Curious Faith – **Can I trust God?** 06162024

Intro – Father’s Day Video

Prayer – Father I thank you for the men here today that are Father’s in some way – biological, spiritual dads, step-fathers. For all the Father’s in this room and online today – we honor you. We are so thankful for you. I ask you Lord that you would bless them – pour out your wisdom, your strength, your love and compassion on every one. Give them faith Lord – in you. Give them courage in all that they do. I pray Lord that you would draw them close to you – the greatest Father of all. Pour out your favor and blessings on each one Lord. We love you Lord, Abba, Our Father. God. I pray that your living word and the power of your spirit would do for us, what we cannot do for ourselves. God, would you build our faith to put our trust in you today. Amen

Announcements – Camp, baby bottle campaign

"I am a pastor, and sometimes, I find it difficult to put all my trust in God. Can I be that honest with you today? I sort of said something similar last week when we were talking about faith… and the scripture where the man said “I believe, help me with my unbelief.

Do any of you ever feel that way? You want to trust in God, but sometimes, you find it difficult to trust in him especially in our actions. It's easier to **say** trust in God, than it is to do this. Can you relate? You might feel like I love God and I believe in God, but, I still feel so uneasy about the future. When you look around, there's a lot to feel uneasy about, isn't there? There's the tension all over our country. So often you may look around and you ask yourself like, what if….? And start playing the what if game. What if so-and-so happens as life goes on? And it's really easy to ask a lot of what if's in the current status of the world.

We ask personal things like what if I lose my job? What if I get sick, or someone that I love gets sick? What if food and gas prices keep going up and never come back down? It's easy to play the what if game. What if I am single for the rest of my life? What if my financial situation never gets better? What if I have to work this job that I am unhappy in forever to support my family? It's complicated. You know how easy it is to run down all the what if's. On and On and On – Can you relate?

I don't know about you guys but I want to trust God, but sometimes I just want to say God, it's difficult to trust in YOU - a God I can't see. There's a lot that I can see, right? I can see the political craziness everywhere. Some of you, I can see it in you – the stress. I can see whenever my bank account goes down and gas and food prices go up. I have been trying to find a way to cut our grocery bill each month and it seems impossible unless we start having little debbie’s for dinner. I can see all the tension every time I read or watch anything in the news. God, I want to trust in you, but it's hard when I don't really see you. Or, some of you might say, how can I trust in God when I did trust in God, but he didn't do what I asked him to do? We talked about some reasons why God might not have answered our prayers last week. I prayed, I had faith, I believed and I checked my motives and my relationships, and he could've, but he didn't. And maybe its because God had something else for us. I really want to trust in God but sometimes it's just not easy to do.

"Today, in the series Curious Faith, our question, we are asking hard questions, today we are asking can you trust God? And I will tell you the answer upfront. I believe the answer is absolutely, yes, you can. But we're going to need his word and his spirit to help us.

We are going to look at a powerful example from the Bible. If we ever stop going to the bible or talking about the bible or encouraging you all to read your bibles – you better run to another church. This is where everything we preach comes from!

In Luke chapter five, we find a story that perfectly illustrates the struggle and the reward of trusting God, even when it doesn't make sense."

. So, Luke chapter five, and I'm going to give you two prayers that I believe will help build our trust. Let me give you the context, and then we'll look at them.

The kind of, the story behind the story is Jesus was at a lake, by the Lake of Ge’nnes’aret and he was teaching. It was kind of like a Bible study or what we might call a life group. We just finished up our LifeGroup session for the spring and another will start in Sept. Our group did the Purpose Driven Life book and video study written by Pastor Rick Warren and it was so good. I 100% recommend it for everyone - whether you are new to Christianity, have followed Jesus for years or not even sure about Him yet. I personally read the book prior to knowing anything about a relationship with Jesus and it set me on a path that changed my life forever!

Back to Luke - And it was the end of a very frustrating day for some fishermen, who had been out and did what they normally did, but they didn't have the success they normally had. They didn't catch anything and so they were cleaning up their boats and putting away their nets. And Jesus walked up into one of the boats belonging to Simon Peter. And he said, "Hey there, would you take us out on the water?" –And so, sure enough, Simon took him out on the water and Jesus gave a... little lesson, a teaching. And here's what happened in Luke 5:4 NIV, scripture says "When Jesus had finished speaking, "he said to Simon, put out into deep water" say **deep water**.

Sometimes we have to go out of the shallow, into the deep, to learn what we need to learn. He said, "Put into the deep water" and "Let down the nets for a catch". Say **let down the nets.**

Those of you watching online – participate with us! Type that in the chat. Let down the nets, just type it in, let down the nets. He said, "Put out into the deep water "and let down the nets for a catch. "And Simon answered", let me stop for a second before I tell you what Simon said, because to me this is Simon doing his best to be polite. He's got Jesus, the rabbi, this very important person who just taught a really great message, asking him Simon, an experienced fishermen to do something that makes no sense whatsoever. As we watch as Simon tries to be polite, but I can guess what he's thinking is, Teacher, you teach. I'm a fishermen, I'll fish. You're a rabbi, you do rabbi. I'll do what I do. Who are you to tell me? Right – He is thinking there are generations and generations of fishermen in my family, and you're getting on my boat, taking up my time, giving me your crazy advice. But he is polite And Simon says this, "Master, we worked hard all day "and all night, and we haven't caught anything". What you're asking me to do feels really, really, really ridiculous. Doesn't make any sense.

 How many of you know that oftentimes what God asks you to do, doesn't make any sense? Often, when God will invite you to put your trust in him, it can make you feel really, really stupid. Can you just imagine what my friends and family thought when I said – I am quitting my job as a business analyst – where I had been for over 30 years. Why would you do that Kathy? Because I feel like that is what God is asking me to do? Oh really – how are you going to pay your bills? Hmm – he hasn’t told me that part yet. I am not advertising for anyone to go quit a job without another one – unless God tells you to that is. And, I received Godly counsel and multiple confirmations that God was speaking just that to me and to Mike.

Remember a few weeks ago I shared that I felt like God told me there was a testimony in the room but no one had told me they had one, I didn’t know that for sure and I didn’t want to look stupid and stand up here and say there is a testimony in the room and have no one come forward. Yup even your Pastors deal with this. This doesn't make any sense. And you might read in scripture, well, Jesus says, "Don't worry about tomorrow "because tomorrow will take care of itself". And it's really easy to quote that to somebody else but sometimes when you read it, you think, well, have you seen what's going on in our country or just in my family? Somebody's got to worry about it. Somebody's got to do something about it. That doesn't seem to make a whole lot of sense to me right now. "Don't worry about tomorrow", we think - well, somebody better worry about tomorrow.

You might read in scripture, "Bless those who persecute you". And it's real easy to tell that to someone else, but you might be thinking you don't know the people that I work with.

Scripture says "Don't lean on your own understanding". Well, fine. But if I don't lean on my own understanding, sometimes my bills aren't going to get paid. What you're asking me to do, sometimes Jesus, just feels unreasonable. It feels completely stupid. I want to trust in you, but you have to give me a little something. I can't see you, I can't always feel you.

"Let's break this down into two powerful prayers that can help us build our trust in God. The first prayer is: 'Lord, help me to obey you, even when I don't understand.'"

"Lord, help me to obey you, "even what I don't understand". And what's so powerful to me is that we see this prayer lived out when Simon, by faith, did what Jesus asked him to do, and he let down his nets. Look again at our scripture, Simon answered, "Hey, master Fisherman Jesus. "We worked hard all night and we haven't caught anything. "But... "because you say so, "I'll let down the nets". Say it with me – because you say so…...

This doesn't make any sense to me Jesus, "but because you say "so. "Lord, help me to obey, "even when I don't understand". Because you're asking me to do it, and because of who you are, God, I'm choosing to put my trust in you. And this action leads us to the fact that we don't have to understand completely to obey immediately. You don't have to know the end of the story to turn the first page, and be obedient to the one who asked you to do this.

"A lot of times, when we think of trusting God, we tend to think about the big things like okay, God, you know, you're going to ask me to obey and, move to a new city or quit my job and take another, or quit my job and stay home with my children etc... But it’s the small things too…..For example, I remember a time when I felt God prompting me to reach out to an older women who was new in her walk with Jesus. It didn't make sense to me at the moment, but I obeyed. That small act of obedience led to a deep and beautiful friendship and Mike and I being able to baptize her and her husband in their swimming pole at the age of 75 and 78 I think." They blessed us and our LG so much with their love and hospitality and we helped them in their walk with Jesus. I remember so clearly – this woman saying she didn’t understand her reading in the bible. She was doing it but it didn’t make sense and when I explained the Holy Spirit and told her she could ask for the Holy Spirit to fill her, and He would, and she did and the next week she had highlighted all kinds of verses and said I don’t know what happened but it all seemed so clear this week!

I was always afraid God would ask me to move to Africa after Mike traveled there a few times) and He never did but I never thought he would ask me to change careers after being in the same industry for most of my adult life and He did. And that may be the case that it is something big. But what I've found is to really grow in our trust and our faith in God, it often starts by trusting him in the smallest ways. And sometimes, the smallest acts of obedience and trust lead to the biggest results, the biggest blessings, and the biggest miracles.

The smallest... act of obedience. "But because you say so", I'll do this. "Lord, help me obey, "even when I don't understand". Some messages I have preached have been like that – Ok Lord because you say so – I don’t necessarily understand why you would ask me to do this Lord. Or you know this is a hard one God, they won’t like what I say…like when I preached on the reality of Hell a couple weeks ago – some of you had to skip last week because you were still “digesting”….

WE don't have to understand completely, to obey immediately. Why did God prick my heart to reach out to that person or send them a note of encouragement or pray for them? Just a reminder – if you want to send someone here a note and you don’t know their address. We have cards at the connection hub you can fill out and we will address and mail for you! We just need to obey. How do we grow in that trust? How do we learn to trust in a God that we want to trust in, but sometimes it's hard because we just can't see him.

I want to give you some advice and it's only for this area of your life – not all areas. Some of you might remember me saying this a few years ago. What you need to do is you just need to get clingy. Get clingy. Now, I promise you if you're dating, you don't want to get clingy. That's just weird. Don't do that with the person you're dating or even with your spouse if you are married. Don’t be clingy. That’s not attractive.

But when it comes to God, sometimes we just need to get clingy. There's a great Bible verse, if you've been a Christian for a long time you probably have at least 1 coffee mug with a Bible verse on it, last week I told you it is probably thanks to Paul for writing ¾ of the new testament but it could be this one. This is a popular one too - Proverbs 3:5-6 says "Trust in the Lord with all your heart. "Lean not on your own understanding, "but in all your ways, acknowledge him". Probably it was Solomon wrote this one - who wrote a lot of Proverbs. The word acknowledge comes from the Hebrew word, yada, which means to know. "In all your ways know him, "and he'll make your paths straight". In all your ways you know him. You know him on the mountain tops, and you know him in the valleys. When you know him in the good times, you learn to trust him in the bad or the hard times.

How do you know God? How do you know him? How do you get to know him intimately? How do you know him, trust him, walk with him? The only way that you can know him is to be close to him. And the way to be close to him is to cling to him.

I could never have walked through some of the trials that have come my way if I didn’t know God before the trial came. God spoke to me and reminded me a few years ago - Kathy you know me and you trust me. He reminded me He would be with me always and this encouragement came right before a very difficult season came. And it made all the difference in the world in my response and actions.

The word trust, at the very beginning of this verse, "Trust in the Lord". How do you do that? The Hebrew word translated as trust is the word bata’ (batach). But what this word means is, is it means to cling to. Not just to be close in proxsimity, but to hold on to and to not let go.

Here's the key. In order to hold on to God, you have to let go of whatever else you were previously clinging to. In order to trust in him, you lean not on your own understanding.

And - Can I just say for a minute - That's just hard. That's almost not fair. To tell me not to lean on something or someone other than myself, I'm wired to lean on my own understanding. Some would say it's a strength that I can figure this out. I used to feel that way, I struggle with this still at times – proud of my own strength. It made me happy - I am a strong woman, I can do this, I can figure it out on my own. I can take care of myself. I don’t need anyone!

But when you get to the place where you let go of your own understanding, your own plans, your own desires, your own will, your own strategy, your own place of comfort. And when you cling to one who is a rock, who will never fail you. You cling to the faithfulness and the goodness of the only one who really is good. Then, anything else that brought you the illusion of security before, fades away in the presence,and the strength, of the goodness and the grace in the presence of God.

We all need to get clingy. Look at the person next to you and tell them, get clingy. Type it in the chat, I'm a clinger, I'm a clinger, I'm clingy or I am going to get clingy. What do you need to do? It's time to cling to the promises of God. Don't let go, cling to the promises of God. WE say God, I thank you that I can cast my cares upon you because you faithfully care for me. God, I'm clinging to your truth, that you will provide of all my needs, according to your glorious riches in Christ Jesus. God, I thank you and praise you that you are working in all things, to bring about good, to those who love you, who are called according to your purpose. God, I cling to your truth that you will never leave me, God. You will never forsake me, God. That when I draw near to you, God, you will always draw near to me. God, thank you, that you are close to the broken hearted. God, you save those who are crushed in spirit. God, you are my refuge. You are my strength. You are my help... in time of trouble.

In order to cling to the goodness of God, you have to release what you were clinging to before. Money, security, self, a person etc. Lord, help me to trust you, to cling to you. Even what I don't... understand. God, help me to trust you and obey even the smallest of promptings, even if they don't make sense to me. Because... I trust you, I'll let down the net. I don't know the outcome. Simon - He had no clue of the outcome. And the good news is, the outcome is God's responsibility. Obedience is ours. Lord help me to trust you, even when I don't understand.

I promise you that God will prompt you. In some way, he'll invite you to trust him. And what you'll discover is that big miracles, often follow simple acts of obedience. And we see this in our story. Jesus says, "Hey, put down the nets. "Let down the nets for a catch". And Simon says, "We'll trust you". And scripture says this, "When they had done so, "they caught such a large number of fish, "that their nets began to break. "So, they signaled their partners "and the other boat to come and to help them. "And they came and filled the boats so full "that they began to sink. "Lord, help me obey you, "even when I don't understand".

And our second prayer we can pray is this, Lord help me surrender what I cannot control. Lord, help me surrender what I cannot control. I love this, Simon obeys and he lets down the nets, and he's surprised, catches so many fish that the nets can't even contain them. And suddenly he realizes, Oh my gosh, Jesus is not just a rabbi, he is a holy one. And Simon falls down and he says, "Get away from me, rabbi. "I'm a sinful person, I'm not even worthy to be "in your presence". And here's what Jesus did, if you imagine his love. Jesus says to Simon, "Hey Simon, don't be afraid. "From now on, "you'll fish for people". From now on, what you've done your whole life, I'm going to use those same skills, but give you even a higher calling.

So what happens? "They pulled up their boats on shore". Watch this, what'd they do?. "They pulled up their boats on shore" and what'd they do? "They left everything, "and they followed Jesus". They left everything. What did everything include? Everything included their nets. The very thing that represented provision, represented security, represented the future. Think about the magnitude of that. They left everything, including the nets. When it comes to your nets, whatever that is, that provides safety. Your understanding, your hope, your bucket list. Your, if only this, and God, here's what I need. When it comes to your nets, first thing you do is you let them down when he invites you to. And then at some point, you lay them down. I surrender this completely. I let go of my plans. I'm trusting this to you God.

And, lets be completely and totally honest, this is not easy. This is hard. There's nothing easy about this. This can be one of the biggest steps of faith ever, when you say I'm not just **letting** down that which makes me feel secure, but I'm **laying it down**.

We all have so many things in our lives….

"God. You can...(fill in the blank) " heal so and so, you can allow me to get pregnant and give me a child, you can take the desire for alcohol away, bring unity to this conflict, you can restore my relationship with my children, you can save my job, put an end to the craziness in our world, and God you haven't. "And I don't understand "why". And so we let go... of our understanding, and we choose to cling to him. And trust in his goodness, and his plan and his purposes that are higher than what we have the ability to understand.

And in his presence, clinging to him, somehow he comforts us, with a peace that goes beyond our human ability to even understand. And we can say, honestly, truthfully, as I cling to him, even though my heart is hurting, my hope is not shaken. Though my heart aches, I still trust in him.

I don't know who this is for today, but you may need to, not just let down the nets, but lay down the nets. Because, you don't always have the power to control, but you do always have the power to surrender.

 I want to show you the words from Psalm 20:7, the words of David when he said this, and I hope you'll feel it and find yourself in the middle of this verse. David said this, he said "Some trust in chariots. "Some trust in horses". Some trust in whoever holds office, but I thank God that our hope is not in just who's in office, but our hope is in who sits on the throne. Some would put their hope in their bank accounts or in the medical report, and David said it this way, "Some trust in chariots and some in horses. "But we, as the people of God, where do we put our hope? "But we trust in the name of the Lord, our God". While it's easy to trust in just what you see, we're going to trust God.

 Worship Team

If you find yourself today, you want to trust, but it's so difficult to trust in a God you cannot see. You feel like you're on the edge. You feel like you might be ready to give up. As we close, I challenge you to take a step of faith this week. Identify one area in your life where you struggle to trust God and pray these two prayers: 'Lord, help me to obey you, even when I don't understand,' and 'Lord, help me surrender what I cannot control.' Trust that God will meet you in your obedience and surrender, just as He did with Simon Peter."

I want you to think for just a moment and answer the question, when did this miracle with Simon take place? When was it that the disciples who had given up hope, see the miraculous provision of the goodness of God in a miracle catch of fish?

The answer is, at the end of a very frustrating day. When did the miracle take place? It happened... when they had given up hope. If you find yourself about to give up, about to surrender the dream of God answering your prayer. Finding yourself not trusting God. It could be your marriage. You're fighting for it, but your spouse doesn't even seem to care, and you feel like you can't even hang on for a moment longer. It could be the dream of getting out of debt, or of God healing one of your daughters, or your sons. It could be God hearing the cries of your heart and providing someone for you to share his goodness with and to do life together.

If you find yourself about to give up hope, remember, when did the miracle take place? It happened at the end of a very frustrating day. If you find yourself in the middle of a frustrating season, let me remind you, it's not over, it's not over. Our God is still good, our God is still here. Our God is still in control. God has more for you. God is still with you, he is still faithful and he hears the cries of your heart. Do not grow weary in doing good , for at the proper time, you will reap a harvest if you do not give up.

Whatever you've been clinging to, have the courage, the faith to let go of your own plans, your own dreams, and cling to the everlasting goodness and the grace of our God. While some trust in what they can see, we put our faith and our trust in the goodness of God.

Pray

So Father today, we pray by the power of your Holy Spirit, that you would do a work in the hearts of your church. Some of us have a burden, we have got a pain. There's an overwhelming sense of disappointment. It might be a marriage, it might be a relationship. It could be a health issue. There might be a fear that we can't seem to kick. There might be an addiction that won't seem to go away. It feels like the end of the day, and all hope is fading. But Lord, help us to put our hope in you.

Maybe you are praying for a loved one to come to Christ. You might be praying for a miracle in your body. It might be a financial provision. It might even be that your faith continues

Father, help us to put our trust in you. To cling to you. To let go of whatever we've been holding onto, and hold onto you and not let go. We thank you God, that when we draw near to you, you draw near to us. And what we may find is that we're not really just holding onto you Lord. But God, we thank you that you're holding on to us. We put our trust in you, God. We continue to believe. And God by faith I believe for every hurt, for every sickness. God, for every crushing disappointment, I lift these up before you and thank you that there is a name above every name. His name is Jesus. We put our trust and hope in you.

Amen

If you are believing, you are trusting in God for something or you want to start trusting him – letting down your nets or laying down your nets. We have a prayer team here – come up and let us pray with you. The worship team is going to play quietly– come up and receive personal prayer. LifeGroup leaders, prayer team, elders, prayer warriors come forward and be available to pray with people. The prayer room is open – you can go in there or right here. We can trust God with everything.

We love you and there is nothing you can do about it!

Happy Father’s Day!