

The Trade: Faith & Trust for Certainty

As I was considering my message for this morning, I kept challenging the Holy Spirit because it seemed like the subject I'm going to speak upon, was not linked to what John Ball is about to share with us. Well, after asking 3 or 4 times "are you sure?" ... the Holy Spirit reminded me that He never makes mistakes. This message is for someone sitting here today – maybe several someones.

Have you ever struggled with UNCERTAINTY? Yea ... me too, and I always wondered why. Why do we worry about things and get anxious about the future, when we are literally "a Sons of God?"

Because we haven't yet traded those worldly cravings for certainty for complete trust and faith in God

SLIDE TRADE 1

We tend to gravitate to the "known plan" that certainty seems to provide and instead of accepting a trusting and faithful role under God where we are rarely fully aware of His plans in our life.

The bible says in Psalm 62:8 ...

Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.

But man... these fleshly bodies of ours still experience uncertainty at times

- Uncertainty in God's direction for our life
- Uncertainty in the mess that is the world around us
- Uncertainty in our finances, health and relationships

Uncertainty is all around us because we sense it through the lens of a heart that want's things to go a "certain way" and in a specific time frame. In our minds we build up a "perfect" day and a perfect life.

We crave a world where we have complete control and know exactly what's going on now AND what will happen in the future!

- Unfortunately we are of this world
- Unfortunately we have limited minds
- Unfortunately we can't see how "all things work together" – we can only see our small part
- Unfortunately we crave certainty in order for our perfect world to fit our mental narrative

This way of thinking – wishing for perfection, will mess with, stall, inhibit, sidetrack and slow God's plans for our lives, because worldly certainty is a lie. There is no such thing.

Oh ... we WANT there to be certainty - We WANT to "know for sure" what's going to happen next.

The reality is we have no idea of tomorrow – or even the next hour, as James reminds us in chapter 4

James 4:13-14

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit" — yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

The certainty we crave and chase is pure fiction. It's never going to come to fruition and the outcomes of seeking it are fleeting at best and downright painful at their worst

SLIDE TRADE 2

We strive to create and manifest our plans in the world and it just seems that it all leads to naught.

1. Disappointment when chaos and pandemonium rule over your best laid plans
2. Frustration that it “never works out” quite the way you envisioned it to
3. Worry that it’s all going to come crashing down and ...
4. Constant anxiety that YOU have to keep pushing to achieve worldly success

What appears to US as uncertainty is very likely to be God’s hand working to accomplish His plans. Instead of trusting that we have a loving heavenly Father to provide in His perfect timing, we sometimes insist on fighting to get what we want.

The famous ethicist, John Kavanaugh. He tells of a time in his life when he went to Calcutta to work for three months at “The House of the Dying” – the place where Mother Theresa and her team would pick up dying people off the streets of Calcutta India, to love and care for them. This experience was part of his heartfelt search for direction about his future. The first morning there, he met Mother Teresa. She asked, “And what can I do for you?” Kavanaugh asked her to pray for him as his time in India was up and he wanted to know if he should return to the US to pursue his career as a college professor or remain in India to work with the poor.

“What do you want me to pray for?” she asked. He responded by explaining that he had come thousands of miles from the U.S. to find direction: “Pray that I have clarity.”

She said firmly, “No, I will not do that.” When asked why, she said, “Clarity is the last thing you are clinging to and must let go of.” Kavanaugh commented that she always seemed to have the clarity he longed for. She laughed and said, “I have never had clarity; what I have always had is trust. So I will pray that you trust God.”

Daniel Henderson from Strategic Renewal said:

“There is something in all of us that always wants clarity. It is part of our sinful ego and a common expression of our insecurities. Clarity can become an idol that replaces authentic trust in God. In many ways, we would rather understand the details of the road ahead than rest in deep intimacy with the God who has promised to direct our steps. He has never promised to show us a detailed 10-year plan. Clarity can actually become spiritually counterproductive as it shortchanges trust, a life of faith, and moment-by-moment dependence on God.”

When we don’t fully trust God, we spend too many hours and days in a spirit of fear, doubt, worry, anxiety and despair

One of my favorite brothers here at MOC is Ben Yoder

- Ben is the poster child for living according to the spirit AND trusting God
- That also means Ben appears (sometimes) to be “wandering” from thing to thing
- To a lay person, Ben’s week may appear to be without a real plan
- One day he’s in the mountains helping folks displaced by Hurricanes
- The next day he’s witnessing to his neighbor or volunteering here at our church
- **When you look at OUTCOMES you’ll see there is no BEN plan – only God’s plans**
- **When you examine the FRUIT of his faith, you’ll find Glory to God in his efforts**
- I’m spiritually jealous of Ben’s trust in God – I want more of what he has

Men of Covenant, we need to BMYB - “Be More Like Ben”

I know that I NEED to trust God more and trust me less

I'll bet all of us could do with a little more trust in God and a lot more ignoring of the uncertainty around us

SLIDE TRADE 3

When we choose to trade “certainty” for “trust in God” the whole outcome of our experience here on earth is changed – and I don't know about you, but I prefer these outcomes FAR better than the ones listed under “Certainty!”

- I crave Peace
- I want to produce fruit for my God
- I want to experience the wonder of His blessing and His Kingdom and ...
- I want to leave behind the anxiety of the LIE of certainty and live in the TRUTH of Trust

As I close this morning I'm reminded of the movie clip we watched here last year and thought it was worth sharing again.

It's from the movie “Rudy” and in the scene, we see a desperate Rudy asks Father Cavanaugh as if he is a God himself, to perform a miracle to get him on the Notre Dame football team. Father Cavanaugh's answer to Rudy is the answer EVERY man must come to in order to TRUST God. Father Cavanaugh's answer was, “Son, in thirty-five years of religious study, I've come up with only two hard, incontrovertible facts; there is a God, and, I'm not Him.”

Such profound words. As believers in God, we should know better than anyone that once we place our faith in His Son Jesus Christ – we - our flesh - our plans, are off the table. **It's HIM we are here for, it's HIM we love, it's HIS plans we execute because He is I AM and we are I AM NOT!**

It's this faith that builds our trust in God and ...

It's our trust in God that dampens our need for worldly certainty and ...

When we care less about certainty, we have the courage to walk in the spirit and produce fruit to glory of God's Kingdom. Certainty can only be found in God and it takes the form of TRUST

Walking in spiritual certainty is a reflection of a deep trust in God because ...

God's plans are:

- Perfect
- All knowing
- All encompassing
- To His glory and ends

So ...

- If the present time in your life feels uncertain to you
- If you are worried or anxious about “what's next”
- If your life is chaotic when compared to your plans.

The bible has the 2 word answer ...

“Trust God”

Amen