

# Confidence in Faith

February 26, 2023

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ Online Ministry. This week's message is titled "Confidence in Faith." The Scripture reading is Luke 7:18 to 28. Thank you to Ed, Glynnis, Barbara, and Paul for being part of the video.

## Welcome, Announcements, Prayer

Good morning to all of you. [Good morning!] It's wonderful to be together. So I was laying in my bed this morning. I could see out the bathroom window and I could see the sun coming up. And in the middle of February, when we often have this gray, dismal, dreary, cold, damp weather. I thought, wow, Equinox is coming. The sun is coming back. I don't know. I woke up cheerful this morning. I hope you did too. And as just this morning, as I was looking at the bulletin board, I could see a letter that came from an elementary school. This in the end, the end of January. And it was thanking the giving knitters for the contributions that they made to some children in the school in terms of warm scarves, hats and mitts. And so if you can be involved in these kinds of activities of our church, you're welcome to join in. And Barbara, here is the kind of organizing that

So, we are concerned about physical things, but really what draws us together is our concern for spiritual matters, too. So there's a balance here in terms of the physical, but really we want to connect with the spiritual health and welfare of all of us. I read this week an author, John Henry Newman. He writes, Christ is already in a place of peace, which is all of us. He is. He is at the right hand of God. He is hidden in the brightness of the radiance, which issues from the everlasting throne. He is the very abyss of peace where there is no voice or tumult or distress, but a deep stillness. He has entered rest. That is our home. Here we are in a pilgrimage. And Christ calls us to the many mansions which He has prepared for us. We have to have this perspective that we're in tumult and distress. But there is deep stillness coming. Let's pray.

Our Father in heaven, we approach your throne with humility and awe. We cannot even in words, understand how massively intelligent and powerful that you are, but a being that somehow was able to create this experience for us and that you have promised that if we believe and if we pay homage to you, that your spirit will come and in boldness to be the people you want us to be. And we pray, Father, that today, as we are gathered, that this might happen, that we might be emboldened to go forth from this place, to be our hands and your feet, to help create stillness and peace for people. We pray, Father, for Lynn and for Michael and for Daniel and for Shirley. Today, we pray that they might find comfort in knowing that you are all powerful, that they might find some comfort in healing. But we pray, Father, also for the Spirit, your spirit to and dwell them that they might have in the division, the difficulties that they're experience, experience, peacefulness and stillness to know that the mansions that your your son has prepared for us, the real and that that reality may be soon or may be a long way off, but that might give them courage to move forward. We're thankful for this time. We pray your blessing on it, that we might learn to love you more and that we might learn to share that love with our neighbors and to be your hands and feet here. Pray these things in Jesus name, Amen.

## Communion

Good morning. So good to see so many faces that I love. I've been away for a little bit and it's certainly glad. I'm certainly very glad to be back. When I spoke to you at Christmas time, I talked about Mary. And one of the things that I love about Mary and what I consider to be one of her most special qualities is that she treasured things up in her heart, things that she didn't really understand fully. And if you think back to some of the circumstances around when the angel came to Mary that she was going to find herself pregnant, but she was unmarried and a virgin. You know, just so many things that were incredibly mysterious. And the Bible says that she stored these things up in her heart. Things she really didn't understand. They led her to both, I think, wonderment, but also, like wondering, think about her. I think she wondered whether God like how God not whether, but how God would do or even like could do the things that he said he would do. I'm kind of finding myself in a place like that right now. I'm wondering if God could or even would do what I ask. I want to claim the promise that Jesus makes in John 15, verse 16 Be whatever you ask in my name. The Father will give you.

I'm praying for my life, for the life of my new son in law. I'm praying for my faith that God will let me believe that his life can be saved by him. I believe. But I really also doubt. He has glioblastoma. I don't know those of you that are younger. You might be completely unfamiliar with glioblastoma, but it's a brain cancer that goes very deep in your brain. It typically grows tumors deep inside your brain beyond where it's operable and then extends tentacles into the other hemisphere of the brain and grows tumors there, too. You might be familiar with Gord Downie. He died of that. One of my very close friends had glioblastoma and died within a year. It very typically has about a year. Daniel has been living for six years with glioblastoma, so he's beaten all the odds already. He's had extensive chemotherapy, extensive they call it gamma blade, gamma blade radiation. But these tumors that are growing in him are completely inoperable, even with gamma blade, the cancer is growing and it's spreading. They're brand new newlyweds. They have their whole life. They hope to have a family like it goes on and on. I pray for him all the time. And I'm aware that God does not always answer our prayers in the way that we expect or even want him to. I know he works for all things to work them out for good, and I want Daniel to live so very badly.

Matthew two-, Matthew 623 says he cares for the birds of the year and he feeds them. Jesus asks, Are you not more valuable than they will not Daniel be cared for more than they are? So what am I to do? The heart of Matthew six is not to worry. As I prayed, taking my doubt before the Lord and confessing it to him. And I mean that. Confessing my doubt before the Lord. Just like Thomas, I believe. But I doubt he met my heart and my mind where it was to me, he says, Your conflicted ness, your belief and your doubt mingled together are worth more than a bird to me. Store things up in your heart like Mary did. Trust me. Give me time and space to do what I do best. And then this in John 15 versus 1 to 17. I am the true vine, and my father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit. Well, every branch that does bear fruit he prune so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to. You remain in me as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself. It must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine. You are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit. Apart from me, you can do nothing if you do not remain in me.

You are like a branch that is thrown away and withers. Such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you. Ask whatever you wish and it will be

done for you. This is to my father's glory that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples, as the Father has loved me. So have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love. Just as I have kept my father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be complete in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this. Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this. To lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends. If you do what I command. I no longer call you servants because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends for everything that I learned from my father. I have made known to you. You did not choose me. But I chose you and appointed you so that you may go and bear fruit. Fruit that will last. And so that whatever you ask in my name, the father will give you this as my command. Love each other.

And so as we go to the father in communion with him and with one another, we remain in the vine. We remain with that place where we just don't always know. But we treasure it up in our hearts because we trust. We trust as we remain in him, He will remain in us and he will guard our hearts and our souls. Please pray with me for the Communion. Dearest Lord God, we are so blessed to have this this amazing opportunity to really remember how we are a part of you through the bread and the fruit of the vine God that we remain in you.

That you have laid down your life for us, that you've already proven. You've proven your love for us, God, and we can rely on it. We can trust it. You are safe to hold both our our joy and our sorrows, our belief, and perhaps most especially our doubt. God, we lay before you, our doubts. We lay before you of all of ourselves. Our hearts and souls, our minds, our spirits, God. And we think you as we take this communion. God, please let us rejoice that we can come in contact with you, commune with you, be with you, be with your heart and share your heart with us. God, we love you. We thank you so much. Thank you for this opportunity to come before you in this act that joins us to you. God, we love you and thank you. In Jesus name, amen.

## Scripture Reading – Luke 7:18-28

The Bible reading this morning is taken from Luke seven verses 18 to 28. John's disciples told him about all these things calling to them. He sent them to the Lord to ask, Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else? When the men came to Jesus, They said, John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, Are you the one who is to come? Or should we expect someone else? At that very time, Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits and gave sight to many who were blind. So he replied to the messengers, Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard the blind receive sight. The lame walk and those who have leprosy are cleansed. The deaf hear, the dead are raised and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me. After John's messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John. What did you go out into the wilderness to see a reed swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see a man dressed in fine clothes? No. Those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces. But what did you go out to see a prophet? Yes, I tell you. And more than a prophet, this is the one about whom it is written. I will send my messenger ahead of you who will prepare your way before you. I tell you, among those born of women, there is no greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than He.

## Sermon

Hello. I want to start today by being very relevant and local. So in that mindset cast your mind to the late 19th century in the southwest of France, the Languedoc region near Carcassonne, Aldi, who knew Carcassonne was a place and not a board game in the late 19th century. There is a little known bishop in from a small rural town and relatively unknown, except that in the late 19th century he was he was removed from the Catholic Church. Why was he removed? Well, he had been decorating his local churches and he'd been putting up lots of decorations and refurbishments and spending lots of money. And he had gotten this money by. If you're familiar with some of the Catholic traditions with selling masses. So he had somehow gotten his hand on a directory, the time of wealthy Catholics throughout France, and he had written them all and said, Hey, I'll do a mass for you if you send me some money. And so he was overwhelmed with responses. And to his credit, he spent the money on the churches that he ministered in, but he had too many responses that he could actually do for the masses. So the local authorities came in, said, can't do this. You're not doing the number of masses for the ones that you've accepted. So he was removed from his position.

End of story. Right. You know, we don't need to know him anymore. Except go ahead. About 50 years. And there's a gentleman who was in Morocco. He tried his hand at pastor making the pastor factory that failed. He started a sugar plantation factory that failed. He didn't have much money left. French nationals were not welcome in North Africa in the fifties. If you know your history. He then made his way to the southwest of France, where he was looking for some kind of business opportunity. He found an old house that was up for sale. He purchased it. He turned it into a hotel and restaurant. But if you've I've never been to the southwest of France, anybody. But it's not a super bustling place, at least not back then. He was having difficulty finding customers. He happened to find the person who owned the house that he bought was the housekeeper of that bishop. And he started reading up on the local lore about this bishop and what had happened, and something clicked in his mind and he went, Who treasure this? This bishop apparently had lots of money and there was this mundane reason, But what if he had treasure? And what if this treasure was connected to the Anyone know the name? The Cathars. The Cathars, Cathars in that area is an old Catholic sect. It was actually the first place of the first crusade. And there's this local lore about the Cathars and what happened. And so the this myth he developed of, well, this treasure came through and he found it because he has this connection with the former housekeeper. And so he started advertising, well, I've got this treasure that I found. And then he added on, because it's the fifties just for flourish, it seems. I also found these manuscripts at the time. There was lots of news going around about the Dead Sea Scrolls being found. So he just added on a thing and it was successful. His business picked up. He actually, when he was able to sell the place, eventually make a profit and move on. But in the process of developing all of this, he wanted to publicize further. So he he he found a local author said, hey, come on, write a book about about this. I've got some evidence here. And the process of doing all that up. He he he discovered that he thought, well, what if somebody actually looks into this? They won't find anything?

Well, it turns out in National Archives, at least back then, it's a lot easier to add to things than to remove things. The Bibliotheque Nationale, he and his friends actually went in, created documents and lists, did the whole tea stained weathering thing and added and went in and actually added documents to the official archive in Paris. Backing up all that he had talked about. And so this author went look at, oh, this is true, I wrote it up. Look, find some random person in the southwest of France, got a hotel, made some money off of it, swindled some people. Some treasure hunters came by fine, except that in

the sixties, another gentleman went on holiday in the southwest of France, and he was at a random hotel. And he picked up a book that happened to be in the hotel. And what was the book? But by that author that was asked from the hotel guy to write, he read it. He went, Whoa, there's all this stuff about this treasure and this bloodline of ancient kings. And of course, it had been embellished over time. And he says, this is amazing. He happens to be someone who works on BBC television programming in London in the seventies. He is kind of milling about this over and over. He develops these three British programs on the BBC about this mysterious history of the Cathars and the history going on in the southwest of France. This is also a gentleman who, by the way, also wrote for Doctor Who. He wrote three scripts. All of them included prominent storylines involving murderous monks. Interesting. He he does this all up. He writes a book with a couple of his friends. He adds in a new element to the story. So no longer. So originally, this treasure that came through the Cathars, it eventually became the Holy Grail. So the Holy Grail was this treasure, you know, where I'm going with this.

And then he eventually he kind of switches it around a little bit. And the Holy Grail is no longer the treasure. It's the bloodline of Christ. You see, this new story is that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married, had children, and this was, of course, an affront to the early church. So it was hidden. And sometime in the fifth century they were whisked away. Well, not them, but their descendants were whisked away to the south of France and the Cathars, where the Cathars protected them, kept their secret and of course all under oppression, blah, blah, blah. Eventually this had to be eliminated. So the first crusades happened and tried to crush them. But of course the truth was protected and kept through a series of secret organizations ending up with the Priory of Zion. This is the first recorded bid of the Priory of Zion. So this is now the story. Well, sometime later and we know this because this author has actually has said it, admitted it openly. Dan Brown reads the book that this BBC scriptwriter writes, and he reads it and goes, Whoa. And he goes and he looks up in the Paris archives and goes, Whoa, it's all true. And so he writes in his book, In the 2003 Da Vinci Code, he writes, I think, honestly, that this is all true. This is based on fact that Jesus actually had children. But the bloodline continued, and everything we understood about Christianity, at least in its broad forms, is not right. All because a bishop wanted to decorate his church to be a restaurant or wanted to gin up some customers and see a bunch of authors wanted to make some money.

I talk this morning about doubts. Were you around when The Da Vinci Code came out? I was around. I was going round and I even knew. I knew a preacher who would intentionally carry The Da Vinci Code around with him all the time because it was such a hot topic that it would spark conversation with lots of people. Like, people would open up about Jesus and religion because it was such in the year it was sold 88 million copies, which was only beat recently by the Twilight book. One of them, I don't know that one I don't know anything about, but it was a smash success and it caused a lot of doubt in the religious world, cause a lot of people to step back and go, Oh, am I really certain was. Maybe there are murderous monks wandering around. I'll be albino, murderous monks, if I recall. You know, maybe that's saying it. So I talked about doubts this morning because life, that's a humorous doubt. Perhaps, But life is full of doubt. Lots of minor things are doubtful. Will the Leafs win the Stanley Cup? Doubtful! In my life: Will the USB plug go in the right way on the first try? Doubtful. In fact, I don't know about you. For me, it always takes three times. Now think about that. How many sides are there to the USB plug? There's only two. So you put it in once. If it doesn't work that way, it's got to work. No, but I don't know why. But every time. But there's also more serious things. Things in life. Our job choice.

Health. Sometimes. Even family. Any view parents and might experience doubts with your child later? I would say that ever happens. But it could, theoretically. And although I know the traditional correct, according to some version of Christianity, says that there's no room for doubt in faith. I've had my own and I've known many others who have had doubts in faith, too. Not wanting to destroy faith, but rather desperate to affirm it. Usually how do we deal with doubt?

Let's look at a moment in John the Baptist life. Luke seven. Starting at 18. John's disciples told him about all these things, calling two of them. He said them to the Lord to ask, Are you the one who is to come, or should I expect someone else? When the men came to Jesus, they said, John the Baptist sent us to ask. Are you the one who is to come? Or should I expect someone else? At that very time, Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits and gave sight to those who were blind. So he replied to the messengers, Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard. The blind receive sight, the lame walk. Those who have leprosy are cleansed. The deaf hear, the dead are raised. The good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me. John the Baptist was not shy. He preached repentance from sin. He baptized. He lived to what he preached. He called people out. He called out leaders for bad behavior. And that's precisely why he was in prison. Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee. John was outspoken and didn't mince words when he condemned Herod's divorce from his first wife and married his brother, Philip's wife. The Gospel of Luke records the doubts of John the Baptist concerning Jesus. John had proclaimed Jesus as the coming Messiah and had witnessed the miracle, miraculous events of Jesus baptism. But he began to wonder if Jesus was truly the Messiah, or was there another to come. Most likely, we don't know exactly why, but most likely, John, like the disciples of Jesus, were expecting a kingly figure. Someone who would purify Israel, deliver the nation from its Roman rule. And Jesus fit this bill so often, even in the best situations, things seldom turn out the way that we would expect.

John criticized the existing religious establishment. But then John had gotten personal. John spoke out against Herod himself. Herod had against all traditions and law of the time married the wife of his brother and John spoke out about it. Criticizing a ruler can lead to discontent. Discontent can lead to revolt. Revolt can lead to a ruler being removed and replaced by a new leader. It makes sense why Herod would want John out of the picture. He doesn't want for personal criticism, but he also doesn't want the public to revolt. Perhaps, though, even more importantly, he doesn't want the Romans to have to come up and clean up whatever mess may result from this. The key to success to being a regional governor, governor at the time was for Rome to not know you were there. If they have to send the army, it's not good news. Things seldom turn out the way we dream. That may have been John's thoughts as he sat in prison, even though Jesus was doing great miracles. He was not acting as the powerful political savior that John possibly expected. Nor was Jesus executing God's judgment on sinners. As John may have promised. So John was perplexed, filled with doubt as he sat in his prison cell many of the day, including Jesus own disciples. We have from other texts, believed that the Messiah, the Christ was not only a religious leader, but a political and military leader as well. That he would come to teach, yes, but also liberate Israel from the Romans, Restore the historic Israel of old thinking back to people like King David and Solomon.

Most likely, John is thinking about the same lines. We know from Mark's account of the feeding of the 5000. There's a little couple of details in there that are important clues. When they're sitting down, everybody to eat. They organize all the men, it says, in groups of fifties and hundreds. Why organize people in groups of 50 and hundreds? If you're sitting down to listen to a sermon and eat some food.

Military units, we know from Mark--it says specifically--in the same account that the grass was green. Unlike winter in southern Ontario, which apparently we have green grass in that part of the world, the only time of year where you have green grass is springtime. And if you're going to march on Jerusalem, you start in spring because you actually have enough time to complete your campaign. And we know again, from the end of that particular account that the disciples themselves wanted to crown Jesus King. So even the disciples themselves are thinking this is a movement that is beyond religious. This is a movement that is perhaps political, perhaps military. And John may have been thinking about the same things. Jesus has not delivered the same sort of change that he was expecting.

But A, Jesus had not delivered the big change he was going to yet on the cross. But perhaps more importantly, Jesus was going to deliver a type of change that just wasn't expected by the people of the time. Jesus told John disciples, Go back and tell John what you've seen, what you've heard the blind receive light, the lame sight, which I guess is light, the lame walk. Those who are have leprosy are cured. The deaf hear, the dead are raised. And the good news is being preached. Jesus gives us the answer. And it's interesting this is in most accounts, the four fold answer for how you how you know someone is the Messiah. Blind would receive sight, lepers would be healed, dead would be raised, and the deaf would hear. So he's giving John his answer. John has to reevaluate his understanding. Why? Why isn't Jesus throwing out the Romans? Why? If Jesus is the promised Messiah, then why aren't things happening the way that I think they should? If. If Jesus is the type of Messiah that He's expecting, it would make sense. I mean, John is clearly on his side. Why hasn't he ridden up to Galilee and released John from prison? John, along with his disciples, are expecting a political power in their answer from Jesus. But the answer is not political. Our answer to our human crisis or human doubts is not political power in some state or capital. It's found, rather. And this is the big change that Jesus did and change in our heart, our human nature. It is the defeat of Satan's power to destroy us and our relationship with God and each other when dying on the cross. Jesus did not call for 10,000 angels to come rescue him, which would have been a thing in the same line as military power political leader. That's why the Pharisees shouted, If you're the true messiah, come down from the cross and we will believe that you're the one.

No, His purpose was to transfer His Holiness to all who placed their faith in him, and by the resurrection from the grave. And death opened the doors of heaven for us and guarantees us that we now live free from accusation. The big change that Jesus did was bigger than any particular region, nation, or even era. Jesus transformed our individual hearts without a state or political body so that no rebellion is required until after the resurrection. Many of the day could not imagine what Jesus was doing. They could not imagine the Kingdom of God being separate from the nation state of Israel. So John doubted his expectations, did not line up with what he was seeing and what he was hearing. We could talk about missed expectations about how both in religion and life, we have many expectations that are not met. But instead, I want to focus on the simple fact that John doubted John, the forerunner of Jesus, the Herald, who proclaimed that Jesus was coming. The person whom Jesus calls the greatest prophet doubted. And it's not. It's not kind of doubted. It's not like, well, maybe, sure, whatever. But you know I a little bit doubted its fully. Are you the messiah type of doubting and through messengers but to Jesus directly from the Bible perhaps surprisingly is not shy about the fact that people doubt Jesus own 12 disciples doubted fairly frequently Moses the great leader of Egypt who gives Israelites law doubts. And here, John, doubts too. We should not be surprised when we doubt whether it's missed expectations or something else. We can find ourselves in a position where

we have doubts. Having doubts is not inherently wrong. In fact, purely logically, in order to have faith, there first must be doubt, because faith is an act of choice to set doubt aside.

If you don't have any doubt, you don't need faith. Notice what Jesus says after John's messengers. Leave verse 24. After John's Messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John. What did you go out into the wilderness to see a reed swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see a man dressed in fine clothes? No. Those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces. But what did you go to see a prophet? Yes, I tell you more than a prophet. This is the one of whom it is written. I will send my messenger on ahead of you who will prepare a way for you. I tell you, among those born of women, there is no one greater than John, yet the one who is least in the Kingdom of God, is greater than He. Jesus not only does not criticize John for having doubts, He publicly praises John. After John asks his doubting questions. Too often I've seen people express doubts in faith. They're met with answers. Good as John--as Jesus did, but answers and criticism. Why are you doubting? Stop doubting Jesus here meets doubts with answers and encouragement. Jesus here, though, goes one step further, encourages us even more. Verse 28 says, As important as John is and remember, he says that John is the most important person ever to be born. It's a high standard. He says. As important as John is, we are in higher standing in the kingdom of God. Contrast here is between the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of God. Perhaps alluding to John's own doubts about who Jesus is and what He's here to do. But that's a guess. John is the greatest human ever born according to Jesus, however, the lowest of the citizens of the Kingdom of God is greater than the greatest human ever born.

Now, I know this can be confusing, so I've come up with an analogy, and it's brilliant. It's kind of like comparing the best horse against the worst car in a cross country race, assuming both are working to the minimum standards of working. The horse has four legs, is fed, the car runs. Okay, said it. So your your worst car in 2022, according to Google? Oh no. Sorry. Sorry. Your best horse in the world, according to Google, is by the way, horse names are weird. Sir Barton Gallant, Fox, Seattle Slew citation or the Secretariat. You've heard of some of these horses. They're apparently very good. They don't have motors, so I don't know them--anything--anything with them versus the worst cars in 2022, according to Google, which by the way, Google now thinks I am trying to buy a new vehicle, although my searches would be very confusing to Google. Toyota MURI never heard of it. Mercedes-Benz GLC, Ford Explorer, Chrysler 300 or a mitsubishi Mirage G4. But if you have any of these cars, I'm sure yours is fine. It's great. Probably. I believe Jesus and Luke 728 is breaking the fourth wall. He's turning to camera and he's giving us encouragement when we face our doubts. We're better. We're we're in a better position than even John was. And he's the best now, probably in our lives, in our lives, in our faith. We're probably not even a 2002 Mitsubishi Mirage G4 is the low one, which is apparently very bad. Perhaps we're again another Google search that will come back to haunt me. A mediocre 2022 Ford EcoSport. It's apparently the most mediocre car of 2022. Perhaps you're not in a position to be the best car of 2022. RAV4 apparently is the best car, so that's going to but but instead you're maybe the mediocre Ford EcoSport or even the Mirage, but you're still better than the best horse ever in a cross country race.

So perhaps this analogy has limits, but you may see where the illustration, if you're facing doubts in your life, especially doubts and faith. I want to encourage you today if your doubt has the answers, that's great. And I hope you seek them out and find them. I believe the ultimate answer in all of our doubt is Jesus. I think we've heard actually from multiple people today on that topic. But faith always



requires a leap of faith. Faith always requires a leap. It's in the basic definition. Belief is in things unseen. At some point in our doubt experience, we all need encouragement to that leap. So today, may we find answers. We seek and be encouraged when we experience our doubts.

## Closing

Thank you, Paul, for your message today and giving Don Smith a break to have a vacation, and we're happy that you're able to step in. And such an interesting, powerful way. I can tell you that being in a Lexus owner, they have their problems, too. Just want to know that. So we've been together, we've had had this experience today together. So we go out from here and we we carry some of the message, some of the encouragement that we've received with us and that and maybe in some small way or some large way, can inform us in terms of how we can be God's hands and feet. Let's pray our Father in heaven. We're thankful for these at this time that we've had to together.

We pray. Father, as we go out, there will be your hands and feet that we will embody love for you and love for each other and for our neighbors. That your spirit will inform us in terms of the words that we choose and the way that we use them, that your spirit will inform us as to what we do and how we act, that we might honor you and all we do and are. And we realize, Father, that in this experience here that we have concerns and doubts. We pray, Father, for you, for your peace that passes all understanding and that you might be with us and guide us through these times where we question and when we doubt, we pray for others. We emerge from those situations. We might understand your peace and how it has come to us and how it's emboldened us, and that that might give us faith that you are real and that you do love us and that you care for us. And we pray, Father, that we might be embodied to think and to feel that you're you are true, your son is true, that your spirit is powerful and that it is in all things true. You pray this in Jesus name, Amen.

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