



Sermon Growth Guide

March 3, 2024

Trust Me



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All for Love - Trust Me

John 1:35-51

Key Verse: John 1:50

“Jesus said, ‘You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that.’”

Big Idea: The Lamb of God invites you to come, see, and follow Him.

Foundations

As we continue the **All for Love** series, our passage this week starts with looking at the Lamb of God. Jesus is God’s sacrifice to give us “at-one-ment” with Him.

But what else do we learn about who Jesus is, from what these early disciples say about Him?

They call Him Rabbi (teacher); the Messiah (The Anointed One they’d been waiting for); the one Moses (the law) and the prophets wrote about; Son of God; King of Israel.

We see the verb follow four times in our passage. Scripture uses this word to refer to joining as an attendant, to accompany, to become or be a disciple, to side with a party.

In our social media world, how many invitations do you receive daily to follow a person, company, or party?

As we grow in our discipleship, we are learning to follow Jesus together. Trust that you will see great things as you are formed into the likeness of Jesus.

Understanding God’s Word

Together, read John 1:35-51.

Jesus asks: “What do you want?”
The two invitations He extends are: “Come and see.” And “Follow me.”

After following Jesus, each disciple makes a statement about who He is.

How familiar are you with the writings of Moses and the prophets? Where do you see Jesus in them?

Applying God’s Word

Who do you trust enough to invite into your life; to really see your joys, and struggles, and follow you?

Who are you following; and in being a student of them, is that helping or keeping you from being a student of Jesus?

Witnessing God’s Word

Following Jesus requires trusting where He is leading you. What is your current posture towards Jesus? Are you fearful or hesitant to follow; or are you looking for the next person to tell: “come and see with me”?

Ask your Life Group to help you identify who you may need to stop following, to follow Jesus more intentionally.

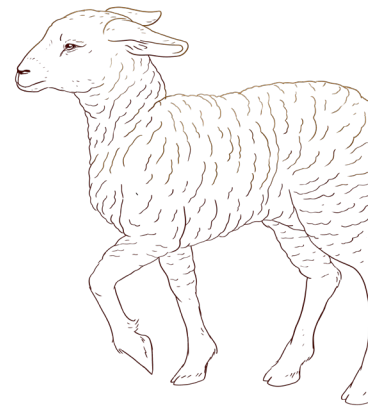
We have a trust problem these days, a trust crisis. People find it hard to trust. For example, in 1958, 75% of the population trusted the government to do what is right most of the time. Today it is 16%, and when you ask if government will do what is right all of the time, it goes down to 1%. Whoops. It's not just government. We have a hard time trusting one another. Among the key questions Gen Z asks (we're looking at one each week) is this one: Gen Z asks, "Can I trust you?" Trust is a huge issue. It is hard to trust. Maybe you have been hurt in the past. Maybe this generation is just so exposed, constantly, to all the horrible things happening in the world that they have a harder time with trust. But love requires trust. You have to trust to experience love. Eventually you have to take the risk to trust if you are going to experience love. Risk, to trust, to love.

Walking toward Easter this Lent season, what do we know? Jesus came. Jesus lived. Jesus died for us on the cross. Jesus rose again from the dead. He did it **All for Love**. And today, Jesus stands before each of us and says, in much the same way He did to His first disciples, **Trust Me**. Can we trust Jesus? Trust is built—it is easily lost, in a moment—but it is built over time with consistency. Trust is built by making a promise and keeping a promise. When you think about trusting someone, you ask if they have kept promises. Faithfulness. You look at character. Are they the same person up close as they are far away? The closer you get the more integrity you find. You look at humility. When they make a mistake, do they own it? You look at gentleness. When I am in your care, do you take care of me? You look at intimacy. What is it like to sit at the table and break bread with you? These are things to look for in any relationship when you are asking about trust. Can you trust Jesus?

Our passage is when Jesus calls His first disciples. Two of John's disciples stepped toward Jesus to explore

following Him. Disciples looked for Rabbis kind of like figuring out where to go to college. What do you have for me? What will I learn? Who will I become? Jesus says, "Come and see." "'Come,' he replied, 'and you will see.' So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him." (John 1:39) Jesus let them come closer, hang around awhile. What do you find when you get closer to Jesus? They took a risk to step closer to Jesus, and it changed their lives forever. One of these guys was named Andrew and his brother was named Simon. "The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, 'We have found the Messiah' (that is, the Christ)." (John 1:41) That's a huge statement, and it seems from the rest of the story that Andrew wasn't really clear on what he was saying. Nobody acted that confident about Jesus being Messiah, but, nevertheless, Andrew is sure he has found something. Something worth sharing. When you find someone worthy of trust, you want to share it. So, I ask you, have you found Jesus worthy of sharing? You who know and follow Jesus, look at Andrew here. Do you share Jesus like that? Is Jesus worth telling anyone about? "And he brought him to Jesus."

This Simon is the one we know of as Peter. "And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas' (which, when translated, is Peter)." (John 1:42) There is a lot we want to say about this, and we probably want to say more than we know sometimes. Jesus renames this man as soon as they meet. What do we make of that? The best explanation I've heard is this. The name Simon comes from Simeon, one of the twelve sons of Jacob, father of the twelve tribes of Israel. Simeon was known for being rash and flying off the handle. You can read about him in Genesis 34 and 49. Jesus didn't want Simon to grow into that name, the name of a hothead. "Your name is Peter." Rock. Jesus wanted Peter to grow into solid character. Consistency. Integrity.



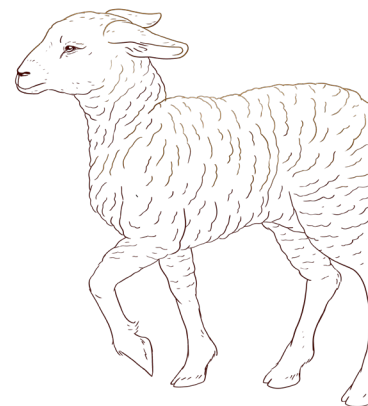
Humility. Trustworthiness. Jesus is already thinking of when Peter will declare: “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” That’s what Peter said. “Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.’” (Matthew 16:17-18) We know it was more the profession of the faith than the man Jesus meant, but the name is important. Peter. Grow into this. Character. Integrity. Solidity. Trustworthiness. It took him a minute, didn’t it? If you watch Peter, the hotheadedness still shows up! But Jesus said, grow into this. Grow this way. Peter risked it to step toward Jesus with trust and it changed his life forever.

Who’s next? Philip. “The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, ‘Follow me.’” (John 1:43) “Follow me,” feels a little stronger than, “Come and see.” When I imagine Jesus saying, “Follow me,” I imagine feeling pretty compelled to follow Him. But this is not bullying. This is not coercion. You still have to get up and step forward. Philip takes the risk to step toward Jesus with trust. It changes his life forever. He runs to tell his friend, Nathanael. “Philip found Nathanael and told him, ‘We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’ ‘Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?’ Nathanael asked. ‘Come and see,’ said Philip.” (John 1:45-46) Come and see. Did you notice? Even with the first twelve disciples of Jesus, with the first four, Jesus called followers through other followers. Jesus includes us in building his church. So, again, is Jesus worth sharing? What is the last time you reached out to someone and said, “Come and see”? As you make Easter plans, are you planning to share Jesus with anyone? Is Jesus worth talking about, worth inviting others to see? Alright, I’ll stop turning the screws. Have

I turned them enough? You’re feeling it? I’ll stop. Andrew brought Peter to Jesus. Philip brought Nathanael to Jesus. They took the risk to step toward Jesus with trust; it changed their lives forever.

A little more on Nathanael. This is cool. When Nathanael took the step toward Jesus, what did Jesus say? “When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, ‘Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.’” (John 1:47) Well, that’s a pretty weird greeting. That’s almost as weird as, “What’s your name? No, it’s not. I’ll call you Peter.” “‘How do you know me?’ Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, ‘I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.’” (John 1:48) This prompts a radical response from Nathanael, a conversion response: “Then Nathanael declared, ‘Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.’” (John 1:49) What is going on? I’m with those who speculate that Jesus knew what Nathanael was thinking under that fig tree. That is what busted Nathanael up. Jesus knew what he was wrestling with. And what could he have been wrestling with? Well, we can only guess, but Jesus says, “Here is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.” “Israelite” comes from the name “Israel” meaning “wrestles with God.” It’s the name Jacob was given when he was renamed after wrestling with God in Genesis 32. Now Jacob was a man full of deceit. Jacob was a liar, a cheater and a manipulator, but God used him as the father of the twelve tribes. What could Nathanael have been wrestling with? This is what I think. Have you ever wondered why cheaters and liars sometimes prosper over the honest and humble? Maybe Nathanael was wrestling with that. If Jacob cheated his way along, what do I need to do to be successful? What does a man have to do to make it in this world, even with God?

Jacob slept with his head on a rock and had a vision, Jacob’s Ladder in Genesis 28, with angels going up and down from heaven to earth. Is that what I have to do to be successful?



Is that what I have to be to make a difference in this world? To be a liar and a cheat, conniving and manipulating and deceitful? Is that what it takes? Jesus looks at him and says, “Behold an Israelite, a Jacob-ite if you will, but one who is honest and true, in whom there is no guile.” A man of character and integrity, a man who is trustworthy. And what does Jesus say? “He then added, ‘Very truly I tell you, you will see ‘heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on’ the Son of Man.’” (John 1:51) You will see it. Don’t confuse God’s grace over Jacob to use him despite his faults to build his people, don’t confuse God’s grace over Jacob with God’s endorsement of his errors. You don’t have to cheat your way to the top, Nathanael. You don’t have to be liars and cheaters, men and women of First Pres, to make it and make a difference for God. Maybe that’s what he was thinking. Nathanael risked it, took a step closer to Jesus with trust, and it changed his life forever.

To love, either to love another or to be loved—which we all need; we all need to love and be loved—to do that, you have to take a risk. You have to exercise a little trust. A woman in this church stopped me in the hall the other day. I won’t tell you who it is, so she won’t be embarrassed. She said, “I delivered a plate of cookies to my neighbor this afternoon.” “Oh, that’s nice,” I said. Where is this going? “No,” she said, “I was convicted by your sermon on love. I hadn’t been very kind to my neighbor. I think I was kind of a snot. So, I made some cookies and took them to her and met her at the front door, and gave them, and smiled, and apologized.” Church, that’s no small thing. No small thing. Imagine. What if every one of us this very week took the risk to put ourselves on the front step of a neighbor with an act of love? That takes trust. That’s a risk. No small thing. I say, Cookie Brigade, rise up! Pie Patrol, stand by at the ready! You’re next! What if First Pres had a reputation as the most loving church in our city? Small acts.

Just a little risk. In this way heaven is opened. A little trust, a little love, and the ladder between heaven and earth is suddenly clear.

Jesus came down to earth fully aware of the risk. We could say it was trust, but the trust Jesus had was that He could trust us to do with Him just as He expected. To betray Him. To have Him killed. But He did it anyway. He took our sins on Himself, carried them to the cross and died so that we could be forgiven, loved, and brought near to the Father. Draw near to Jesus now. “Trust me,” He says. The closer you get the more character you will see; the more integrity, the more solidity, the more trustworthiness. Trust Him. Jesus invites us to break bread. To sit at table with Him. Open your mouth and be fed by Him. You will find there has never been another more worthy of your trust.

