

**Message: “Game Changer: What’s Your Move? Part Three”, presented by Reverend Kristen Lowe on 05-07-2017 at Crossroads United Methodist Church, Waunakee, WI.**

James, the brother of Jesus reminds us that there’s more to faith than just believing. Faith has teeth. Loving and believing in God means we take action.

**James 2:14-18**

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith.

Jesus doesn’t just suggest we care for one another. He commands that we love others as he has loved us, unconditionally and by demonstrating our love for others.

**John 15:12**

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

May God’s word take root in our hearts. Amen.

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There was a man who got lost in the desert. The summer sun was sweltering. Even the cacti looked parched. Wandering for miles his mouth became very dry, his lips cracked and his body ached with thirst. In a weakened state he spied a shack in the distance and made his way there. Once inside the shack he found a water pump with a small jug of water and a note.

The note read: “Pour all the water into the top of the pump to prime it. Then begin pumping. If you do this you will get all the water you need”.

The man faced a difficult choice. If he trusted the note and primed the pump he might get all the water he could ever need. But what if the advice didn’t work? Could he survive much longer without any water? Should he waste what little water he had?

Throughout his life he had been more of an immediate gratification kind of a guy. The jug of water beckoned. His whole being cried out to guzzle it down.

But the prospect of an endless supply of life-giving water held intrigue. He knew not what kind of journey laid ahead—how much desert needed to be crossed. He noted the empty canteens he had carried with him. He imagined stocking up on a supply of water and making it through this ordeal alive.

Saying a short prayer, he took a leap of faith and poured the jug of water into the pump. He then began to work the handle vigorously.

At first nothing happened. The handle creaked but the spigot was dry. He pumped harder. A desperate man threw himself into the one activity that could save him. Strange sounds began to emerge from the pump, then a small trickle of rusty water. He pumped faster. A miracle happened. The water turned from rust-colored to clear, the trickle became a steady stream.

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He drank his fill, washed himself and filled every available container.

Before heading out he carefully filled the little jug, studied the note and then made one little addition: “Prime the pump, trust me it works.”

Beloved... if you were a lonely traveler in the desert..... what would you do?

Will you dig the water jar from the sand..... and drink it?

Or will you believe, and in believing, pour every drop of water into the pump?

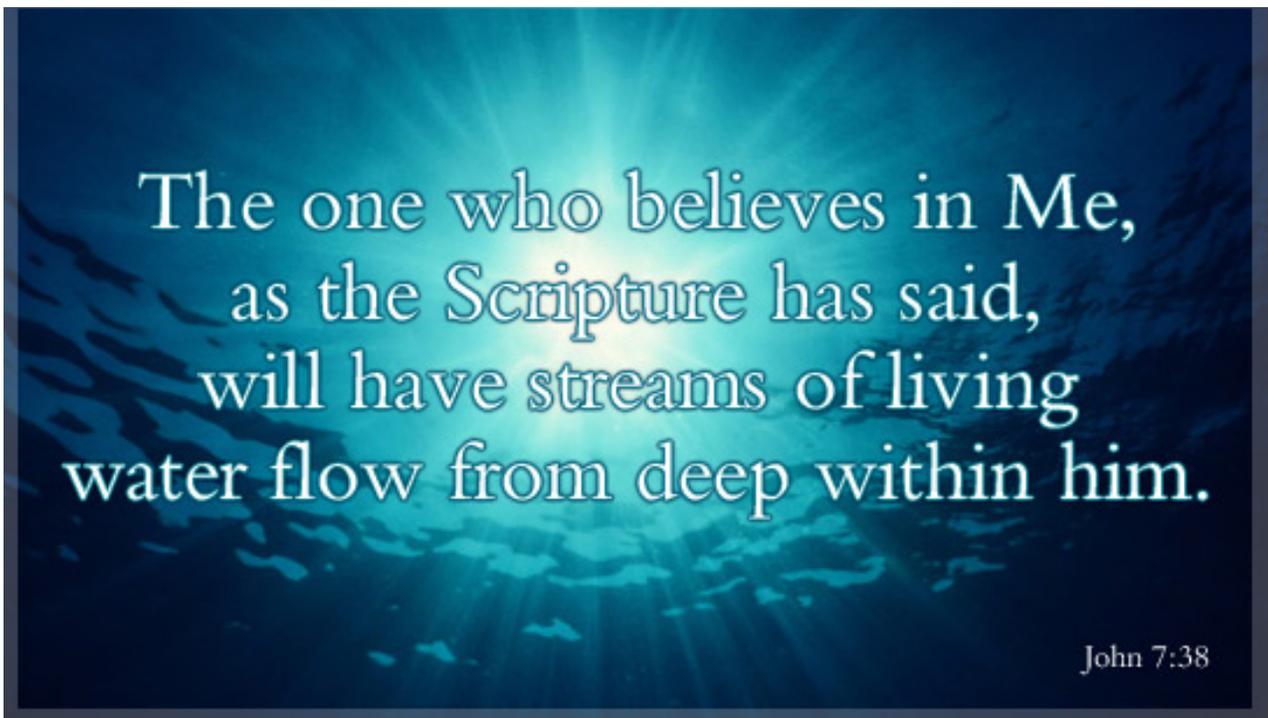
Will you take the risk, both for yourself and for the next weary traveler that may pass that way?

What’s your move?

That story poses an interesting question for each of us.

Do you believe? Do you trust? Do you have faith, faith to act on that which is written?

What would your move be?



Now in much the same way, God has laid before us a written note. A note that we call the Holy Scriptures.

They are our words, words of salvation, words of life. Words of living water in this desert called life.

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They are the source of life, they point to eternal life. A living water from which we will thirst no more.

Do you believe God's word? Do you have faith in God's word?

Our lesson this morning from John's Gospel calls us to believe. It calls us to a life in Faith.

For those of us who are hungry and thirsty in this world, Jesus says, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall never hunger, whoever believes in me shall never thirst." John 6:24-35

Recognize that if you want to be satisfied in this life – to have a life that overflows with blessings, then you need to act.



We are called to believe and to act on this belief through Faith. Everyone, each of us daily expresses faith in something. We don't live a single day without exercising faith. When you rise in the morning, you flip a light switch and have faith that it will work. When you enter your car, you turn the key and have faith that it will start.

Faith is what we do. It is not what we say we will do.

The difference between the Faith we exercise in our daily routine in the world and spiritual faith is the object of that faith.

Everyone places their faith in something or someone. And the truth is, your faith is only as good as the object, the person, the ideal in which you place your faith.

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The Holy Spirit is the object of our spiritual faith. If we proceed under our own strength, under our own efforts, in the end we will fail.

But Beloved, there is a transforming power available to us and to all who call themselves followers of Christ.

And it is faith. Action faith. That is the key to unlocking this power.

And to receive this transforming power, we must open ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works through acting faith.

If we are to succeed, we must learn to walk in faith. And For a Christian, faith is not spelled "F-A-I-T-H," it is spelled "R-I-S-K." For if something is not a risk, then it really does not require faith.

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It means a constant and lifelong surrender.

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I have a colleague whom I spent time with this past week. He’s one of those people who can talk to anybody. He has the kind of disarming presence and personality that draws people to him. I asked him how he does that. Do you know what his answer was?

Risk.

He said that every time he talks to someone, he risks rejection.

When we act out our faith through caring for others through what we say or do, we are priming the pump. We are risking what we pour out, but when we risk our faith in the name of Christ, we receive far more than we give. When we supply our own needs with our faith, we are simply drinking the primer water.

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Beloved, you are a traveler upon this island in the universe we call earth. You come across a book, a book with 66 other books within it. As you read it, you see the truths that lie within. God gives you the assurance, the strength, the conviction to live life to the fullest. But it also asks you to surrender yourself to Jesus. The author and the finisher of your faith.

We are called to act on our faith, to step across the room, to extend ourselves to another, to practice the selfless giving of ourselves.

There is a choice. What's your move?