*Introduction*

In our series so far on Faith, we have had quite a journey. If you have been taking in what we have been talking about, you should have grown in your faith. You should be a stronger Christian than you were when we first started.

But are you?

We started our journey by understanding and learning that faith is not living by sight, that hope is different to faith. We have seen that only faith in God alone is real faith because He is faithful and trustworthy.

We have looked at the life of Joseph and seen that even in the bad times of our lives, God IS there and working out HIS plans for us.

We have also seen that God does not change. He is still the Holy, Righteous, unchanging God that He was before the creation of the world.

Living by faith is practical, its like a muscle, to get it stronger you have to use it and increase the use of it.

A weight lifter builds up his/her muscles by adding weights on a regular basis. He/she starts small and works out, until the work out is easy, then they increase the weights and do it again, and again and so on.

For faith to increase, we too, have to use it over and over again and then increase.

This morning, we are going, God willing, to look at a practical aspect of faith, something that we can all do, and something we can all benefit from.

We are going to look at Eating by Faith.

We are going to ask ourselves 2 questions and then challenge ourselves to do something during the week to come.

Before we look at those things, let us remind ourselves of what the Word of God says.

Let us READ - Habakkuk 2

***“See, the enemy is puffed up; his desires are not upright—  but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness***

So accurately does this prophecy express the central theme of the Christian message that it is actually stated 3 times in the New Testament:

***Rom 1:17For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”***

***Gal 3:11 Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because “the righteous will live by faith.”***

***Heb 10:38And, “But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back.”***

The entire theme of the book of Romans is based on this prophecy. The Gospel is based on faith. It comes from God's own faith, it is preached in faith, it is accepted in faith and we are to live in faith.

We are to live in faith. Every part of who we are is included in this. We are to live in the here and now in faith, its not for the future, its for now.

Everything we do at any time is included in living: eating, drinking, sleeping, working, etc etc.

Yet we often presume that the mundane actions of daily life have no spiritual significance and offer no place for the application of our faith.

But actually, the Word of God teaches the opposite.

It is only when we have been faithful in the simple material areas of our lives that God will entrust us to bigger things

***Luke 16:10-11 “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?***

As a starting point to this, we are going to look at the area of food. In future weeks, DV, we will look at the area of finance.

**1. How do we eat from faith?**

There is nothing more practical than that which affects our bodies.

***Rom 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.***

Our spiritual service of worship starts by presenting our bodies to God.

In Romans 14, Paul tackles the issue of food from a faith point of view.

***Rom 14:2 One person’s faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables.***

Paul is not talking here about being a vegetarian, he wasn't saying that eating veggies was wrong or right, or that eating meat was wrong or right.

Rather, he was saying that anything we do in FAITH is right, and anything we cannot do in faith is wrong.

He concludes this chapter 14 by saying

***23 But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin***

We are to eat from faith.

Several things are involved.

1. We must acknowledge our dependence upon God for our food.

I'm sure that if you went out into the street and asked random people "where does your food come from?"

They would say - Tesco, The Co-op, Budgens etc. But the real truth is that our food comes from God, we receive it as a gift from him - If He did not supply it - we would go hungry.

**2. As a logical consequence of our food coming from God, we should thank him for it.**

I have never been one who always 'gives thanks' at the meal table, I was never brought up with it, I had never seen the importance of it. I usually kept it for Chuch events, or when I was eating with a bunch of 'holy people' - you know what I mean...

But, when I was researching and reading for this morning I came across these verses that have changed my outlook

***1 Tim 4:4-5 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.***

As we receive our food from God with thanksgiving and prayer - it is sanctified, that means it is made holy, and is designed to do us good.

That means that even if there were originally something in the food that was impure or harmful, their effect would be nullified by our faith, expressed through the simple, yet practical aspects of prayer and thanksgiving.

A man I once knew had gone on a missionary trip to an eastern European country, and was lodging with a very poor family. He noticed, hanging in the kitchen, a rather smelly dead chicken, what we would call today, gone past its best before date.

When it came to dinner time, he saw that this chicken, was now on the dinner table and that he was going to have to eat it.

Whilst the family gave thanks for the meal, he was worrying about eating it and getting something nasty. He could not, not eat it, as this would offend this poor family, but after dinner he felt quite ill. The rest of the family were perfectly ok.

Now was this a case of the family being used to a poor way of life, or eating from faith and thanksgiving.?

4. "Eating from faith" has implications that go beyond the table.

Our food is the source of our natural strength, and God is the source of our food.

Therefore our strength is itself a gift of God. We are not free to use it in selfish ways, but are under an obligation to devote it to God's service and glory.

This is why Paul states

***1 Cor 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.***

This same principle was shown at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost

***Acts 2:46-47 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,  praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.***

There was obviously something different about the way these early Christians ate their meals that gained them favour of their unconverted neighbours, and helped to win them for the Lord.

If the consequences of 'eating from faith' are so far reaching, it brings us to a second question:

**2. What happens if we do not eat from faith?**

The Bible gives a vivid picture of the man who does not eat from faith in the book of Ecclesiastes.

Solomon, throughout most of this book describes what the Bible calls elsewhere, the 'natural' man. That is a man who lives his life through unbelief, without the grace and knowledge of God, he states

***Ecc 5:17 All their days they eat in darkness,  with great frustration, affliction and anger.***

What does the writer mean - To eat in darkness?

It is the opposite of eating from faith.

Such a person does not acknowledge that food is a gift from God, neither does he thank God for it. Therefore it is not blessed and sanctified.

What is the result?

***great frustration, affliction and anger.***

A thought occurs to me that, with so many suffering from diseases caused by food, or intolerances, could it be that because we are not eating from faith, that we are eating in darkness?

*Conclusion*

Romans 1:17 states "***The righteous man shall live by faith"***

This involves every area of our lives. We are to be a living sacrifice, that brings glory to God.

We need as believers to allow our faith to permeate into everything we do, every moment of every day.

Giving thanks for our food and acknowledging that it comes from God and it is His gift to us, is a great place to start putting that faith into action.

Its a simple step, but an effective one.

Let each of us, this week, start, if we don't already, by giving thanks to God for each day, for our food, for our strength.

The more faith we exercise, the more life we will enjoy.

Amen