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Farming Faithfulness

Step One: Trust God

1 Kings 17:8-16

1. Trust God – church and class.

2. Build Trust – community and conversations.

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Good morning, everyone. Our main Scripture today comes from 1 Kings chapter 17. Strangely enough, 1st and 2nd Kings tell the history of the different kings of Israel, some good, but mostly bad. In 1 Kings, we find an evil King, King Ahab. You may not know his name, but you probably have heard of his wife, or at least the name Jezebel. She was a Phoenician princess, and her name means “Where is honor” and is also known as shameless or immoral woman. Their marriage was a political one, hoping to bring peace and trade to the land. Ahab was not a peaceful man and as a team, Ahab and Jezebel did lots of bad stuff. The end of chapter 16, says Ahab did more to arouse the anger of the Lord, than all the kings of Israel before him. Jezebel brought into the relationship, her fake god, Baal. Instead of following the God of Israel, they followed Baal. Baal was thought to be lord of fertility, including crops and rain.

Elijah was a prophet. He was one who spoke on behalf of God, calling out sin when he sees it (most common sins by the kings were idolatry and injustice). Elijah enters the story and confronts Ahab. To show God’s power, and to punish Ahab for worshiping Baal, Elijah announced a drought. It would end up lasting seven years. Ahab would have turned to Baal for rain, but it didn’t come. During the drought, Elijah heads out to the wilderness where God takes care of him. Eventually because of the drought, his water source runs dry, and God tells him where to go next. Let’s stand and continue the story as we read together 1 Kings 17:8-16...

Then the word of the Lord came to him: “Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food.” So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, “Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?” As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.” “As surely as the Lord your God lives,” she replied, I don’t have any bread – only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it – and die.” Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: “The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land.”” She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

This passage is an incredible example of trust, and that is what we will learn from it today. Elijah and the widow both trusted God to provide. The widow sacrificed what little food she had because she trusted God. Elijah trusted God to feed him and care for him too. Earlier in chapter 17, you see that God used ravens to deliver meat to Elijah during the drought. Now he trusted God to listen to Him and go to Zarephath to find the widow who would care for Him. Many Old Testament Prophets didn't have much, like money, a home, animals, usually just the clothing they wore and food they could carry. They had to Trust God. The widow was willing to trust God. She left her life and her son's life up to God. That is a lot of trust. For some people, trust comes easy, for others we have to learn to trust.

Two of the ways we can learn to...

1. Trust God – is through church and class.

Coming to church and worshipping together, obediently giving, joining in prayer for others or ourselves, helps us learn to trust God. It's not always easy, but we can do it, and we want our children to learn that they can trust God too. As a children's pastor, I oversee all ministry to children. It's important for our children to know they can trust their teachers and pastors, but most importantly, they can trust God. There are three verses on the city wall if you walk down the hallway from here. Two of them are Matthew 28:20, Acts 1:8. They are reminders that we can Trust God because he is with us wherever we go. And that we can Trust God because he gives us power through the Holy Spirit. Our children learn at church and in class that they can trust God. Now class doesn't just mean 9am Sunday school. We also have Wednesday night Caravan, Children's Quizzing, and small groups during kid's church. This time allows our children to study God's Word, memorize Bible verses, and learn how the Bible can be lived out at home, school, and like Acts 1:8 says, "to the ends of the earth". I know you aren't kids, although we all have our childish moments. But you learn to Trust God in church and classes too. Maybe you haven't been to our Core classes yet. But do you know what John Wesley called his small groups? Classes. In a small group, you not only learn to Trust God, but you BUILD Trust, with those in your group. Through community and conversations.

2. Build Trust: community and conversations.

As a church, we are becoming known in our community for what we do, and it is exciting. We have built trust in our community. In the past, partnerships between schools and churches was unheard of. Most schools didn't want churches involved; they didn't trust the church. Over time, we developed such a good relationship with Wide Hollow we were able to duplicate it with Mountainview. Now there are schools in Yakima, asking and inviting churches to partner with them. We also build trust through Trunk or Treat, Upward Soccer, Homework Club, Breakfast with Santa. Building trust in our community, leads to more opportunities to build trust, through our conversations. We want our families and everyone else to learn to build trust through conversations which is why the title of this sermon is **Step One: Trust God.**

Some of you may have not noticed, some of you may have been wondering why it's titled that. This month in Kid's Church, we have a series called "Plate it". Since Thanksgiving is this month, our kids are learning about recipes and how the steps in a recipe help you prepare a meal. Each Sunday they learn about a different prophet. Recipes help prepare a meal and the Old Testament Prophets, helped prepare Israel for a Savior. So this month, our kids are learning about the prophets and also the steps we can take to prepare ourselves for God and living life the way God wants us to. To encourage faith conversations at home, all kids at 10am learn the same Bible story, which today, is the same passage we read just now, about Elijah. Our entire church is learning the same thing today, Step One: Trust God. I want to encourage faith conversations at home, but I have learned that just having the kids all learn the same thing, isn't enough. So I created this document. It's called a Table Talker. You take it home and for the month, it gives you overviews of what kids are learning, questions for discussion, some challenges, and a dinner related game. Having this and a Bible on their dinner table will hopefully help families take advantage of mealtime by creating intentional and meaningful faith conversations at home.

Conversations to build trust happen within the family, but we also want children to know others in church that they can build trust with.

Starting after Christmas, we have a new ministry we are calling the Buddy System. An opportunity for kids and adults to sign up and be paired with another person from our church, a buddy. The role of the buddies is to pray for each other during the week, and then connect in the hall on Sunday after service. They'll get to send letters to each other, and once a quarter we will have an event for buddies to have conversations and connect, like Bingo, or a craft night or something like that. Once trust is built, buddies could later be invited to the Talent Show, or their Upward Soccer game, or a birthday party, etc. Then trust is built between a family in church and another adult committed to praying for them and getting to know them. This will help us create long-term relationships in church. If you google, "how to build trust" The number one way, is to value long-term relationships. Having a buddy you pray for and connect with at church, or write letter to during the week, will create a long-term relationship and give it value.

Building Trust is not easy, and it takes time. For those who have a hard time trusting others, it okay. The more we trust God, the easier it gets for us to trust someone else. The widow trusted Elijah. As a widow, she would have had no income after her husband's death. She put her life and her son's life at risk, by trusting Elijah and doing what he asked. She trusted God with all she had left. Jesus saw a widow and noticed a similar outcome with His followers. In Mark 12:41-44...

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you; this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything – all she had to live on."

Both widows, gave all they had. They sacrificed what they had, and they trusted God to meet their needs. It doesn't matter who you are or what you're going through, we all need

to trust God now. That's why STEP ONE is Trust God. Sometimes it will be difficult to Trust God. In the same way it can be difficult to trust people. Most of us have been hurt by someone who broke our trust. The more we trust God, the more likely we are to build trust with others.

If you trust God, you need to tell Him. Tell him every day. It's a good reminder for us. Don't trust him? Tell him why not. Ask for help to trust him in the areas you lack trust. As a Dad, I lose sleep over my kids and what the future will look like for them. I so badly want them to love Jesus and I want them to love church. I know I can't make them believe anything. I want them to experience God's love and because of that, they can't help love him back. I'll do everything I can, but I know they have to make the choice to follow Jesus.

So, I trust God, and do what I can with what I have – my time, energy, teachable moments, etc. You trust God, and do what you can with what you have. Trusting God doesn't mean you do nothing. Both widows did something, they Trusted God and gave what they had. Out of our Trust in God, we act. Trust God and ACT.

In my family, our kids love being in the kitchen, "helping" prepare something delicious. I like cooking, but the best food I make, is when I have a recipe and stick to it. Following the steps to prepare the meal. The Old Testament prophets kind of gave Israel a recipe for how to prepare for the birth of the Savior they had been waiting for. You might think it's too early to talk about Christmas, but the Old Testament Prophets talked about Jesus coming for hundreds of years before it happened, so a month early should be okay. The prophets help us with Step one: Trust God. In a recipe, you measure ingredients to put into whatever you are making. When you trust God, don't measure. Not a dash, or a cup, or a teaspoon, or a sprinkle, God desires, we put ALL our trust in Him.

PRAYER