

HAVE FAITH IN YOUR WORDS 04: PUT LEGS ON YOUR DECLARATIONS Study Guide

Our premise for today is very simple: The more you believe what you say, the more you will walk in victory. So, today as we study God's Word together, I want to give you a big key to help you believe what you say, and that is simple: to believe what you say, you need to do what you say.

Read James 1.26 then James 1.22. If we do not bridle our tongue, we deceive our heart. If we hear God's Word and do not do it, we deceive ourselves. You could say we are self-deceived, or self-deluded.

If we only hear the Word and do not do it, we will always end up deceived. The most deceived people in the world are not atheists, Buddhists or Muslims, they are the Christians who listen to God's Word and do not do it. Those people always end up in terrible deception – they don't know who they are, what they are called to do, they get deceived about other people's hearts, what is going on around them, their future, their importance, everything.

I had someone just before the lockdown call me up and ask to preach at the Tree. They told me they had been to Bible College and therefore they need a place to preach. I asked what their pastor thought of their preaching, and what they were currently doing in their local church, and they told me they do not go to church. That is someone who is utterly and totally deluded. And what is worse – they do not even realize it.

I know people who have told me that God is going to make them a millionaire, but they do not even tithe. They think they can hear God's Word about prosperity but they cannot actually give the lowest level of giving in Scripture – they are self-deceived!

People who listen to the Word and do not do it, always end up deluded. And many people miss it there, they know the Word, they heard the Word but they did not act on what they heard. Noah had to build the ark not just mentally accept it was going to flood. Real faith has actions! I have had to spend a lot of time this week helping some people grasp that there is no definition of spirituality that does not involve you working and serving and doing something. Faith needs actions, and the most deluded people in the world are hearers who do not do.

Read Romans 14.20-23. This is a side issue, but I felt very strongly that it needed to be addressed in the context of our actions. The issue is this: We must not do things that damage our own conscience, and we should be very careful not to damage the conscience of others. In the context of Romans 14, we are talking about meat that has been sacrificed and offered to idols. Of course, the idols never ate it, so the meat was sold cheaply by the temples to false gods. Paul says that if you do not condemn yourself by what you do, you will be happy.

Condemnation in the Greek is a building term, and it means a building that is totally useless and can never be fixed. Someone condemned will think they are useless and will never be useful. Do not do something that will make your own heart think you are useless.

A lot of people say "I am under grace now" and do all sorts of things against their own heart that lead to their heart telling them that they are useless. Sometimes it is things that are sinful and selfish, other times it is things that just don't matter – but if you do it and it makes your heart condemn you, then do not do it.

In our nation right now there is a meat-eating issue with Halal meat. Halal meat is killing by someone praying to Allah. Some Christians cannot eat it, because if they do, their heart starts to tell them they are useless. If you feel guilty and condemned eating halal, then do not eat it. That saves you having a heart that beats you up! Do not do something that makes you feel condemned.

Some Christians know Allah has no power and can eat the meat – if that's you then eat the meat and enjoy it. But Paul does tell us – if it doesn't make you feel condemned and useless, that's awesome, but do not do it in front of others and make them feel they should do it and then they do it and feel useless. In other words, never use your freedom to hurt or damage family! One of our goals as Christians should be to never do something to make another Christian feel worthless and useless.

You see if you encourage someone to go against their own heart, their own heart will condemn them, and as Christians we need to not just guard our own heart, but protect and guard each other's hearts. The more condemnation in our hearts, the less confidence in our hearts. If we lack confidence, our prayers are weak and ineffectual because we don't know we are righteous! The mountains do not move when they command them because they doubt in their heart.

Read Romans 14.23 again. Notice it says that if you doubt, then you are damned when you do it. That does not mean that God damns you – God does not damn anything. God only blesses and exalts. But we damn ourselves by acting against our heart. The word damn here means condemned to live an unhappy life. When we act against our heart, we condemn ourselves to be unhappy. We sit there regretting what we did, cursing ourselves and damning our own future self!

God will never damn you, but as we have been teaching all throughout this series, God's Words have no power on earth, only our words do. God's Words only have power when we speak them. And when we speak them, their greatest power is on our own heart. And when are doing things that we should not have done, when we watch TV programmes we know we should not have watched, when we eat things that make us feel guilty, our heart beats us up. There are some things that you cannot do with a good conscience, some of those things are selfish and rude and no one should ever do them, others are things that really do not matter, but if they damage our conscience we should definitely not do them, our heart is too precious.

There might be something I could do and I am fine, but you wouldn't be. And as you get your mind renewed by the Word of God, things might change. But even if things change, always remember your actions affect others, you need to think: "I do not want a member of my family feeling useless!" Those of us who think we are strong in faith should look after those who are weaker in faith, not judge them. Those of us who think we are strong in grace, need to actually be gracious!

Paul knew that food offered to idols is just food because idols are useless, powerless statutes. I know that if someone prayed to Allah while killing the cow that made my rump steak, Allah is a false god and has no power. But if you think it is wrong, and you do it, you will lose confidence and you will grow in condemnation, you will feel useless. And then it will be harder for you to receive from God. So do not do those actions. That is foolish!

I have seen people grasp grace at an intellectual level, still hasn't got their heart, and they do some of the things they couldn't before – depending on their religious background it

might be things like: eat bacon, have a Christmas tree, watch the Simpsons, eat halal meat, drink a glass of wine. But because they haven't gardened their heart, that action makes their heart condemn them and they have no confidence before God.

And make sure as well, that you do not do things that detract from grace. Some of you just are lazy and call it grace! I've heard people say "I have grace now, I don't need to go to church, I don't need to read my Bible, that's legalism". That is a deluded person saying that. Now, you do not need to go to church to get blessed, I agree. But if you are blessed, you go to church.

Someone told me a while back they are too mature for church. They say they do not get fed at church and so they do not go. They think they are being an adult, they are being a total child! They are being a teenager not going to family dinner because it is boring to them. If they were mature, they would offer to lay the table, spend some time with Granma to love her and bless her and help her, and do all the things adults do. There is more to church than just sticking your head in a trough of the Word and feeding yourself, we are family!

You go to church to find out who you are and what you are, to let the pastor speak to your heart, to be equipped to minister, to learn how to garden your heart. You have to protect your heart, and one way to do that is get involved with church! And then in the church, we need to protect people's hearts!.

Some preaching has really damaged people's hearts and other people have damaged their own hearts and messed up what they do.

I have read a lot about the early Pentecostals while studying the life of Lester Sumrall and others, and they used to preach against cars and planes and TV. You cannot preach against those things and then believe for them with a good conscience.

Some people preach against prosperity and they are always in need of money. I know people who preach against Facebook, Youtube and social media, and now it's lockdown they are struggling to use these things because of their hearts condemning them while they are trying to use them. Lester Sumrall said one preacher told him: "I wish I hadn't preached against cars so much, I find it hard to believe for one."

But if there are things that would condemn you, don't do them. It will muddle your heart and make it hard to be confident before God. Now, garden your heart and work on it – but while you are doing it, do not do the action because you are making life hard on yourself. Someone will say "I am in grace now", but grace does not mean you no longer have a heart. You have to guard and garden your heart.

Read Galatians 5.6. Circumcision was a mark of the Old Covenant and under that covenant, it was essential. Moses' children almost died over this; Goliath died because he was uncircumcised. In the Old Testament, it is a big deal, but in the New Testament it is not a big deal. A lot of actions are not a big deal – drinking a glass of wine, watching a football match, having a car, having a plane, wearing make-up, eating bacon. But if they are a big deal for your conscience then they are a big deal. But at the same time, let's grow in grace, renew our mind and make the main thing the main thing, and the main thing is faith working by love.

"Faith working by love" is the entire life of victory in the New Covenant. Faith means to believe and accept that God did it all at the cross. Now the work "working" here in the

Greek is *energeo*. It means full of energy or energetic. True Biblical faith is energetic, it has life in it. It doesn't mutter and mumble "er, er, er... by His stripes, mmmm, I am um, er... healed" No, it has energy. It has loads of energy in it – it is confident and full of life and energy. Faith is not lazy. Faith doesn't quit its job to "go and live by faith", it works until it gets to full-time ministry!

And faith works by love. Now 1 John 4.10 says that love is God's love for us, not our love for Him. Some people think faith works by our love for God – and there is some truth to this, your faith will work better if you are more loving as you start acting unkind and mean to people. But faith works by you knowing God loves you. God loves you, which is why you should not act against your heart, because you will be trying to convince yourself God does not love you. Faith works best in the atmosphere of knowing that God really loves you.

So you could say "faith works by love" like this:

EAGERLY EXPECTING WITH SOME ENERGY FOR GOD'S LOVE TO YOU TO CHANGE EVERYTHING!

And compared to doing that, external things just do not matter that much!

So, we need to have faith working by love. So, do what it takes to build your faith. Be where the Word is preached, listen to the Word, meditate on the Word, speak the Word.

In addition, do not just speak and listen to Words of life, but take heed what you hear (Mark 4.24) and stop letting other people sow their weeds in your head. Keep the media at bay! They are filled with fear, hate and unbelief most of the time! Keep your nose in the Bible, most craziness comes when we leave the Bible behind. Keep in local church, God has put us in family for a reason.

We need to do what I said the last couple of messages: declare the Word of God (2 Cor. 4.13). But then, having done all that, we need to put legs on our declarations. Faith must act in correspondence with what we believe!

Lee preached a great message on David – but if all David did was declare he could cut Goliath's head off, he wouldn't be a hero. He had to sling the stone to get the victory! Faith had to have legs!

Paul and Silas would still be in prison if they did not sing. Joseph would have been killed by Pharaoh if he did not save the food up. Abraham would be someone no-one knew if he didn't move house. Lazarus would still be in the tomb if Jesus had not got someone to move the stone. Your faith must have corresponding actions.

Or let me say it like THIS – real faith acts. It is energetic. Faith works in love. It works, it acts, it moves. When you are in faith, there will always be an action that demonstrates faith. It is that simple. It might be as simple as singing praise to God, thanking HIM you are healed and you are wealthy. It could be you saying "I believe I receive NOW when I pray, amen"

Faith always has actions. Read James 2.14–22. Faith without legs does not go anywhere, faith without corresponding actions is dead. These verses do not apply to non-Christians, James is written to Christians. We have to act in accordance with our faith.

You want to mess up your faith – speak it out, and do the opposite. I see this so often. People declare “I believe God will meet all my needs according to HIS RICHES IN GLORY”, then they google “how to get a cheap loan”, and they are full of worry and fret and pain. They did not put legs on their faith, they spoke the Word, then negated the word by their non-corresponding actions.

Read James 1.22. If we do not do the Word, we delude ourselves. One of the biggest signs of self-delusion is blaming other people for the mess you are in. So many people are blaming the devil, blaming God, blaming the pastor, blaming society – blaming anything other than themselves. But the real reason it is not working for you is you never put corresponding actions into place.

Every action I have made during lockdown is an action that we are going to make it as a church. We have sowed more seed than we have ever sowed in the last couple of month, like I mean so much more! We have increased because of it. This last weekend alone we have added two more TV slots. We have a rapidly growing TV ministry, and it is awesome. We are not finished, we have barely started! But I acted on it, I did what I believed!

I see people blame God for their lack of healing, when they have never once acted healed. People blame God for their poverty and they have never acted prosperous. We need to do the Word.

Read Matthew 7.24-26. The difference between building on rock and building on sand is what you do or do not do. When your faith has corresponding actions, the storms come and you will be fine. When you do not, the storms come and you will fall, and your fall will be great. That is why I am being so stark, I do not want you to fall, I have seen too many people fall and seen too many people with a great fall, because they deluded themselves into thinking because they have heard the Word, they are going to stand the storms. It's not what Jesus said!

Sickness is a storm, COVID19 is a storm, lockdown is a storm, losing your job is a storm. To stand the storm we need to go from talking a good game to playing the game. Start acting like you got it.

One of the key ways to act like you got it is to pray like you got it. When you pray about something do not go and pray over and over, but start thinking, start praying like it is done, start praising and worshipping and thanking God. Pray like it is done. I see so many people praying like it is not done, they get prayer chains, and ask intercessors to help and bombard heaven. We need to pray for healing and act like you got it. We need to pray for prosperity then act like we got it. We need to act on the Word and act like you got it. We need to have a working, energetic faith. Act on the Word, act like you got it, and it will manifest to you!

Do not act according to the senses, what you see and feel, act according to faith. Stop looking at the storms, and certainly do not let the storms tell you how to act, you look at the Word and believe the Word, and stand on the Word.

Stop looking at your past, the natural, the circumstances, others and look to the Word. Paul said I can do all things through Christ. He never said I can do all things because I was a Roman, or because I was a Pharisee, or because I am a mighty apostle. No, Paul could do all things because He was in Christ.

If you are trapped in sin, stop acting like you are oppressed, and start acting like you are free. Stop acting like you need deliverance and start acting delivered. Stop acting sick and start acting well. If you are in financial need, stop acting poor and start acting rich. Start thanking God for your victory. Give to the church what a rich man should give!

The truth is your house is going to stand in the storms, you are going to thrive in the storms, you are coming out stronger and better than ever, there will be not one feeble among us, and we will have the wealth of the wicked in our hands.

QUESTIONS

1. Who are the most deceived people in the world?
2. What would have happened if Noah had only assented that a flood was coming and not actually believed?
3. What does the word “condemned” mean?
4. What kind of actions can condemn someone’s heart? You can talk in general or personal terms.
5. How can we make sure our actions do not condemn the hearts of people in our Tree of Life family?
6. God will never damn us, but what does it mean to damn ourselves and what kind of actions can make us damn ourselves?
7. What does “faith works by love” mean to you?
8. What kind of actions correspond with believing that we are holy, healthy and wealthy?
9. What does it mean to build on the rock and have our house stand the storms?
10. What about this message inspired, encouraged or challenged you the most?

