.

Oh, you're talking about works, you're talking about works.

Did you read what the scripture said in the context? "**Not by faith only.**"

As Christians faith and good, godly works go hand-in-hand, no matter how small it is. This is what the Apostle James is talking about.

To me, this is one of those areas that separates who walk in the Spirit, those who walk in the Spirit, and those who walk in the flesh. Or even more concerning, it separates the true converts from the false.

Having faith in the true and living God demands actions, a response comes by that. It happens; no matter how slight you'll see it and you'll know. This is a product that's produced by believing in the true and living God in the first place.

Good works are godly works in all that we do. As we start to come to know what is right, that convicting Holy Spirit prods us, and we do what is right because we believe.

We live a selfless life; it becomes more selfless as we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord, and that's all to honor God, not ourselves so that we may serve others as the Lord leads.

And there's many ways to exercise our faith. But prayer is by far the most important action that we can perform. And that leads to the fifth pillar of our faith, which is faith is constant, a constant process. It can't be temporary. It must be constant, present within all situations at all times.

And we need to pray for that. And this is where prayer as that action of faith comes back into play.

I don't know about you, but I continue to learn that God's timing is God's timing, right?

When we pray, He owns that. He owns the time it will be answered and how it will be executed. And we need to realize that more and more. If we truly believe, then we would be driven to have faith in those prayers, faith in them.

And then when they're answered at a time or way that we did not expect, trust that God did it the way that we needed it done because He cares and loves us.

And we need to be constantly praying for one another and pray that everyone's constantly praying for us. We talked about prayer on Sunday a little bit, the power of prayer is amazing.

Learn to pray for every single thing. Practice.

Sometimes when you're driving; I would say almost all the time, unless there's a lot of people in the car perhaps, cut the radio off and start praying.

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Stop listening to that garbage or the news outlets; don't get me started on those clowns.

The main point here though is that our faith must be constant, which includes prayers, which should be constant.

Now I'm going to look at a parable with you, and if you don't mind, join me in the Book of Luke, Chapter 18. We're going to read two verses. I would like you to see it, just I don't have it on the screen.

The Book of Luke Chapter 18:1. This is in regards to the persistent widow. I want to emphasize verse 1, and then I want to skip down to verse 8 for the sake of time just so we can make a point here about continuous prayer and faith being a by-product of our belief.

So verse 1 we'll read, the Word of God says, "**Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.**"

Do we see that? "**That men always ought to pray and not lose heart.**"

This is important for us to truly understand.

And we skip down the verse 8. Jesus says, "**I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?**"

Think about what God is saying here. Will He really find people of faith continuing in the faith and praying to Him for His promises to come?

Here we have the just Judge of the entire universe who will fulfill His Word: Are we praying to Him?

Do we, or do we only pray when things get bad?

That's like that son that some of us may have. You never hear from him, and when the phone rings, you're like, Pssh, he needs some money. You already know what time it is.

No.

Do we demonstrate that we pray, have this aspect continually that shows our belief in the first place.?

We need to believe in the promises of God, so much so that we are overly asking for them to come. Please come, please come. While at the same time, asking Him to bring people to us so we can have them believe also!

We don't stop His coming; no, we advance people so He can come quicker.

Sometimes we have it backwards. Well, you know, my so-and-so's not saved.

Hurry up and save them. If God uses you, pray for it, keep praying. Let's go!

Who wants to stay here? We all know what's coming. We should be asking to believe it.

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Now, all of this takes tact, of course, knowing God's Word in order to be effective for God's kingdom. So we need to pray for that as well. And the thing is, is that none of us can do this.

This requires the power of the Holy Spirit. He will teach us. He will show us in demonstrating all of these pillars of faith and beyond. But we have to let Him and not grieve the Spirit or quench the Spirit. Allow the Holy Spirit to have His way in our lives.

And again, this is not about salvation. It's about being known by our fruits, that we indeed believe.

So we said earlier that the believer has belief, faith, and trust all together. We talked about all but trust, and we'll end here.

The word "trust" means to take refuge. And this taking of refuge is in the presence or the confines of divine protection. Divine protection.

Notice the first time that we see the word "trust" or "trusted" captured in the scriptures. It's in the Book of Deuteronomy Chapter 32:37.

The Word of God reads, "**He will say: 'Where are their gods, the rock in which they sought refuge?'**" or translated to the word "trust."

This is what trust means as it pertains to God. Trust is finding divine surety. When it comes to God, it's divine surety. It is a done deal because God's behind it all. And this is why trust in man means nothing. And this should really hit home for all of us. I can't be your divine refuge.

No, I would like for you to trust me. I trust you too. But that only goes so far. That trust stops when souls are at stake.

Anything dealing with your soul? The only one to trust in is the true and living God, none of us at all. Complete trust is in the refuge of the Divine One.

But what's so sad is by the acts of some people or the lack thereof, many of us, I would venture to say is that somehow we always continue to put our trust in man. And every time we do that, it stiffens our walk. Our walk with the Lord is crippled.

Why?

Because we trust in man.

That is our biggest hindrance that we have, fallen man. The government: This big umbrella that continues to bloom out of control, why do we believe that the government is the answer?

Now, that does not mean we do not do civil duties. Whatever you're called for go in the name of the Lord. Here is the problem: When this becomes the object of your life.

How many people fall to man?

How many churches fall to man?

Let me just say this. You would not believe how many churches are now under the watch of the government because they are being funded by the government.

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So where's their trust? And we think the Lord is going to bless that ministry?

It's partly unbelievable.

Nevertheless, it's still sad, all because of a lack of something.

In the Book of Psalms and Chapter 146:1-5, the Word of God reads, "**Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul! While I live I will praise the Lord. I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.**

Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help. His spirit departs, he returns to his earth. In that very day, his plans perish. Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord, his God."

To me, this says it all. We're to believe in the Lord and rely on Him, not man. And one last thing. Look at the word "believe".

And notice that the letter I is in the middle of the word "believe." It is up to us as individuals to believe. And if I am a believer, you will see it at the center of my life, exactly where Jesus Christ is and should be for us all.

Why don't we stand? Kaponu, will you get ready to bless us with song, please?

I pray that the Word of the Lord has spoken to all the hearts here and those online. And with that said, why don't we bow our hearts once again to pray for God's blessing?

Father in heaven, we want to thank You for what You have accomplished in and through Your Word this evening. And we pray that it would stick with us in our minds and hearts as we disembark and go our separate ways, looking for a speedy return back here with You in Your house where we can enjoy more of Your presence and fellowship as we assemble together as a living organism.

And Lord, I pray that You would just continue to use this ministry and use all the saints here to do Your will. We love You and we thank You and we believe in You, in the mighty name of Yeshua, Jesus Christ, we do pray. Amen.