

An abstract image featuring a large, dynamic splash of blue ink or paint against a light, off-white background. The splash is composed of various shades of blue, from deep navy to a lighter, misty blue, creating a sense of movement and depth. The ink appears to be spreading outwards from a central point, with some areas being more concentrated and others more wispy.

IN THE FACE OF JESUS

# Sermon Growth Guide

**July 27, 2025**  
**There is Faithfulness**



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**Luke 9:18-27**

**Key Verse:** Luke 9:20 - “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “God’s Messiah.”

**Big Idea:** It matters who you say Jesus is. Where do you place your faith?

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## Foundations

This current series, “In the Face of Jesus” talks about finding the fruit of the Spirit within Jesus – we see the fruit in Him. So far, we have seen love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and goodness in our Savior.

This passage occurs after many miraculous signs and wonders had been performed, including the miraculous feeding of the 5,000. People would have started to talk of all they’d seen, which is when Jesus asks Peter what the gossip is. Having witnessed so many miracles, what do you think the people were saying at this time?

After this passage comes the transfiguration – where the disciples see the glory of Jesus. They also witness, from verse 35, “A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” This comes after Peter named Jesus as the Messiah, or anointed one. Everything that happens in the transfiguration corroborates what Jesus had been called – the anointed one.

The ‘anointed one’ shouts of someone being worthy. Of someone being chosen by divine authority. All of Scripture points to the Chosen One. Jesus was anointed. Faithfulness means that we focus on who Jesus is and remain steady. Our passage ends today with Jesus challenging us to deny ourselves and follow Him. He is worthy for us to give our whole lives up for Him.

## Understanding God’s Word

Read the passage. ‘Messiah’ or “Christ” means anointed. In the sermon, Pastor Tim highlights the fact that Jesus instructs His followers not to tell others about this interaction. There were a variety of expectations that others had around an ‘anointed’ one. What expectations of Jesus do we see in the Scripture? What does Jesus, in turn, expect of the disciples and those who follow Him?

## Applying God’s Word

It was faithfulness that kept Jesus on the mission. Faithfulness. Jesus stuck by the Truth that He knew. What have you put your faith in? Will that belief endure and carry you through when times get tough? It matters who you say Jesus is. Who is Jesus? Who is Jesus to you? What knowledge of God can you count on?

## Witnessing God’s Word

To become a disciple of Jesus means to stop following yourself and start following him. How can we gently and lovingly encourage others around us to stop following themselves? As Christians, we pray that the Spirit within us is making a difference in our lives and that others see a difference in whom we’re living for – that they see us as faithful. Is there anything within yourself where you need to make a course-correction? Or an area you need to invite the Spirit into?

I am not asking if you have faith, wondering whether or not you have faith. We all have faith. The question is where do you place your faith. We exercise faith every day. Every time you get in your car and turn the key, you believe it will start. Every time you get on a plane, you are exercising faith. Whenever you get in an Uber. My first ride in an Uber was back in Atlanta when ridesharing was a new thing. I decided to try it. I got picked up at the airport. The license plate matched, but there was no way this man was the same in the picture. I got in anyway. We started off fine, then he missed the exit from one highway to another. He pulled the car over on the shoulder, put it in reverse, and sped backward to the exit! This was a busy highway! I thought, "Well, Lord. Here it is." Where do you place your faith?

We are looking In the Face of Jesus this summer. We are studying Luke and looking into the face of Jesus to see the Fruit of the Spirit. If we are believers in Christ, we are being formed into the likeness of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is at work in us making us more like Jesus. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23) So, if that's what becoming like Jesus looks like, we will find those same qualities in the face of Jesus. So far, in the face of Jesus there is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness and goodness. Today, in the face of Jesus, There Is Faithfulness. Actually, the word in Galatians is *pistis*, "faith." It incorporates a range of meaning: faith, faithfulness, fidelity. Faith is a gift from God, a fruit of the Spirit. And there is faithfulness in the face of Jesus. The faithfulness of Jesus is making you faithful. If you don't understand that, if you don't take that to heart, you will wonder how faithfulness occurs. Maybe some people have it and some just don't. Maybe it's genetic. Some people are faithful spouses, faithful friends, faithful citizens and community servants, and others just aren't. Maybe I'm one of the ones that just doesn't have it. I wish I had faithfulness; I wish I had faith, but I don't. No. The faithfulness of Jesus makes you faithful. Faith is gift of God.

"Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, 'Who do the crowds say I am?'" (Luke 9:18)

There is no more important question to answer in your life than that question. Who do you say Jesus is? This is the eternally-binding question. God has sent his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus died for your sins on the cross, gave his life as an atoning sacrifice. He rose again from the dead because he did nothing to deserve death. Will you recognize Jesus for that? Will you return love and devotion to God? Or will you shrug your shoulders and walk away? "They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.'" (Luke 9:19) People say all kinds of things about Jesus. Some say he was a good teacher. Some say he was a myth. Some say he was a religious teacher who was misunderstood, then deified by his followers. "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, 'God's Messiah.'" (Luke 9:20) What about you? At the end of the day, it doesn't matter who your wife says Jesus is, who your grandfather says Jesus is, who your church says Jesus is. It matters who you say Jesus is. Where do you place your faith? This is the first profession in the Gospel by a disciple that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ. Messiah is the Hebrew word for "anointed." Christ is the Greek word. They mean the same thing: this person is the one sent by God to be our Savior and Lord. Jesus tells them not to tell anybody that this is him. Isn't that strange? Aren't we supposed to tell people about Jesus? Yes. But there were a lot of different ideas of what Messiah meant and what the Messiah would do. Some expected a spiritual leader who would lead people out to the desert to pursue purity. Most expected a military leader who would toss out the Roman occupation. Jesus didn't want those false expectations coming into play. "Just say nothing; let me do what I need to do. Then they will understand what Messiah truly is." And what is that?

"And he said, 'The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.'" (Luke 9:22) Did you catch the word "must"? He must suffer. He must be killed. Why? This is Messiah, this is the Christ, this is the anointed one who saves—he must give his life as an atoning sacrifice. The reason Jesus came was to give his life away. To become like



a sacrificial lamb. To pour out his blood and have his body broken as a once and for all sacrifice to pay the debt for our sins so that we can be forgiven and welcomed into eternal life. “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23) At any moment, you’d imagine, Jesus could have walked away from that mission. One time he was attacked by Roman soldiers and said, “Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?” (Matthew 26:53-54) It was faithfulness that kept Jesus on the mission. Faithfulness. We are to have a similar faith. The faithfulness of Jesus makes us faithful.

Jesus was clear it would not be easy. It is right, it is rewarding, it is eternal life as life was meant to be, but in this fallen world it isn’t easy to follow Jesus. “Then he said to them all: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.’” (Luke 9:23-24) Take up your cross. A condemned man sent to be crucified had to carry his own cross piece to the execution site. That’s not a pretty picture. That’s not inviting. Jesus says you need to decide. To become a disciple of Jesus means to stop following yourself and start following him. It’s as stark as the one-way walk of a condemned man. Now, if you try to hold on to your life, if you desperately cling to the way your life is, the things you have, the sweet setup you currently enjoy...the irony is, you will lose that life anyway. Nothing stays the same. All things change and go away in time. But if you give your life to Jesus, Jesus said it will be like planting a seed down under the soil. “Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” (John 12:24) The seed isn’t gone because it’s been buried; it becomes a multiplication of overflowing life. The faithfulness of Jesus is what inspires us to be faithful. Jesus doesn’t ask us to die for him. He dies for us. Then we hide our lives in him, we bury our lives in the soil of redemption, and we gain the eternal life

we never deserved.

This is the most important question you will answer in your life. Who do you say Jesus is? Where do you place your faith? If it is anywhere but in Jesus, you are grasping at things you cannot hold. This question is a matter of eternal life or eternal death. “Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.” (Luke 9:26-27) That’s a mysterious saying. Was Jesus talking about the end times, the transfiguration some of them are about to witness, Pentecost? We don’t know for sure. But what is clear is that this question, where do you place your faith, who do you say that I am, this question is bigger than life and death. Death is smaller than this. It is defanged. Jesus’ faithfulness to die on the cross outmatches death’s power.

Faith is a very important category then. This is a critical thing to try to get right. Salvation is at question. What is faith? Hebrews says, “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” (Hebrews 11:1) John Calvin defined faith this way: “a firm and certain knowledge of God’s benevolence toward us, founded upon the truth of the freely given promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit.” Where do you place your faith? Faith is trust. What do you trust? Who do you trust? Faith is critical. It is how we are saved. We are not saved by our good works; we can never earn enough good karma to deserve eternal life; we can’t pile up enough good actions, good deeds, random acts of kindness. I hope you are doing those things, but they won’t save you. We are saved by grace through faith. “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9) Why? How does it work?

Faith is trust. It says, “I trust you.” When you trust someone, you bind yourself to them. When that trust is betrayed or there is distrust the relationship splinters unless you practice forgiveness and love. Jesus asks, “Do you trust me? I gave my life for you. I spilled out my blood on the cross for you. Do you trust me?” With ordinary relationships, if you trust someone you grow closer to them. With Jesus, when you trust in him, you give your life, you are fully united with him. All these things Jesus has done, all these things God has done for you, they don’t matter at all until you come into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. That’s how all of it comes home. You don’t get the benefit of medicine until you swallow it. You don’t get the eternal life won by Jesus until your life is buried in him, until he swallows you, until you trust him enough to hide your life in him, to give yourself to him. That’s the importance of faith. That’s how we are saved, by faith in Jesus Christ. Will you believe?

Blaise Pascal was a mathematician and a philosopher. He thought very carefully about things. He said at one point that there is no rational way to prove the existence of God. People have tried to do this for ages. Where did motion come from? Something had to move the first thing to create motion. The First Mover. That’s God. Where did existence come from? God. Where did love come from? Various arguments you can use to at least raise the possibility that there must be a God in heaven. Pascal wasn’t satisfied. If you could rationally prove God’s existence, no one could walk away. But, he said, if you think about it, if you believe there is a God and turn out wrong, you really haven’t lost anything at all. However, if you disbelieve, if you walk away from God, you may lose eternal life, you may find yourself in eternal death separated from God’s love forever. Might as well believe. It’s called Pascal’s Wager. At some point he did. After he died they found a page from his journal he had torn out and sewn into the folds of his coat for safekeeping. “The year of grace 1654, Monday, 23 November, ... From about half past ten at night until about half past midnight, FIRE. GOD of Abraham, GOD of Isaac, GOD of Jacob; not of the philosophers and of the learned. Certitude. Certitude. Feeling. Joy. Peace. GOD of Jesus

Christ. My God and your God.” It went on. Trusting Jesus, he found himself swallowed up in his burning, consuming, eternal life! Hidden by faith in Jesus. Are you?

We see faithfulness in the face of Jesus, along with the other qualities, the other fruit. Faithfulness. Faith. The faithfulness of Jesus gives us faith. Will you believe? Will you put your faith in him? I want to encourage you to do it right now. Trust him. Open your heart to him. Follow me in prayer, “Jesus you are trustworthy. Jesus you are faithful. Fill my heart with faith. I believe in you; I trust in you; I offer you my life as you have given yours for me. Forgive my sins and welcome me now into the fire of your eternal life. In Jesus name. Amen.”