

A PEOPLE OF FAITH

Tuesday Evenings in March 2020 at 7.30 10,17,24 and 31 March
A series produced by John Rackley asking what it means to have faith in Christ
at the beginning of the 21st century.

HANDOUT

Faith is a way of behaving

*'Ask any Christian today what it means to have faith and that person will usually recite a list of things that she or he believes about Christ. What does this really have to do with being a follower of Christ? According to the early Christian documents we have, including the gospels, almost nothing. What have been lost in our time are the other three meanings of the word 'faith'. They are faith as **fiducia** (radical trust in God), as **fidelitas**, loyalty in one's relationship to God, and as **visio** (a way of seeing creation as gracious).'*

Robin R Meyers

Question: do you agree with this statement?

We live in a culture that likes definitions but they can control rather than free us. This is why we must not tie the word 'faith' to the word 'belief'. If we want to capture what faith means we need to move away from definitions and instead look at what we might call specimens of faith in action. Faith happening before our very eyes. Faith behaving. This is what we learn from Jesus – the pioneer of faith.

Question: what is a pioneer? What makes a pioneer different from a settler?

Mark 2:1-12

*A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ² They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. ³ Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. ⁴ Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. ⁵ **When Jesus saw their faith**, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."⁶ Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷ "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"⁸ Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things?⁹ Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? ¹⁰ But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, ¹¹ "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."¹² He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"*

Question: what did Jesus see?

- Faith having the insight, boldness and persistence to convert concern into action
- Faith is doing all you can, not just hoping something will turn up
- Faith is causing other people inconvenience and to think differently
- Faith is taking people so far and not taking them over completely
- Faith does not heal, but brings people to the place and time for healing

This is *faith-behaviour*. Faith in Jesus responds to him in certain ways. The religious people take the first opportunity to get involved – by starting an argument about blasphemy. They see the healing. They see the faith. They think only of their beliefs.

*The fundamental fact of existence is that trust in God, faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It's our handle on what we can't see. **The Message***

The Journey of Faith

We travel as pilgrims from the little light
we have through the darkness
into a greater light than we can imagine.
So will begin the last and greatest adventure of all
as we drawn into the splendour of the full light of God.

Eddie Askew