

Conversation with Jesus

Discovering God's redeeming purpose in our lives

Small Group Discussion

Week beginning Mar 5th

How does God's "unchangeableness" change us?

Navigating by the stars has for centuries enabled explorers to fix their position. As we journey through life, we can navigate the constantly changing landscape of our lives by looking to God. He is unchanging. His character, promises and purposes are unchanging. (These will be our focus over the next 3 sessions.)

God's "unchangeableness" enables us to securely place our trust in him. He is our Rock, our firm foundation. Everything God has revealed about himself will always hold true because he is unchanging. On Sunday we referred to Hebrews 13:8 "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

Faith is essential to our walk with God. God loves to hear us express and then act on our faith in him. In conversations recorded in the gospels, Jesus often commented on people's faith – positively and negatively. Today we're going to explore how our faith in our unchanging God grows.

Read Matthew 8:23-27

? Look back over chapter 8 and list the miracles the disciples had witnessed since hearing Jesus' 'sermon on the mount'.

Could it be that Jesus was using the impact of the furious storm to see how much the disciples had learnt from being around him? It could be that Jesus wanted to see if their faith had grown.

As they faced the storm, Jesus described their faith at that moment as "little (v26). But notice that Jesus immediately did something to build their faith. He stilled the storm! He didn't give up on them.

? What's your response to this?

? What situations in your life have felt like being in a furious storm, and what lasting truth have you learnt about Jesus' presence with you through these times?

Jesus was training his disciples to understand how to live in the Kingdom of God – highlighting the importance of faith.

- ? **Sometimes he comments on “little faith”.
Look up Matt 14:31, Luke 12:28, Matt 16:8. What do you think Jesus was pinpointing on these occasions?**
- ? **Sometimes Jesus points out “great faith” e.g. Matt 8:10, Matt 15:28. Thinking of these comments as training for the disciples, what do you think Jesus wanted them to learn about faith?**

We can see that Jesus wants his followers to understand these absolute truths:

Not so much about the size of our faith; but who our faith is in.

He is present with us

He will provide for us

We can always rely on him

He’s committed to teaching & instructing us, and growing our faith

Read Hebrews 11:1,2 & 6

- ? **What do these verses teach us about the importance of having faith?**
- ? **Look back over your experience and list some of the things (good & bad) that have helped your faith to grow.**
- ? **We will face challenges & difficulties in this life – it’s a given. What did Jesus say about this ... John 16:33?**

We can trust Jesus’ unchanging word. God is committed to strengthening our faith.

- ? **What does James 1:2-4 say that faith in God in difficult times will produce?**
- ? **How will increased faith affect our prayer life, our understanding of God’s word (see Romans 10:17) and our connectedness to Jesus?**

Pray together – about challenges we’re facing, asking that we’d respond in faith & see God at work in those situations. Give God thanks that he sticks with us. Thank him that he wants to grow & mature our faith.

* Please remind your group about the opportunity to meet 1 to 1 (perhaps with someone else in your group) to go through the questions about how things are going in our lives of faith.