



28th September 2025

16th Sunday after Pentecost



Trusting God, Living Faithfully Today

Main Point

God calls us not only to believe His promises for the future but to live faithfully in the present. From Jeremiah's purchase of a field, to the psalmist's trust, Paul's call to contentment, and Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus, we are reminded that true faith shows itself in daily obedience, generosity, and compassion.

Intro |

A few years ago, I heard a story about a minister in North Wales who decided to test his congregation. On the morning he was due to be formally introduced as their new Rector, he arrived early—but not in a suit or clerical collar. Instead, he came disguised as a beggar.

He hadn't shaved for a week. He wore a scruffy wig and ripped clothes. He smeared dirt on his face, put on broken glasses, and clutched a can of beer. Then he slumped on the church steps as people arrived.

One by one, the members of his new church walked past. Some avoided eye contact. Others gave him a wide berth. No one stopped. No one asked his name. No one offered a word of kindness.

When the service began, this "beggar" shuffled to the front. The congregation gasped as he removed his disguise and revealed that he was, in fact, their new minister. He told them: *"This morning, I wanted to see whether you would welcome the stranger at your gate. And I'm afraid many of you missed the moment."*

That story is confronting, isn't it? It forces us to ask: What does it mean to trust God—and to live faithfully in the present moment? If our faith is real, it should show up not just in what we say we believe, but in how we treat people here and now.

I think that one of the hardest things about following Jesus is holding together two truths at once: that God is utterly faithful to His promises, and that we are called to live faithfully in the here and now—even when life feels uncertain, pressured, or confusing, and it looks as though God is absent.

The four passages before us today speak into that tension. They remind us that real faith is not just believing in God's promises for the future, but also choosing to live in obedience, trust, and faithfulness in the present moment – when it doesn't look like anything is changing or improving.

Today I want to hold these two themes together in three points:

1. Faith looks beyond our circumstances.
2. Trust in God frees us to live faithfully today.
3. Living faithfully now has eternal consequences.

Then we'll consider how this plays out in our daily lives.

Point 1 | Faith Looks Beyond Our Circumstances

In our Old Testament reading, Jeremiah was asked by God to do something extraordinary. The city of Jerusalem was under siege. The Babylonian army was at the gates. The people were terrified, and Jeremiah himself was in prison because his prophecies of defeat were too confronting for the king to bear.

And yet in this darkest of moments, God tells Jeremiah to buy a field. Can you imagine investing in real estate in a land about to be destroyed? It makes no sense!

Yet Jeremiah obeys. He buys the field, weighs out the silver, signs the deed, and places it in a jar for safekeeping. Why? Because God promised that one day "houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land." This act of faith was more than a transaction—it was a prophetic sign. Jeremiah trusted God's promise of restoration beyond judgment. His obedience declared: "The present suffering is not the end of the story. God's purposes reach further than what my eyes can see."

This is the heart of biblical faith: looking beyond present circumstances and daring to believe that God's promises are true. Faith is not optimism. It is not denial. It is trust—trust that God's word is stronger than our fears and His promises greater than our pain.

Point 2 | Trust in God Frees Us to Live Faithfully Today

But faith is not just about the future—it practically transforms the present. When we trust God's character and promises, it frees us to live faithfully here and now.

Psalms 91 captures this beautifully: "*He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.*" (v1) This psalm reminds us that God is our refuge, fortress, and protector. To live in trust is to live without fear, to find security not in circumstances but in God Himself.

And this trust has practical consequences. In Paul's letter to Timothy he warns that some people put their trust in money and possessions (1 Timothy 6:6). They chase wealth, thinking it will give them security. But in reality, it becomes a trap for them.

Instead, Paul says, those who trust God should live with contentment: "*Godliness with contentment is great gain.*" (6:6) When you believe that God will provide, you don't need to hoard or cling to wealth. You are free to pursue righteousness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness. You are free to be generous, willing to share, and to store up treasures in heaven.

Trust in God, then, is not just an inner feeling—it shapes how we live. It frees us from fear and greed. It opens our hands to generosity. It calls us into lives of righteousness and love. We might say it this way: Faith is the root; faithful living is the fruit.

Point 3 | Living Faithfully Now Has Eternal Consequences

But what happens if we fail to live faithfully in the present? Jesus' parable in Luke 16 gives us a sobering answer. The rich man lived in luxury every day, feasting and dressing in fine clothes. At his very gate lay Lazarus, a poor man covered in sores, longing for scraps. The tragedy is not just the rich man's wealth—it's his failure to notice Lazarus. His trust was in riches, not in God.

When both men died, their situations were reversed. Lazarus was comforted, while the rich man was in torment. And Abraham's words cut to the heart: "Son, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things." (v25) The rich man's unfaithfulness in life led to eternal consequences. His refusal to act with compassion revealed where his trust truly lay.

The parable ends with a warning: God's Word in the Scriptures are sufficient. We don't need more signs. God's word already calls us to faithful living now. This is a hard message, but it echoes what we've seen all along: trusting God's promises is not separate from how we live each day. Faith and faithful living go together, and they matter for eternity.

Application: Trusting God, Living Faithfully Today

So, how do we bring this together?

- Like Jeremiah, we are called to trust God's promises even when life feels uncertain. That may mean making choices today that don't make sense to the world—stepping out in obedience because we believe in God's future.
- Like the psalmist and Paul, we are called to rest in God's protection and provision, finding our security in Him rather than in money, possessions, or control. This frees us to live faithfully now—with contentment, generosity, and love.
- Unlike the rich man, we are warned not to waste the present moment. The people God places at our gates—the neighbours, the needy, the hurting—are opportunities for faithful living. Trust in God will always be seen in how we treat others.

So here is the challenge: Where is God inviting you to put your trust in Him today? Maybe in a place of fear, where He's calling you to believe His promises beyond what you see. Or maybe in your finances, where He's inviting you to live with generosity instead of anxiety. Or maybe in your relationships, where He's calling you to live out compassion, love, and faithfulness in the small daily choices that matter for eternity.

The truth is this: Trust in God is never wasted. And faithful living in the present is never forgotten. God sees, God remembers, and God honours those who put their trust in Him.

May we be a people who put our faith not in wealth, not in security, not in ourselves—but in the living God. And may that faith bear fruit in faithful, generous, compassionate lives, lived to the glory of His name.

Concluding Prayer

Gracious and faithful God,
we thank you that your promises are sure, that even when our circumstances look bleak, your word stands firm and your purposes never fail. Teach us to place our trust wholly in you—not in wealth, not in possessions, not in our own strength—but in your unfailing love and care.

Help us, Lord, to live faithfully today. Give us contentment in what we have, generosity towards those in need, and courage to obey you even when it seems costly. Keep our eyes fixed on eternity, so that our daily choices reflect your kingdom. And may our lives bear the fruit of faith—compassion, righteousness, and love—for the glory of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

Amen.

Five Reflection Questions

Here are **five reflection questions** to assist you to reflect on these passages:

1. Where in my life right now is God asking me to trust His promises, even though my circumstances look uncertain—like Jeremiah buying the field?
2. What “refuges” do I run to when I feel afraid or insecure—and how might I more fully rest in God as my shelter and protector, as Psalm 91 describes?
3. In what ways am I tempted to place my trust in wealth, possessions, or security instead of God?
4. Who are the people around me like “Lazarus at my gate” God may be calling me to notice, care for, and show compassion to?
5. What is one practical step I can take this week to live more faithfully in the present—through obedience, generosity, or love?