

Keep the Faith

"When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning. All this I have told you so that you do not go astray." John 15:26-16:1

The past couple summers I have had the privilege of helping coach at a girl's grade school basketball camp through the local Lutheran high school. While I greatly enjoy teaching the girls basketball skills, I also love being a part of this wonderful ministry opportunity. During one of the opening devotions this past summer, a coach gave a very memorable devotion on a phrase frequently used by his mom. The coach talked about how his mom would always say "keep the faith" instead of saying "good bye" to family members whenever they would leave. Through this simple but powerful phrase, she conveyed to her loved ones how much she cared about their relationship with their Savior.

Preceding the events of his passion as they unfolded in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus had a similar message for his disciples. Instead of giving an emotional farewell before his trek to Calvary, Jesus expressed to his disciples his concern about their relationship with him. He knew, being true God, how much his disciples would suffer because of him, and he knew the temptations that awaited them. Out of love, he warned his disciples of the persecution they would endure for following him. He told the disciples that the world would hate them as it had hated him. He didn't want them to be unaware of the hardships they were about to face.

Jesus also knew they couldn't face these hardships alone, so he gave them a promise. He promised to send the Counselor. This Counselor, the Holy Spirit, would fill the hearts of the disciples later at Pentecost.

All that Jesus said to the disciples in the upper room attested to the depth of his love for them. He explained to them, "All this I have told you so that you will not go astray." (John 16:1) Jesus' desire above all else was that they keep the faith.

Jesus has the same loving concern for all believers. He knows that we, like the disciples, will be tempted to fall away from his teachings. While we cannot sustain our own faith, God has mercifully given us his Word through which our Counselor, the Holy Spirit, works in our hearts. Our confidence for the continued preservation of our faith rests solely on the power of the message of Christ. For this reason, it is important that we regularly hear, read, and study the Word to nurture the faith worked in us. With hearts firmly rooted in Christ, we can rest assured that we will keep the faith.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, we praise you for working faith in our hearts. We pray that you preserve our faith and the faith of all those who have come to know you. We ask that you help us to hold onto your teachings, so that we may never go astray. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

For Further Reading:

John 13-16

Written by Hannah Hackbarth

Reviewed by Professor-emeritus Joel Gerlach