

Prayer of Preparation: *Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father; there is no shadow of turning with thee; thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not; as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be. Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see; all I have needed thy hand hath provided; great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

In these past few weeks, Luke has taught us a lot about faith...and what we should do with it. We have learned that faith should change us, that faith should be so strong that it moves us so that we may move mountains, that faith should be so persistent that it never ever gives up and that faith is who we are.

Finally, Jesus says that our faith must be humble. In today's world, and in Jesus' world, faith shouted. Faith screamed. Faith wore fancy clothes. Faith stood outside and prayed REALLY loud and REALLY long. Faith has fancy choirs dressed in jeans and matching t-shirts. Faith has stages with fancy backdrops, clouds of smoke, tons of video cameras, and the best sound system money can buy. Faith is fancy slogans, catchy phrases, and a really good social media team. In some people's imaginations, faith is a show.

But what if that isn't what faith is all about? And what if faith is what gives us power to confess that we are sinners? What if faith is what sends us out to serve...even when we don't receive the response we want? What if faith is all about what God does in us and less about a performance we show to the world?

I think that's what Luke's gospel is sharing with us today. It's a different kind of faith. It's a faith that humbles us because it's the voice of God calling us home. It's a faith that knows that God is ever and always surrounding us with love. It's a faith that says I want to refresh you. I want to restore you. And it's a faith that says, I want to bring you peace.

I find that it's the faith of our mothers and fathers. And grandparents. I mustn't forget our grandparents. That's because they lived in a world very different from ours. Most of our ancestors knew that their very next breath, their very next meal, their health and their wealth came from God. They believed it and they taught us to know and believe.

Today we search for answers and we forget the source. We believe that if we have the right answers, if we have the right methodology, if we have the right people that everything will work out right. We did it. We made it. The source is us. Not so says the sinner in Luke's gospel. While the Pharisee was praising himself; yes, he was low key praising himself, the tax collector was praising God.

The tax collector knew that God is the source of our faith and that in order to get it he must pray. Luke's gospel tells us **how** to pray...we pray with a humble heart. A heart that is empty so that God can fill it. We pray knowing that we are sinners, that we have fallen short of who God wants us to be and doing less than what God wants us to do. So we approach God asking for just one more day, one more time to get it right. Knowing that we will never get it right but that we will never give up trying. That's faith...God's faith.

Finally, we pray with a thankful heart. We pray knowing that God answers prayers. That's what our parents and grandparents taught us...**God answers prayers**. We keep praying. We keep moving. We keep approaching power and moving mountains shovelful by shovelful. And we do it all while thanking God. We do it while thanking God because God is our source.

Response to the Word: *Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide; strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see; all I have needed thy hand hath provided; great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

