

KNOWING WITH CERTAINTY

John 17:6-19 Text vs. 8 *"I gave them the words you gave Me, and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent Me."*

Jesus was praying for His disciples, which would also include those who follow Him today. He prayed God would keep all His chosen believers safe from Satan's power. Set them apart. Make them pure and holy. It was like that song, *"Always On My Mind."* Jesus' followers were always on His mind, even as He was dying which showed the selfless love of our Lord. And our lesson today is what's often referred to as the *High Priestly Prayer*. It's when Jesus pled for His disciples and all believers. Let's look at John 17:8 and consider its meaning. Jesus said: *"I have given them the words You gave Me, and they have received them. They knew with certainty that I came from You, and they believed that You sent Me."* Here, Jesus admitted to His disciples that the words He spoke to them came directly to Him by God, His Father. His teachings weren't merely human wisdom. His teachings were Divine revelations! The source of all He *did* was from God!

And as followers of Jesus, we too, have access to those life-giving words through Scripture. The Bible! It's God's message to humanity. And it's our privilege to receive it. To study it. However, the Bible is *more* than a book. It's a living testimony of God's relationship with humanity. Whether you approach the Bible as a believer, or as a curious seeker, the Bible's pages invite you to explore, reflect, and be transformed. The Bible is a sacred text revered by millions around the world who believe it is Divinely inspired. It contains various books and letters written by different authors over a span of time. 1,500 years!

Yet, the Bible forms a solid story. The Bible is God's revelation to humanity. Its interpretation and significance may vary. But its impact remains profound, because Christians believe God inspired human writers to ensure the Bible's accuracy. And that gives relevance to each writer being led by Divine inspiration letting its timeless message continue to influence lives across generations. For believers, the Bible is a guide for faith. It provides wisdom. It offers comfort. And it gives direction for life. People turn its pages looking for inspiration and answers to life's questions. They seek its comfort during difficult times. They find hope in it for the future. The Bible has transformed thousands of lives. Its stories. Its parables. Its teachings. All inspire individuals to live well-meaning lives. To love unselfishly. And to seek understanding. Through the Bible, people discover God's grace, which is *"God's kindness toward the unworthy, the undeserving."* They seek His forgiveness and His unconditional love by applying Biblical principles to daily life. Clear-sightedness and confidence are the result.

The disciples received Jesus' words with conviction. They recognized the authority and truth behind His teachings. They believed Jesus came from God the Father. And they believed the Father sent Him on His mission which gave Him His purpose. That's why faith plays such a crucial role in your relationship with God. Faith involves trusting Jesus is the Son of God and accepting His message. Just as the disciples believed, you too, can have confidence in Jesus' identity and mission.

But faith is not blind. Faith is based on evidence and revelation. Faith plays a crucial role in your life. It shapes your beliefs. Your actions. Your viewpoints. But faith isn't magical. It's an active trust in, and reliance on, God. Faith gives you confidence toward God. It motivates you to believe in God's power and His will to act in your life. But faith is more than mental conviction. It goes beyond acceptance. Faith must grow into commitment. A commitment to trust God and follow His will for your life. Faith is not a passive acceptance. It's active. It's an anchor. It helps keep you steady in times of turmoil. Faith helps you overcome doubt and fear. When you trust God, you rely on His strength. It's not blind hopefulness. It's a deliberate choice to believe in God's goodness and sovereignty. So, faith is the key to your spiritual growth. It transforms you. And as you grow in faith, faith becomes your source of strength, your hope, and your purpose. Faith isn't just an idea. Faith is an active relationship with God. Faith guides you through life's challenges so you can know with certainty, that you have been entrusted with the same words Jesus received from God and gave to His disciples. And you have the privilege of knowing that and sharing those life-transforming words with others.

But believing in God is just the starting point. Even Satan believes there is a God. Believing in God doesn't automatically have you entering a belief or commitment to Jesus Christ and God the Father. Belief in God is good. But it's incomplete! As the apostle James noted: *"You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons [fallen angels] believe—and tremble!"* (James 2:19) You must go beyond the level of faith shown by demons. In the Bible, chapter eleven in The Book of Hebrews is known as the "faith chapter". It was probably written in the late A.D. 60's during the time of Roman persecution when Jewish Christians were ready to give up their Christian faith and return to the Jewish faith. It defines faith this way: *"Now faith is the substance [the realization, the confident assurance, and solid ground] of things hoped for, the evidence [the conviction, the reality, and proof] of things not seen."* (Hebrews 11:1)

So, faith is your assurance that things *are* which you cannot see. And the remainder of Hebrews 11 identifies real people who long ago lived examples of faith. They believed God. Even to the point of death. Confident that God would deliver them, or resurrect them to eternal life in His Kingdom, they believed their faith gave them the assurance to carry on. And you can have that kind of faith. In fact, you *must* have that kind of faith if you wish to honor and love God. Because *"without faith it is impossible to please Him. For he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him"*

And Hebrews 11:6 describes the two aspects of faith. *First*, you must believe God exists. That He is the all-righteous, all-powerful Creator and Ruler of the universe who cares about His creation. Including you. It's something you can understand by seeing the beauty of creation all around you. And within yourself. (Romans 1:20). *And then* you must believe God will ultimately reward those who humbly and obediently seek Him. So, changing your life to submit to God is what the Bible refers to as *repentance*. It's based on the conviction that God will come into your life and will grant you eternal life. Simply saying "I believe", however, without making a life-altering change won't do it. The kind of faith required for salvation includes understanding what God desires from you, and you standing firm upon that understanding. You put your faith in a correct understanding of God's Word. And then you are committed to living by that Word.

According to the Bible, God has a plan for your life. And everything happens for a reason. Jeremiah 29:11 says, *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." God's purpose for our lives is excellent, and we can rely on Him to guide us.* When you trust in God's plan for your life, you will find comfort in difficult circumstances. And as a Christian, your faith will enable you to rely on God's strength and guidance. Philippians 4:13 says, *"I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me."* And in Matthew 6:25-34, Jesus encourages you not to worry about your life and to rely on God to take care for you. Listen!

²⁵ "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? ²⁸ "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Your unwavering, understanding faith in God is necessary to overcome uncertainty and fear. Faith is necessary for you to have an attitude and act in such a way that it will produce a positive attitude to obey and serve God. *"And whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for you serve the Lord Christ."* (Colossians 3:23-24) Having confidence in God should encourage you to work hard. To serve others with a grateful heart. And to continue studying the Bible.

So, receive God's Word. Share it with confidence. Your faith in Jesus should make you want to declare His message to this world in need. And our text today, John 17:8, should remind you of the Divine origin of Jesus' teachings and the importance of faith in Him, because where there is faith, there is hope. Trust in something greater than yourself. Because faith brings with it the promise of hope. Hold onto faith, knowing that it brings hope. Hope is powerful. It's beautiful. And it's more than wishful thinking. Hope is not a fragile dream. Hope is a confident expectation rooted in the unchanging God who holds the universe in His hands. So let your heart be filled with faith and hope to guide you along your journey as a messenger of God's Word. Keep on knowing with certainty, the life-giving message Jesus gave to His disciples, was for *you!* AMEN