

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH SPEAKS

Jonathon Wills, Presbytery Word for week commencing Sunday 1 March 2026

Transcription of recording, slightly edited

We are going to be speaking primarily from Romans chapter 10 where Paul exhorts us in terms of the manner in which the righteousness of faith speaks. The beginning point of the righteousness of faith is a declaration of 'Do not say this in your heart...' The righteousness of faith speaking reveals what is in the heart of a man and a woman and a child because from 'out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth will speak' and then we do and we act according to that. There is a particular note in which the righteousness of faith declares itself, and it speaks clearly; but equally, it is able to identify that which is not of faith. This is either being audibly spoken or even discerning the thing that is in the heart to be able to speak to it to say, 'Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend and who will descend?"' This is as though the work of Christ is not already finished. It is as though He has not already prevailed and overcome. It is as though that word that proceeds from His throne is not faithful and true for you in your circumstances right now. It is as though you either need Him or someone else to go and do something to make it better for you, other than you participating by faith in this situation and in this day.

There was a statement that Vic made at our New Year's seminar that has really resonated amongst us. It was the call to believe - the call to us to be men and women of faith. If the Lord called us to believe, can we not believe? Why? Because all the power to believe is inherent within the word itself that calls us to that. If the Lord calls to us as those who ought to be of faith, can we not be of faith? Why? Because He said it. There is capacity then through prevenient grace for us to either choose what He is saying and to be of that faith and to believe, or to choose something else. This is to continue to rely on our own understanding (our own wit and wisdom) even if we think there are limits to our own understanding. We will then go off believing another Jesus other than the One who is being proclaimed to us, whose faith and life is to be our faith and life.

It was said to us, 'You shall believe God. If I call you to repent, can't you believe? Can't you believe

and be of faith and then do the works of faith - one of which will be to repent of the issues that the Lord is calling us to repent of?' The call to faith is not the call to positive thinking, demonstrated in two different ways: one is a 'repentant' mindset (I am just negative about myself and about everything), or I go, 'Well, I am going to be of faith, so I am going to think really positively about everything.'

One of the first actions and evidence that a word of faith has reached someone is the posture of a repentant son before the Father. This is because as we are illuminated to faith, we equally recognise where we have not been in faith - where we have not believed. We see the impact of that unbelief both in our own life, in our marriage, and also in our families, and then more broadly from house to house. Faith that has come to us compels us to repent and to turn and to be able to bring confession in relationship to that.

'You shall believe God. If I call you to repent, can't you believe?' John's gospel is written that we might believe. I love the way that he expresses this in John chapter 20 which is immediately after His engagement with Thomas - his call to Thomas to cease his unbelief and to believe. Then in Thomas's confession of 'my Lord and my God', he is not just saying 'I believe.' Thomas's believing is now evidenced in a confession of who Christ is. This is now both the work of repentance and faith in him. He knows who Christ is. Christ has presented Himself to him and said, 'Here I am Thomas; a finished work now for you to reach out and touch every element of My offering journey through all seven wounds all of the way through to its resurrection. You reach out and touch it now and find a participation in it and be not unbelieving but believe.' Thomas's response in verse 28 of John chapter 20 is, 'My Lord and my God.' This is his confession of the kingship of Christ that is now before him: 'My Lord and my God.' Where is Thomas making that statement? The Scriptures do not outline it explicitly, but I am suggesting that Thomas is making that statement as he is on the ground before the feet of Christ, washing them with his tears through this confession of

who it is that Christ is. This is now the evidence of a man who has received faith as he is repentant before the Lord.

Jesus then says to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed but blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.' John then says, 'And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book.' Would it not be lovely to know all of those other stories that John is alluding to here? '...But these things are written...' John has been so specific about what needed to be written for our sake. 'These things are written [why?] that you may believe.' You could almost put an exclamation mark there. These things are written and they are proclaimed to us by messengers who are sent to us, and we testify of those messengers sent from His right hand as the word is proceeding as flashes of lightning from His right hand. He is seated in His kingship on His throne in the midst of the heavenly city in the third heaven atop Mount Zion, and the administration of His word proceeds toward us through these messengers who are sent so that we might believe. Our testimony is, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who are bringing the good news of the gospel. How beautiful are the feet of those who are ministering peace to my home - that come and declare peace to this house.' I am able to receive them as though I am receiving Christ Himself, and then to know that the reward of Christ is with Him and is with all those who receive the word that is ministered.

'...These things are written that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we may have life in His name.' If we can believe... (and by the way, that is a choice for you today. All of the power for it is inherent within the word. Whether you believe or not, that is up to you. That is the mystery of choice. Will you choose to believe today?) ...but if you choose to believe what is proclaimed to you today, you will be confronted by your unbelief. There will be a necessary repentant posture before the Lord because of that unbelief, and you will equally... (as you are illuminated to the hope that is set before you that is sure and steadfast - that has prevailed and has entered the most holy place)... equally we will be confronted with the uncleanness of our unbelief and the

impact of that. But we do not then retreat into ourselves because we have been unbelieving. Rather, there is an initiative of faith that enables us to be repentant before the Lord and to bring the appropriate confession in our homes that we need to make to those who have been impacted upon by our unbelief.

We heard at the New Year's seminar that Christ is angry with our unbelief. He is groaning in His spirit and troubled with the persistent unbelief and its devastating effects within our families. This is where matters... (instead of being resolved within 20 minutes and having a real note of overcoming from there as we walk out our accountability and our participation) ... go on for days; they go on for weeks. For some they have gone on for years and for decades - issues of unbelief. With each day that runs, the impact of that unbelief continues to reach forward, and it bites and it devours within the home. There have been devastating effects in our families. This requires our repentance. We do not come to repentance without the word of faith illuminating our spirit. This is evidenced in Thomas's response to the Lord. We can know with great confidence that everything is already finished in Christ.

I have been stirred in my spirit in Revelation chapter 5 and verses 4 to 5 where John is looking at this remarkable sight of the Father having now set and established His throne within the heavenly city right next to the throne of the Son and the glory of the Father has filled the whole city. It has filled the heights of Mount Zion. That is because the nature of His humility is to reveal all the sons who dwell within Zion. We know that the Father has taken His seat because every son within that city is revealed in glory as a son by the Father Himself. John is looking and he is seeing that the Father, as He is seated, is holding a scroll that has seven seals. John is looking and he is weeping because he is looking around wondering who can open it. And no one is found that is able to open it. John is wondering who can. Then there is this wonderful statement that is said to him in verse 5: 'But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David *has* prevailed." [Not *can* prevail; *could* prevail] ...the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, He *has*

prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.' Everything to do with the work of Christ is already complete in His offering and He is now raised and seated as King until every enemy is then brought as a footstool under His feet.

We have to understand this 'has prevailed' element because it touches the nature of our prayer, which continues to petition the Lord as though He has not already done it. 'Lord, come and do this for me.' This is whether that is, 'Come and get me up out of this pit,' or it is, 'Come down, Lord, and bring this from the heights to me.' We engage with the Lord and with one another as though He has not already spoken - as though He has not already journeyed and finished it for us and that there is now a participation belonging to the obedience of faith in this day. Our prayers become full of these requests of the Lord as though He has not already spoken and declared Himself to us. We are asking Him, 'Lord, help me to believe', and He is saying, 'Have not I already called you to believe? I called you to believe. Can you now not believe?' And we say, 'Lord, help me to believe.' And He said, 'Well, that is a choice that belongs to you. Will you choose to believe? I have called you to believe. Will you believe that all the power and the capacity to believe, now belong to that word?' If in a particular circumstance of life, the Lord calls you to believe... if He calls you, can you not believe? As He calls you to believe, He will also be calling you to repentance in relationship to your unbelief.

He calls and says to us, 'Fear not', as with the first word of the gospel that He declared to Abraham: 'Do not fear. I am your shield of faith. I am your exceedingly great reward.' What does Abraham do? And what do *we* do? We too often meet it as though what He is proclaiming to us is just out of our reach. He says, 'Do not fear', and we respond saying, 'Lord, help me not to fear.' And He says, 'Did I not just say, "Fear not?" ' What is our response to the King as He declares to us, 'Fear not?' Ought it not be a revelation of His kingship and who He is? 'God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore I will not fear' because He has prevailed and He has declared His Word to me. 'The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I

be afraid?' These psalms then continue... As He declares Himself to us, there is a point where we are able to meet it right there - where He is proclaiming it to us in faith. What we are proclaiming today is very basic and very fundamental. It is just that we meet it and He speaks it and we kind of think that the repentant posture is, 'Well, because I have been fearing, therefore I will say, "Lord, help me not to fear." '

We miss the context where Jesus is speaking to the man whose son is deeply distressed and oppressed by an unclean spirit and he is facing death. Jesus addresses the unbelief of the father. He said, 'Would you put off your unbelief?' This is what Jesus says in Mark 9 verse 23: 'If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.' He is not now declaring the greatest positive thinking message of all time. (All you need to do is believe and then all things are possible for you. You can now go out and accomplish all of your dreams in life because God's greatest hope for you is that every dream you have will be fulfilled.) That is not the gospel that we are proclaiming. That is another Jesus. What is the response of this man? This man knows exactly what Jesus is saying. He then brings his confession of repentance, which is not now as he initially addressed Him. ('Teacher, help me with my problem. I want things to be better. And by the way, your disciples are not measuring up. They have not been able to fix it. Can you have a go now?' In other words, 'Who will ascend and who will descend to give me what I want?') Here is now his confession, 'Lord, Lord, King, my Lord and my God.' This is a man now kissing the feet of the King lest He be angry with him because of his persistent unbelief. 'Lord, I believe.' The 'help my unbelief' is his repentant confession. 'It has been my unbelief that has caused my son to be oppressed by an unclean spirit and for that unclean spirit to cause him such distress so that his life is at risk.' He is not saying, 'Lord, I really do not know what it is that You are calling me to believe, so help me with my unbelief.' That is how we often say, 'Help my unbelief. I hear you calling me to believe, but I do not actually know what it is that you want me to believe. And I do not know where I have been unbelieving other than, I just know that I do not really get it. And so Lord, help my unbelief.' 'I believe' is aspirational; but it is not as Jesus said

to Martha. He said, 'Do you believe *this*? I am the resurrection and the life. Do you believe *this*?' And she says, 'Oh, I believe *that*' [the statement of who He is that was right and true, but it was demonstrating that she did not believe the thing that He was saying.] This man is touching it. 'Lord, my Lord, the resurrection and the life, I believe.' Then there is the confession, 'Help me and my son with the effects of my unbelief, which is this...' He is able to clearly then articulate in repentant confession before his King, his Lord and Saviour what that unbelief was and the impact of it, that it might never touch another member of his family again.

Instead of this persistent, 'Help me with my unbelief. Help me with my unbelief.' We then bring all of that unbelief into our corporate prayer gatherings - 'Help me with my unbelief.' The Lord is saying, 'Would someone believe and then declare a word of faith to the one who is unbelieving that they might then cry out, "Lord, I believe", and not this persistent unbelief that sits and plagues?' Can we hear as the fruit of our repentance the confessions of 'I will not fear'? This is not because I am now thinking really positively about myself and about this situation, but it is because He said it. Because He said it, I am believing it and it is 'in my heart and it is in my mouth - the word of faith' that has been preached to me. This is how we know the sound of it in all of our *agape* fellowships. It is not difficult to hear when the word of faith that has been proclaimed is in someone's mouth. It does not mean that someone is saying exactly the same thing that was said, because it multiplies. And equally, we can hear it both when it is said and when it is being said in the heart when someone has not received the word of faith that has been preached — instead, something else is said. We ought to know and discern how to then care for one another in fellowship when these things take place. Equally we need to know how to speak to the unbelief that is not actually being spoken but is in the heart.

That is what Jesus did in the house of Simon the Pharisee. He then heard and saw what this man was saying in his heart. And this man was judging both that woman who was repentant before the Lord, and judging Jesus as well. 'If this Man knew who this woman was who does

this...' and 'If this Man was a prophet, He would do something about it...' Jesus speaks to what he is saying in his heart, because it is out of the abundance of the heart that it is all flowing. 'Do you see this woman?' That is what Jesus then said to Simon the Pharisee. This is in Luke chapter 7 verse 44. I will not read the whole account because that account has been present with us over the course of the last number of weeks. But Jesus asked Simon the Pharisee if he had seen this woman. Clearly Jesus knows that Simon has been looking at her because he has judged her in his heart and he has judged Christ in relationship to the matter as well. He is asking him, 'Have you seen the woman who has washed My feet with her tears... [This is the fruit of eyes that now see. These were the tears. 'Blessed are the eyes that see.']; ... who wiped My feet with the hair of her head; who had kissed My feet and who had anointed Me with fragrant oil? Do you see this woman?' Can you see that He is not talking naturally? Simon has looked naturally (based on his own gospel), and he has made some conclusions. Those conclusions have missed it by a mile because Simon is not a spiritual man. But Christ is asking him, 'Do you see this woman?' He is now calling her, and He is calling us to see this woman. We have heard that the King was angry with our unbelief and He is coming and that we ought to send a delegation to find the conditions of peace that we might find peace with the King who is coming. Those conditions of peace have been made known to us. They belong to the finished work of Christ. And we see it exemplified in the posture and the offering worship and faith of this woman. As you hear Him, and turn to see her, is this woman *you* - this woman who heard the gospel, whose eyes were opened to see? The dead in sin and trespasses was made able to hear and respond through prevenient grace. She heard the word of faith and she loved Him. She loved Him and His commands. This is the beginning point now of being made alive to receive the indwelling of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and then to be born again. Is this woman *you*? Does she describe the nature of *your* response to the word that was proclaimed to us in relationship to His kingship and the call for us to believe? Does she represent *your* response to the word? The conditions of peace were given to us through the account of

this woman who 'kissed the feet of the King, lest He be angry with her.'

The word of faith gave her illumination and hope and called her to repentance. She believed that as she pressed into Him that He would bring His word to pass. Let us remember here that this is a woman whose sins were many, and these sins were known within the town, and she did not receive the forgiveness of these sins until after Jesus had spoken to Simon and then He addressed her. The word of faith had freed her from being locked up in shame about her many sins. She has not tried to fix herself through penance as a response to His word, but she is repentant as an expression of faith. She is illuminated that He is Lord and King. Simon, the religious man, cannot see any of this. He cannot see it in her, and he cannot see it in Jesus.

We too often associate shame with repentance and therefore we fear exposure. Repentance is the evidence of His mercy and ought to be a point of great rejoicing because faith has come. 'I have seen what I have not seen before, and I am filled with hope, and I am before the Lord in repentance and in confession.' Again, this is what the man in Mark chapter 9 was able to touch.

Could I put it to us here (and we have heard this many times as we have stepped through the steps of salvation), that prevenient grace frees us to choose? It not only frees us to choose, but it also reveals the truth of who we are, such that the *true* person is made able to respond. As Jesus is proclaiming a word, this woman is hearing that word. I think we could summarise the word that was proclaimed to this woman as the very same word that was proclaimed to father Abraham, the father of all who believe. 'Do not fear. I am your shield of faith. I am your exceedingly great reward.' This is what she is responding to and the *true* woman, the *true* son of God is illuminated, and she is illuminated to the hope of who she is as a son of God. That is revealed and that is her response - not the woman who is locked up in shame because of her many sins. That is not who we see. We see the *true* woman. He is calling to something that is not as though it is and has always been. He gives life to the dead, and He calls into existence that which does not exist as though it already did. That is how He is proclaiming His word to this woman. He is

proclaiming it to who she is, and by prevenient grace, she is free to choose as *that woman*, even though she is not yet *that woman*. This is the miracle of the interaction that takes place. That is who is responding to the word. She is then proceeding forward to be made alive and then to be born again after His resurrection - together with the other disciples.

This is the nature of it for those who are unbelievers and not yet sons of God. The word comes calling to them as a son of God, even though they are not yet a son of God. Prevenient grace breaks in upon them, and they are then able to begin to speak by faith in response to that word - with that word in their mouth. It is not the other thing that now speaks back, full of complexity and shame. There is now something that is free - free to respond however repentant it might be. Can you see the activity of repentance and faith together here? They are not two mutually exclusive things; they are two parts of the one together.

Prevenient grace works the same for us who believe. We are believing that it is happening right now. It not only pulls back the impediments - all of the religious projections - however long it is that you have been a Christian; however long it is that you have been coming here; however loyal you think you are to this community - it pulls all of the impediments back, the projections, the history, the experiences and it reveals the *true son*. When we choose to believe, it is the *true son* who is responding by faith with a confession of repentance, having been strengthened by the Spirit with might in the inner man. The woman who has resisted the order in which the grace of life comes to her through the headship of Christ and the headship of her husband is able to respond as a submitted, obedient woman to the headship of Christ and the glory of that covering upon her husband. That is how she speaks. Her husband will listen and go, 'On the one hand, I have never heard you speak like that before, yet, as you are speaking it, I bear witness to this is who you are, and it is as if it is who you have always been.'

This is what we ought to hear in the *agape* meal instead of hearing the same old, 'Help my unbelief, I really just did not quite understand what was being said'; or 'I still do not understand

this', and 'I still do not understand that', and 'it was all a little bit too complicated for me.' It is the Spirit who moves upon the heart of a person. It sets me free a little bit in relationship to my ability to articulate, because I am not trying to convince you through clever articulation and humorous anecdotes and so forth. That is not how the gospel is being proclaimed. It is being proclaimed to us in weakness, and we are testifying of the beauty of the feet of those that are proclaiming the gospel to us. We are bearing witness to the journey that those feet have taken to get us to this point.

I tell you that the gospel that is being opened to us has been a labour, a travail and a journey. But we often sit and go, 'Nah, do you want to try again? Will you to give it to me a different way? If you could tell it in a very humorous story, I could share that with my family and friends all week, because I have picked up on the humour of it and that sort of thing.' Instead of, 'I tell you what, I know the issue of unbelief that he was speaking to, and he never even said it.' That is how it works. I do not have to go through every possible unbelieving scenario that is among us in the building and on screen as well. How long would we be here for? And yet the Spirit, through prevenient grace, is exposing these things and is provoking us to response. The response then is not withdrawn, and it is not pathetic. It is full of faith. It is the confession, 'God is my refuge and strength and He is a very present help in trouble. Therefore, I will not fear... There is a river... [Have you seen the river?] ... whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place of the Most High.' And all the citizens within that city rejoice.

This is the very river that John bore witness to. He was insistent upon it when he wrote it in his gospel. Where did he say this? John chapter 19 verse 34: 'One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out...' And this is now John saying that he testified that blood and water have come out. He is saying, 'This is the fountain of life' — 'the fountain for sin and uncleanness' that Zechariah prophesied about in chapters 12 and 13. He is saying, 'This is the very same fountain that I saw.' John has also seen it flowing from the throne of God and from the Lamb. He understands that it

flows from the Father's throne that is presently outside of time and eternity and before. It is flowing from His throne through the physical body of Christ on the cross. John is saying, 'I saw it and he who has seen has testified and I am telling you my testimony is true. I was there and I saw it.' He saw it flowing from the physical body of Christ. Also in the book of Revelation as the elder took him all the way through, he testifies and he says, and 'I saw it flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.' It is a river of life that flows - waters for us to swim in. He says, 'My testimony is true,' and he knows that he is telling the truth. Why? So that we might believe. So what do we do today? Do we go, 'No, show it to me? I want to see it physically coming out of someone's body. I want to see it in a particular way.' Do you know what? We *do* see it flowing from out of one another's bodies. I testify that I see that in you - that it flows from out of our innermost part as we participate in these rivers of living water. 'Be not unbelieving but believe.' John's testimony (his insistence here) is, 'What I am telling you is the truth so that you might believe, ...for these things were done that the Scripture might be fulfilled, that not one of His bones shall be broken.' Again, in another scripture [this is out of Zechariah], 'They shall look on Him whom they have pierced.' Everything that is in Christ is not just out of our reach. It is ours - it is yours as a possession if we would reach out and lay hold of it.

Can I run through these scriptures? You will get the notes, but I will just run it through. 'We have this treasure.' 'We have this hope, even Jesus, the steadfast Anchor of our soul.' 'We have a great High Priest.' These are all the statement saying He has prevailed. And *His* word is *our* word. It is now the word in *our* mouth. It is in *our* heart. It is *our* faith that is now being proclaimed. We could say, 'Whose faith is it? Is it His or is it ours?' It is both. It began as His and His faith was evidenced in what He did. He has now gifted that faith to us through His Word such that we go, 'Whose is it?' It is both His and it is mine as well. We have these things. We have a great High Priest. We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once and for all. 'We have the prophetic word confirmed.' 'We have fellowship with Him and with one another.' 'We have an advocate with the Father.' 'We have

confidence in Him.' 'We have a strong city.' We could continue, couldn't we? 'We have...' 'Behold, He is coming and His reward is with Him and with those who are walking with Him.'

The response of faith, having seen this woman, is to testify, 'This is who I am, and this is who I am learning to be.' We do not just go, 'Well, I am learning to be that, but I am fearful of saying that that is who I am.' We have to be able to catch that this is who I am, and this is who I am learning to be. It is the present proceeding statement of it. This is also to be true as we see Mary anointing Christ's feet for His burial, and the fragrance of that anointing filling the house of a woman who now believes such that she is able to prophetically anoint His feet for His burial. With this confession, we can function in like manner. We immediately participate by faith in word and deed. As James said, 'I will show you my faith by the things that I do, just as my father Abraham did.' This is not a woman again in the house of Simon the Pharisee, who is resolved on every matter. But she loves much because of what she has been illuminated to and what she has heard. Her actions demonstrated that she had received a word of faith from Christ and had been strengthened with might through the Spirit in the inner man.

We could also be asking, 'Do you see this woman in Revelation chapter 12?' That was the woman that I was pressing in to see and to hear during our time of prayer and fasting together - where the camp of the saints gathered so that every household could participate and be heard for the sake of the other households that were gathered. We were all gathered as part of this woman who is in travail. She is in pain because of the contrary circumstances of Satan being in the delivery room wanting to devour what is being brought forth. We were gathered together and I am listening. And I am there in faith that my house would participate and that others would listen and hear the sound of faith and overcoming and travail coming from our home as we are putting off our unbelief and as we are pressing in as believers. We are accepting the conditions of peace. As we are coming before His feet (to kiss the feet of the King), we are there and we are listening. How do you know what she sounds like and what she looks like? We have to come

together and listen to the sound of it. We are filled with faith and hope because of the sound within many homes. Equally, there is a grief because of the silence coming from other homes.

Come with me now to Romans chapter 10 and we will read from verse 5. I would love to run the fuller expression of His ascending and descending journey with us this morning, but time does not permit. We might be able to pick that up in subsequent weeks. 'For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them." ' Again, faith ought to be coming to us and it ought to be evidenced in the way that we are living and the things that we are doing. The first work of faith is 'I believe, therefore I speak.' What am I speaking in relationship to? I am speaking and I am testifying to the One who has prevailed and who has risen and who is seated at the right hand. As King, He is also Priest and He is priesting to me a daily participation in the finished work. His word is being declared to me as a command from the King. Romans 10 verse 6: 'But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven (that is to bring Christ down from above)?" Or "Who will descend into the abyss (That is to bring Christ up from the dead)?" But what does it say...?" '

Part of what I have been inquiring of in the last month is 'What does it sound like when we say in our heart, "Who will ascend so as to bring Christ down; or who will descend as to bring Christ up?" What does it sound like?' I do not remember the last time anyone actually literally said those words. That is the issue that Paul is pointing towards. What does it sound like? You all want me to tell you what it sounds like. I can see you sitting there and on screen as well. What does it sound like? I am again not going to describe the nature of that unbelief circumstantially in every single one of us. I am actually in faith that, based on what has already been said, you already know and you are convicted about the manner in which you say this - saying 'in the heart' something that is other than what has been proclaimed to you. That is essentially expressing an unbelief that He has not already said and done what is sufficient for you on these matters. 'What does it say? The word is

near you, in your mouth and in your heart. That is the word of faith which we preach.' He then goes on and demonstrates the whole thing down. 'How are they going to call upon the Lord? Because those who call upon the Lord will be saved. How do they call upon Him if they have not heard? And how do they hear without a preacher? And how do they preach unless they have been sent? As it is written [I am in verse 15 now]: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things [He is quoting out of Isaiah chapter 52]" ' "

The righteousness of faith is confessing that the word that is in my heart (and now from out of the abundance of my heart), I am now speaking by faith. It came to me. 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.' I needed a preacher to come to me with the word and with the conditions of peace, and I have beheld the beauty of the feet of those who are ministering. What did Cornelius do when Peter arrived at his home? He fell down at his feet, worshipping and how beautiful were the feet of the one who had come. Peter has not even said anything. It is not even his response after hearing from Peter. The wonderful response after hearing from Peter is they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. They were all born again and they were all baptised. But right at the point that he had desired the fellowship of a messenger, he testifies of the beauty of the feet of those that are now bringing the conditions of peace to his home. Peter is able to say, 'I am just a man like you. Come and stand up and let us find fellowship together.'

We have to catch the context of this, though. We are not testifying of the beauty of the thoughts that I have had in my mind racing through, and I have finally concluded. (I am now testifying, 'How beautiful are the thoughts that occupy my mind - that keep me awake night after night. How beautiful they are to me. My spirit rejoices and longs to continue to listen to myself while I think.') Sorry, I am being a little mocking toward it. But seriously, it has to stop. It has to stop. This is the 'saying in the heart'. 'Who will do this, and who will do that?' What does it look like and sound like? It looks like me lying awake at night thinking about myself thinking, instead of meditating on the beauty of the word that was

proclaimed to me. That woman in Simon the Pharisee's house, that was the meditation of her heart and her mind. Do you know, I regularly lie awake at night and the thing that I rejoice in is that the meditation of my heart and my mind is on the word that is being proclaimed to me and the songs that are being sung in our midst that are a declaration of the worship of those who are receiving the word of faith that is being proclaimed. The word is not just in my heart and in my mouth; it is in my *thoughts*. Your thoughts ought to be filled with the word of faith that is being preached to you, such that that is what you want to talk about. I do not want to sit down with someone and talk about all of these other sort of thoughts. Some of the young men over the years that have sought to engage me in that manner know that I will not engage them on that. Rather there is a word of faith that is being preached to us. That is the word that is in our heart and in our mouth. The righteousness of faith is able to proclaim the word of the King that He is proclaiming to us. If you want to know what it is, you just have to listen to him.

Isaiah said in Isaiah 46 verses 9 to 11, 'Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying "My counsel shall stand and I will do all My pleasure"... Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.'

This is the nature when the word declares that hope that is set before us that is sure and steadfast - the hope that belongs to Christ and His resurrection body as the Sheaf of first fruits and the hope that the seed of my name and who I am as a son of God that has journeyed completely all of the way from the depths - not just from the lowest parts of the earth. He went lower than the lower parts and exhausted everything and then we were raised, ascended in glory together with Him - now contained within Him as a seed in that Sheaf. Do you know the seed in that Sheaf is of the same life and genetics as the Sheaf? The guarantee of that is that as that seed is sown, the body that will be is the same body that is the body of Christ. That is the hope that runs through and there is a word that

sustains us every day and, in every circumstance, as we are able to proceed forward such that faith is the substance of what we hope for.

I do not actually need anything more substantial today other than what He is proclaiming to me and the manner in which I am journeying, because my hope is sure and it is steadfast. I know what it is. James then exhorts us and says, 'Is anyone lacking wisdom today? Well, he should ask.' We all ought to be asking for wisdom each day. He says though, 'But when you ask, ask with this assurance that the One who has spoken it has the capacity to bring it to pass.' He purposed it and He will also do it. The word has the capacity for our obedience. When we ask for wisdom, we are to do so without doubting. Because the one who doubts gets what he doubted. He is doubting that the Lord is going to give it to him, and so he gets what he doubted for. 'The Lord did not give it to me.' It is not because the Lord was not there to give it; it is that he doubted.

Rather, we are to ask in faith, knowing that we have the thing that we have asked for. We are able then to proceed as we ask the Lord for wisdom - to proceed now and to live as those who are wise. The call through this season has been to 'be wise, buy oil.' Our testimony is that is how I am living. I am living and I am purchasing oil in my lamp and in my vessel and I am living as someone who is wise.

James then talks and says that if we doubt in relationship to it, 'You forget what you look like.' This is where again, prevenient grace is working; that as the word is being proclaimed - who you are is being revealed. As you see Christ, it is like looking into a mirror and you are seeing the truth of who you are. But if you ask and you are doubting, he then says, 'It is like a man who looks into the mirror, and he turns away and walks away and immediately forgets what he looks like.' That is what it is - prevenient grace through the word of faith is revealing who you are and you are able to see it. It is a matter of whether you choose it or not; and whether you believe or whether you are going to be a forgetful hearer instead of a doer of the word.

Could I exhort us as we are finishing here that both Abraham and Mary (this is now Mary the

mother of Jesus) exemplify for us the manner in which the righteousness of faith speaks? Mary says, 'Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to Your word.' What an extraordinary statement of faith! She not only hears what is being proclaimed to her, but who she is, and the works that have been prepared for her are revealed to her through the ministry of the word of the messenger to her, such that she is able to testify who she is in relationship to the Lord and let it now be. 'May the Lord now bring to pass all of the things that He has spoken in relationship to me.' Is that how you are hearing the word today? 'Lord, bring to pass all that you have spoken in relationship to me. I am in faith for the reformation of my marriage that you have proclaimed to me. Lord, bring it to pass as I am in faith now to participate, not in fear, not in doubting, but my hands are lifted - holy hands lifted in prayer without wrath and doubting - now proceeding as one who is believing.'

We do thank the Lord for the preciousness of His word to us. He is not coming to fulfil all of the preconceived expectations that we have of Him or of one another, but He is coming to reveal Himself to us as the One who has prevailed. That word of the One who has prevailed is to be the word of faith that is in our mouth and in our heart.