

- I. Have you ever seen anyone fire walk?
 - A. You see the coals being heated. You see the temperature reading, typically, of over 1000 degrees Fahrenheit
 - B. You watch another person walk over them and he or she is fine
 - C. If you know anything about fire walking you know that there's actually no danger because your skin does not touch the coals for long enough to burn
 1. Just like passing your finger through a candle flame
 2. It's mind over matter – your bodily fear of burning versus what your mind knows
 - D. But would you do a fire walk? I suspect many of us wouldn't
- II. Isn't that what we experience when we struggle to do what's right?
 - A. We *know* at one level that it's right, but another part of us does not believe that it will make us happy
 - B. The question is what can we do to trust that deeper knowing, to trust the Lord, rather than the fear or desire that pulls us in the wrong direction
- III. In *True Christian Religion 727*, we read, "love is not love without trust"
 - A. If you're trying to be good you want to *feel* the desire to do good.
 - B. And we know that spiritual living means loving the Lord, but we can't love Him until we trust Him?
 1. How do you learn to trust the Lord?
- IV. Our reading today said, "Jehovah is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Jehovah is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked came against me to eat up my flesh, my enemies and foes, they stumbled and fell. Though an army may encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this I will be confident.... I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of Jehovah in the land of the living. Wait on Jehovah; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on Jehovah!"
- V. These are beautiful images of the Lord protecting us
 - A. You can go to sleep because you feel safe: "I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for You alone, O Jehovah, make me dwell in safety." (Psalm 4:8)
 - B. Sort of like the fire at night that keeps wild animals at bay
 - C. Another Psalm reads, "I love Jehovah because He has heard my voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live." (Psalm 116:1-2)
 1. You could rephrase that to say, I love the Lord because I trust in His help
- VI. As you sit in church, the idea of trusting the Lord may seem fairly simple
 - A. We know it is a good thing; we know intellectually that the Lord knows a lot more than we do; in areas of our lives we may trust the Lord a great deal; and we have seen others who seem to be happy because of that trust
- VII. But sometimes it is not so obvious. Sometimes there is doubt
 - A. "In You, O Lord, I put my trust; let me never be ashamed" says the Psalmist

1. In other words, I'm taking a risk for You; don't make me look stupid for that act of trust
 - B. What are the times when you say the words, "I trust you" to someone else?
 1. When someone has done something of a doubtful nature
 2. When someone tells you something that may not be true
 3. When someone may fail & you want to instill confidence
 4. In other words, you talk about trust when there is some doubt, when failure is an option
 5. And an election is a similar act of trust, often given that there's reason to doubt both candidates in various ways
- VIII. In the same way we think about trusting the Lord when something else stands in the way
- A. We are facing a problem where we have failed repeatedly in the past and wonder if even the Lord can help
 - B. We read or hear a teaching from the Word and it seems to conflict with what we *feel* would make us happy, or with what our friends are doing that seem to make them happy
 - C. We are living a good life, but we don't seem to be happy. We feel the pull of something we know to be selfish and part of us wants to give in because we doubt the Lord's way
 - D. Essentially, whenever we are tempted to disobey the Lord we experience a lack of trust.
 - E. The first commandment in Scripture is to love the Lord above all else, but trust must come with that love
 - F. Have you ever done a trust fall? It is when you fall backward off a chair into the arms of waiting friends
 1. You know with your mind that you will be safe, but you have to let go of your body as well and allow yourself to fall over backwards
 2. You cannot say you trust because you *know* you will be safe. Trust is not an intellectual quality.
 3. Nor do you *feel* you will be safe. Trust is not a feeling.
 4. Rather it is a *willingness* to act, just as trust in those friends involves actually falling back in the *expectation* of being caught
 - a. It is an expression of love, but it is more than a simple feeling. It is something deeper and more powerful
 5. It is the same with any form of trust, from sharing confidences with a friend to lending money to someone to committing to marriage or to forgive
- IX. But trust is not blind. People talk about the blind leap of faith you need to take in letting the Lord into your life. This has been depicted in movies as literally stepping out into an abyss, only to find out that there is a path we couldn't see.
- A. That's an absurd action. Trust is not blind. We must be able to see
- X. Consider Peter stepping out onto the water. He must have felt some fear in doing so because we all know water cannot hold us. Yet He knew intellectually that the

Lord could hold Him up, and so He took the risk.

- A. When did his trust fail? When the additional doubt that came with noticing how rough it was. He heard the waves and questioned the Lord's power
 - B. Waves and water stand for truths, and for falsity. Sometimes we, like Peter, can step out into the truth confident that it will carry us toward the Lord
 - C. At other times we look around and doubt, sinking into the mire of doubts and fears
 - 1. Is the Lord really in charge? Will He save me? Will He save us?
 - 2. Yet Peter saved himself by calling out to the Lord and that is the essence of trust: the movement toward the One who always responds
- XI. We are told that trust is the result of a life of charity. In other words, the more you live a good life, the easier it is to trust the Lord: Trust comes from action
- A. "Few know that faith is trust and confidence, and among these few, still fewer know that trust or confidence is from charity, and *is not possible* with anyone who has not lived the life of charity." AC 3868e
 - 1. After you do things the Lord's way you come to see that it makes you happy and you come to trust that even though the task you now face seems to make you unhappy that it will in fact make you happy.
 - 2. The intellectual version of trust is hope, which for most of us is a much easier thing. (See AC 6578)
 - 3. To put it another way, hope is passive. We hope when we cannot control the outcome of a situation, or when there's little we can do. We trust when we play a more active role, when we choose to allow something to happen. In our lives, what we do is active, and what we think is, relatively speaking, passive and dead.
- XII. Another way of putting it: Trust in the Lord is being willing to put yourself in a position that you cannot get out of by yourself
- A. "The person who is given a heavenly self enjoys ... a state of serenity and peace, for he trusts in the Lord and believes that no evil at all can come to touch him, knowing too that no strong evil desires can molest him." AC 5660:3
 - B. "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for You are with me."
 - C. Or on a more simple level, just as the children of Israel in the wilderness had to gather only enough food for that day, trusting in the Lord to provide them food again the next day, we need to trust that the Lord will give us enough strength to carry on
 - 1. Thus in the prayer we say, Give us this day our daily bread. Just enough for today. We'll worry about tomorrow when it comes. We'll trust that the Lord will take care of us then as He is now
- XIII. We would all like to feel safe, to feel the Lord's presence and so to know that things are going to be okay.
- A. The challenge of trusting in the Lord is that we have to choose to live that way even when we don't have the feelings.
 - 1. Trust is really a verb, something we do.

2. Many passages says that the *feelings* or *experience* of peace and confidence come some time after the act of trust, but it will start to change you. (e.g., AC 4353)

XIV. More than anything, the Lord wants to love us and to be loved in return. Since love requires trust, we need to act in ways that turn us to Him

- A. Trust underlies the feelings of love we can have for the Lord and from Him
- B. And trust is built when we do what the Lord says.
 1. I invite you this week to pay attention to the times when you end up distrusting the Lord, which includes any time you do something against His will, or when you doubt His presence in a situation
 2. And I invite you to notice the many times when you trust Him without even having to think about it
 3. You'll probably notice that the areas of trust come in the parts of your life where you have chosen to act, to set patterns of living according to His Word.
 4. Enjoy continuing to walk that path. And perhaps you might consider picking one new way to show your trust that His Word is right. Do it, and He will show you wonders.

Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.

For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb.

Trust in Jehovah, and *do* good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.

Delight yourself also in Jehovah, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.

Commit your way to Jehovah, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.

He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.

Rest in Jehovah, and wait patiently for Him;

Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way,

Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.

Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret; it only causes harm.

For evildoers shall be cut off;

But those who wait on Jehovah, They shall inherit the earth.

For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more;

Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, But it shall be no more.

But the meek shall inherit the earth,

And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. (Psalm 37:1-11)

Ps 27:1 Jehovah is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear?
Jehovah is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?
When the wicked came against me To eat up my flesh,
My enemies and foes, They stumbled and fell.
Though an army may encamp against me, My heart shall not fear;
Though war should rise against me, In this I will be confident.
One thing I have desired of Jehovah, That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of Jehovah All the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of Jehovah, And to inquire in His temple.
For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion;
In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me;
He shall set me high upon a rock.
And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me;
Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle;
I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to Jehovah.
Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice!
Have mercy also upon me, and answer me.
When You said, "Seek My face," My heart said to You, "Your face, Lord, I will seek."
Do not hide Your face from me; Do not turn Your servant away in anger;
You have been my help; Do not leave me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation.
When my father and my mother forsake me, Then Jehovah will take care of me.
Teach me Your way, O Lord, And lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies.
Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries;
For false witnesses have risen against me, And such as breathe out violence.
I would have lost heart, unless I had believed
That I would see the goodness of Jehovah In the land of the living.
Wait on Jehovah; Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on Jehovah!

Matt 14:23-32 And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

AC 8450:3 Good originating in the Lord exists with those who love the Lord above all things and their neighbor as themselves; but good originating in a person exists with those who love themselves above all things and despise their neighbor in comparison with themselves. The latter are also those who are concerned for the morrow because they trust in themselves, whereas the former are those who are unconcerned for the morrow because they trust in the Lord, a matter dealt with above. Those who trust in the Lord are constantly receiving good from Him; for whatever happens to them, whether it seems to be advantageous or not advantageous, is nevertheless good, for it serves as a means contributing to their eternal happiness. But those who trust in themselves are constantly bringing evil on themselves, for whatever happens to them, even if it seems to be advantageous and fortunate, is nevertheless bad, and consequently acts as a means contributing to their eternal unhappiness.

AC 8553 Peace holds within itself trust in the Lord, the trust that He governs all things and provides all things, and that He leads towards an end that is good. When a person believes these things about Him he is at peace, since he fears nothing and no anxiety about things to come disturbs him. How far a person attains this state depends on how far he attains love to the Lord.

[2] Everything bad, especially trust in self, takes away the state of peace. People think that someone bad is at peace when he is calm and cheerful because everything is going right for him. But this is not peace, it is the calm and delight belonging to evil desires that merely simulates the state of peace. This delight, being the opposite of the delight belonging to peace, turns to undelight in the next life, for that is what lies hidden within it. In the next life outward things are rolled away one layer after another through to inmost things at the center. Peace is at the center of all delight, even of the undelight of a person governed by good. So far therefore as he casts off what is external the state of peace is revealed and he is filled with bliss, blessedness, and happiness, the source of which is the Lord Himself.