

**Reeks:** *Things that Last Forever*

**Titel:** *Finding a Real World Faith*

**Prediker:** Trevor Hudson

**Datum:** 20 Februarie 2011

  
mosaïek

daniellestraat, fairland 2030  
posbus 1658, fairland 2030  
t: 011 268 4700  
f: 011 268 4800  
info@mosaïek.com  
www.mosaïek.com

Good morning, friends. It's really good to be with you. We start a series here at Mosaïek for three weeks, Things that Last Forever, and you will know that when Paul writes his letter to the Corinthians, he says there are three things that will be eternal, and they are faith, hope and love. And so, we invite you to a journey with us these next three weeks as we explore these three things that last forever. Today our theme is Finding a Living Faith. Next week I'll continue the series as we look at the theme of hope, and then Johan will bring it together on the third Sunday, as we look at the theme of love. Faith, hope and love. And I have very short reading; I'm going to use a lot of scriptures. You may like just to pull out the leaflet out of your bulletin, you may want to make a note of some of the scriptures that I'll be referring you to and giving to you. There's only one that I've put down there, but there will be a number that I will use. Some of them will come up on the screen, some of them I will just give to you.

But I thought that we could read this one verse together. It comes from Romans chapter 10; it's one of my favourite verses and it's verse 17. Let's read it together, friends. Consequently faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the Word about Christ. I read that alone; I would love to read it with you. Let's read it together, and I invite you to read it aloud as well. Consequently faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the Word about Christ.

I don't know if you heard the delightful story of those three guys from Mosaïek, who went overseas to New York on a holiday and on the last night of their holiday, they decided to paint the town red, like only Mosaïek people can do. So they went out on the town, they had far too much to drink, which was not good. When they got back to their hotel, there had been an electricity cut and the whole hotel had been plunged into darkness. To make matters worse, their rooms were on the 60<sup>th</sup> floor and the elevators were not working, so the three of them got together and they just worked out a strategy to help them climb the stairs for the next few hours. The one was going to tell some funny stories for the first 20 floors, the next one was going to tell ghost stories and then the last guy, for the last 20 flights, would tell sad stories. So they started climbing and they listened to some funny stories and they listened to some ghost stories and then, for the last 20 floors, when the guy who was supposed to tell them some sad stories, the guy is quiet, not a sound. But they climb up, they climb up and eventually – they'd been climbing for about four and a half hours, the sun is coming up – and eventually they arrive. Eventually, they arrive on the 60<sup>th</sup> floor, but the two guys are really intrigued that the guy who was supposed to tell them sad stories, hasn't said a word, so they say, hey man, why were you so quiet? He said, man, I don't know how to say this, but I forgot to pick up the key for our rooms at the Reception desk. I like that story, I like that story, and over the years it's become a little bit of a parable for me. Would you not agree, friends, that it's possible for us – does this make sense? It's possible for us to get to the 60<sup>th</sup> floor and suddenly to realise that we haven't got the key. So all I want to ask you this morning – all I'm going to ask you – is whether you've got the key, that's all. And some of you may say to me, Trevor, but what do you mean by key? What is the key? And I want to say very simply that the key is a living faith, a living faith, a living faith. Have you got the key?

You know, throughout the New Testament, the disciples... they were always looking for this key. There is a little moment, I think it's in Luke - and make a note of this, read it when you go home – Luke chapter 17, there is a story where Jesus tells them something about forgiveness and the disciples are rocked back on their heels, and as they are rocked back on their heels, they say to Jesus, Jesus will you increase our faith? Will you give us the key? And I think whenever our lives get rocked back on their heels, the cry from our heart is for more faith, for a living faith. And I don't know what you've come through this week. Maybe some of you have come through chaos in relationship, crises at work, news that has rocked your lives back onto your heels, and it's when our lives are rocked back on their heels that we cry out to God, God, will you give us a living faith; a living faith. So let me ask you one more time: Have you got the key? Have you got this key? Do you live with a living faith?

I want to organise my message around three basic questions. I hope it's going to be help... I'm going to be very simple today. The young folk are with us; I want them to understand the message, and the three questions are this: What do we mean when we speak about a living faith? What do we mean? So often we use words in the church and we don't know what they mean. What do we mean when we speak of faith? And then I want to ask another question: How do we receive this faith, how do we get it? And then lastly, I want to end off with a very practical question: How do we grow this faith? How do we grow it?



So what do we mean by faith? I want to speak very carefully and I need to also be honest and say to you this morning that faith has come very slowly to me, very slowly. Faith has come gradually to me, gradually. Often, my prayer to God has been the prayer of the disciples, Lord, I believe. Will you help me in my unbelief? But the one thing I've discovered is that we don't need too much faith for God to work. We worship a big God and even when we've got small faith, God gets to work; God gets to work. So what do we mean by faith? I don't mean... let me say what I don't mean. I don't mean that general kind of faith that we use every day. We use faith every day. You came into this auditorium in the faith that we would be here. You are going to leave this auditorium in the faith that your car is still in the car park. We use faith generally. Life doesn't operate without faith, but I'm not speaking about that at the moment; I'm not speaking about that, nor am I speaking just about an intellectual belief about God. The devil also believes about God; I'm not speaking about that today. Nor am I speaking about faith as a leap into the dark. Sometimes people say, faith is just like a leap into the... I'm not speaking about a leap into... You can't base your life on a leap into the dark.

What do I mean by faith? Let me describe faith to you in a simple little sentence. Faith is an inner, personal knowledge. It's an inner, personal knowledge. Can I say that once more? Faith is an inner, personal knowledge. Sometimes we separate faith and knowledge; that is tragic, tragic. The biblical writers always kept faith and knowledge together. Look at this sentence; Paul writes to Timothy, II Timothy 1:12, he writes these words, he says, I'm not ashamed, because I know – knowledge – I know whom I have believed. Do you see, in the same sentence, knowledge and belief, knowledge and faith, go together. Faith is knowing that God is real, knowing. Faith is knowing that God is active every moment in our lives, knowing. Faith is knowing that I'm loved and accepted and forgiven by God in Jesus Christ; it is knowing that. Faith is knowing that there is nothing in all of Creation that can ever separate us from God's love in Jesus Christ. Faith is knowing that all the resources of God are available to us in Jesus Christ; it is knowing that. That is different from a leap into the dark. That is different from just taking a gamble; it is knowing that, and that's what I need to know when my life gets rocked back on its heels, that's what I need to know when I go through the divorce, when my business is under crisis and pressure, when I hear that there's someone who's desperately ill, when I stand at the side of a grave. That is what I need to know, that God is real, active, that I'm loved, accepted, forgiven by God in Christ; that there's nothing that can separate me from God's love in Jesus Christ, that all the resources of God are mine in Christ. I need to know that.

Have you got the key? Have you got the key? They key is a real, living faith and you may say to me this morning, Trevor, I haven't got the key. I would love to have the key; how do I get it? We can't manufacture this, we can't work it up. I can't say to myself, I must really try to have faith. It doesn't work like that. Let me speak carefully: Faith comes into my life as a gift when I open my life up to Christ, his message, that is what Paul says to the Romans; chapter ten, look at it again, chapter ten verse 17, he says, Consequently, faith comes... it comes, it is a gift. It comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the Word about Christ. It's when I open myself up to Christ and his message - his word - that faith is born.

Many years ago, I came across a little piece of art by Holman Hunt. It's an ancient piece of art and it's always been special in my heart. It's a picture of Christ, the risen Christ, standing at the door, knocking, and in one hand there is a light and you notice, if you look very carefully at the painting, there is no door handle on the outside; there is only a door handle on the inside. And Christ keeps knocking. The crucified Christ, the risen Christ, even as I'm speaking today, Christ is knocking at the door and it's when we open the door that Christ enters our lives and he brings to us the gift of faith. And as I interact with Christ, I come to know the reality of God. I come to know the reality of God as I open the door.

I've said this to you before and I'll say it again, as a pastor, I could write my doctorate on how doors get opened. I'm always knocking on doors, seeing people. I've learnt how people open doors. Some people don't open doors; I just knock. Some people come to the door and they open it a little bit and we talk and we talk through the cracks. Some people – and I've learnt this with experience. I always look at the curtains on the other side of the door. People look through the curtains, and when they see me and I often hear the sounds of things being cleaned up quickly. You know, whiskey bottles being pushed away, lottery forms – Lotto forms – being put under the Bible, and then they come to the door and it's very forced. And then, those wonderful moments – wonderful moments – when I knock at the door and someone says, Trevor, the house is a mess, but come in; just come in. And Christ waits for that, Lord, the house is a mess, but come in. And when he comes, he brings the gift of faith, and as I interact with the living Christ, faith is born within me. Have you got the key? Have you got the key?

The last question: How does this faith grow? When faith is born in our life, it comes like a mustard seed. God never gives us ripe fruit; God gives us seeds that need to grow. Faith grows, my knowledge of God grows. Can I just give you a number of hints - I've got three or four minutes left – just a number of hints as to how faith can grow? Spend moments every day in a one-on-one with Christ. Speak aloud to him, share your heart with him,

meditate upon his words in Scripture. Faith will grow. Open your heart to other believers in Christ. Don't go on this journey on your own. When Christ enters my life, he always brings his brothers and sisters with him, and I can't say, Jesus, you come in your life, but stick your family, especially Mrs So-and-So, who should go join the Methodists in Benoni. You can't do that. You can't do that. Christ gives us a family and when I enter the community... you see, sometimes my faith takes a knock and I need a community to hold me and pray for me and support me and encourage me.

Faith grows as I talk about it, as I talk. When last did you talk about your relationship with someone else? It grows every time I speak about it, every time. I remember when I first opened my life up to Christ and the person prayed with me and he gave me this instruction, he said, Trevor, when you go home, will you tell your parents what you've done. I had never, ever spoken to my parents about faith. They had never spoken to me. My mom was peeling potatoes in the kitchen. I didn't know how I was going to get the Jesus-word out, but I just remember saying to her, Mom, I've started a relationship with Christ today, and as I said it, something... something leapt alive in me. Faith grows when we take risks for God, when we take risks for Christ, when we get out of our comfort zone, when we do something that we know that we can't do in our own strength. And every time I've put myself into a situation, when I get out of the boat and risk myself for God, faith grows, it grows. Faith grows when I listen to what God is saying and when I listen to those inner promptings, faith grows.

Last Sunday something happened that... last Sunday, we were having communion and there must have been about, I don't know, eight, nine hundred people having communion, and this was in Benoni, and there was a little prompting in my heart... just, there was one person out of 900, a prompting to just place my hand the shoulder, that's all, as she took communion. And I was a little bit nervous; I don't like invading people's space and I walked... and I just went and I just put my hand on the shoulder and I just said something about God being with her and loving her deeply, and this week I get a phone call from her psychologist. I can't believe it, she said, do you know that... I said I don't know the person at all. She said, you will not know what has happened in that person's life.

Let me end. Have you got the key? It's terrible to get to the 60<sup>th</sup> floor and to suddenly realise, God, I haven't got the key; I haven't got the key. The key is a living, real faith for the living, real world and I invite you today, especially as we take communion, that you will open yourself up to the One who knocks at the door and that you will let him into your life in a new and deep way. We've got a number of stations all around the community and ministry leaders from Mosaïek would love to serve you today; love to serve you, and we invite you to take the bread and the wine. We remember that on the night in which he was betrayed, Jesus took bread – do you remember – and he said, this is my body, broken for you. And on that same night, he took a cup of wine and he gave thanks and he said, this is my blood, shed for you. So we invite you, friends, go to each station, go to one station to receive the tokens of communion, to return to your seat and then to just receive them in your own time, prayerfully, and then I will pray to close the service.

Dear Lord, thank you for moments like this. Thank you for feeding us with your love in the sacraments of communion, and thank you Lord, that as we allow you to become part of our life, you give us the gift of faith, a deep inner knowing that grows and grows like a seed. And so I ask Lord today that you would come to us. There are some of us who are crying out from our hearts, God will you really help me and give me a fresh faith. Some of us have been rocked back on our heels. Come to us, Christ, even if the house is a mess, come to us, Christ and give birth within us to a new faith. Come, Lord, come into every open heart and mind. Amen.

Friends, it's been a deep privilege again to be with you. Next week we continue as we look at hope and we really hope-hope that you will be here. May the joy, may the joy of the risen Christ always be with you. Take care, friends.

