*Introduction*

**GO THROUGH THE RECAP SLIDES.**

**READ: Psalm 89:19-29**

Last week we spoke about the Greek word 'pistis' which means faith. But the original meaning of this word is trust and 'trustworthiness. If I wanted to be linguistically correct - trustworthiness comes before trust.

If you were to go to a lexicon of NT Greek you would see that the first specific definition of 'pistis' is faithfulness, reliability.

If we go back to the Hebrew word for Faith - *emunah*, the same meaning is applied. Its primary meaning is 'faithfulness' and its secondary meaning is 'faith'

Now the verb from which *emunah* comes gives us the word *amen* which means 'so be it' or 'let it be confirmed'

The root meaning is *firm, reliable.*

Therefore we can safely use the words trustworthiness and trust to understand faithfulness and faith.

Both of these words - trustworthiness and trust, come together in the person and nature of God Himself.

So if we view Faith as trust, its only ultimate basis is God's trustworthiness.

If we view faith as trustworthiness, it is only through our trust that the Holy Spirit is able to impart to us God's trustworthiness.

Let me sum that all up in an easy way.

**The fruit of faith comes by trusting in the trustworthiness of God ALONE!**

We have deliberately took a long time to get to that, but it is important for you to know where faith comes from, what it is, and who it should be in, if we are to be living a victorious life in Christ Jesus.

If I had just come to you all on the fist Sunday and said "You have got to live by faith!"

You would have 'probably' said 'OK no problem!', well actually it would have been 'HOW DO WE DO THAT?'

**In order for us to trust in God, we have to know He is Trustworthy.**

Probably no attribute of God is more emphasised in the Bible than His trustworthiness.

In the OT there is one special word that is reserved for this attribute, and that is the Hebrew word *chesed*.

Our English Bibles translate this word into "goodness", "Kindness", "Lovingkindness" "Mercy" and so on. But none of these words fully expresses the meaning of the original *chesed*.

***I am not giving you a Hebrew lesson for the sake of it - IT's IMPORTANT!***

**If we are to trust in God to do what He says He will do.**

There are 2 distinctive features of God's ***chesed***, or trustworthiness:

1. It is the expression of God's free, unmerited grace. It goes beyond anything that man can ever deserve or demand as a right. (God is not fair - we deserve death for our sin)

2. It is always based on a covenant that God voluntarily enters into.

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We can combine these two features by saying that Chesed is

***God's trustworthiness in fulfilling His covenant commitments, which go beyond anything that we deserve or demand.***

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So, there is a close connection between the following three Hebrew concepts:

1. Emunah = Faith or faithfulness

2. Chesed - God's trustworthiness and

3. ***Berith* - a covenant**

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These three words form a recurrent theme in the Psalm we read, Psalm 89.

***v24 My faithful (emunah) love (love) will be with him,  and through my name his horn will be exalted.***

***v 28 I will maintain my love (Chesed) to him forever, and my covenant (Berith) with him will never fail.***

***v 33-34 but I will not take my love (Chesed) from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness (emunah).  I will not violate my covenant (berith) or alter what my lips have uttered.***

These last two verses bring out a special relationship between God's trustworthiness and the words of His mouth.

From this we see that there are 2 things that God will never do, I dare to even say cannot do:

a. Break his covenant

b. Go back on His word.

God's trustworthiness, imparted by the Holy Spirit, will reproduce the same characteristic in us.

It will make us people of unfailing integrity and honesty.

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**How does all that affect US?**

In Psalm 15:1 David asks 2 questions:

***Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent? Who may live on your holy mountain?***

David goes on to answer his own questions by listing eleven characteristics that mark a person of integrity.

They are:

***2The one whose walk is blameless,
    who does what is righteous,
    who speaks the truth from their heart;
3whose tongue utters no slander,
    who does no wrong to a neighbour,
    and casts no slur on others;
4who despises a vile person
    but honours those who fear the Lord;
who keeps an oath even when it hurts,
    and does not change their mind;
5who lends money to the poor without interest;
    who does not accept a bribe against the innocent.***

***Whoever does these things will never be shaken.***

If we have the fruit of faith (faithfulness, trustworthiness), then you will be as Good as your word. Why? because as we see from v4, this is what God expects.

God expects the Christian to be trustworthy in our dealings with all men, but there is a special obligation toward our fellow Christians, because God's trustworthiness is based upon His covenant.

We are to demonstrate the same trustworthiness to others that God has so richly demonstrated to us.

**What does that mean?**

God's *chesed* (loving kindness), expressed through His covenant commitments, based on His Grace, going beyond anything we deserve or demand has to be reflected in our relationships with our fellow believers.

That means that we don't limit ourselves to the lawful requirements of justice, or a legal contract, but that we will fully enter into the covenant and be ready to lay down our lives for one another.

***1 John 3:16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.***

The Bible paints a fearful picture of the breakdown of moral and ethical standards that will mark the end of the last days (that we are in).

***2 Tim 3:1-5 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.***

The Greek word for 'unforgiving' is defined in Thayer's Lexicon as a mark *of "those who cannot be persuaded to enter into a covenant"*.

The world is heading away from all these things, in fact it already has gone away from the characteristics that a covenant demands.

When you enter into a covenant (an agreement) with someone, you want them to be trustworthy and of integrity, but the world is no longer like that.

It is getting darker and darker. God's people, must, by contrast, be more determined than ever to walk in the light of fellowship.

We must show ourselves both willing and qualified to enter into covenant and maintain that covenant in our relationships and dealings with those in the fellowship.

Therefore there is a great need for each one of us who owns the name of Jesus to cultivate the fruit of faith and be trustworthy, bringing it to full maturity.

The fruit of faith is about trusting God because He is trustworthy, and allowing, through the Holy Spirit, His characteristics to grow in your life daily.

How far you are along that road will be reflected by the way you deal with others, both in the fellowship and in the world.

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God is trustworthy beyond anything we deserve or demand, shown by His amazing Grace.

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Are you trusting in Jesus for eternity? There is no other way.

***The one whose walk is blameless ........He shall NEVER be shaken.***

Amen