

The Power of Faith

God's word speaks prolifically on this subject. However, despite this fact it remains one of the most elusive Christian qualities. Just what is faith and why is it so important to God that His people build it? Below are some unique observations about Faith and its remarkable power in the lives of God's people.



The gospel of Luke records a question presented by the Messiah that addresses the very days we live in. Jesus asked:

Nevertheless when the Son of man comes, shall he find faith on the earth? (Lk. 18:8)

Now Jesus didn't say He wouldn't find faith when He returned to subdue the nations, but the fact that He would ask this question at all should give every true Christian a reason to take pause and reflect on the impact of such a possibility.

The Bible speaks with great force about faith and its message is very clear. Faith is absolutely essential to salvation. Furthermore, its influence in our Christian walk is undeniable. Consider the following: Jesus characterized faith as a weightier matter of the law.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone. (Mt. 23:23)

The apostle Paul referred to faith as one of three things that abide.

And now abides faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. (1 Cor. 13:13)

The book of Galatians identifies faith as one of the fruits of God's spirit.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith... (Gal 5:22)

The Book of Hebrews emphatically declares that without faith it is impossible to please God.

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (Heb. 11:6)

Throughout the gospels a profound connection is made between faith and God's personal intervention in people's lives. Consider just a few examples. The gospels of Matthew and Luke describe an event in which Jesus was approached by an officer in the Roman military who appealed to Him to heal his servant (Mt. 8:5-6, Lk.7: 4-5). Notice what Jesus says regarding this centurion's faith.

And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, And saying, Lord, my servant lies at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus said unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes;

and to my servant, Do this, and he does it. When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel... And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as you have believed, so be it done unto you. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour. (Mt.8: 5-13)

Here Jesus was moved by the faith. In a very real sense He was inspired by it—and as a result was driven to take action. However, what was even more remarkable about this example of faith was the fact that this centurion was a gentile.

This was not the only time the Messiah would be moved by the faith of a non-Israelite. Later in His ministry He was beseeched by a Syro-Phoenician woman begging Him to cast a demon out of Her daughter. Her act of faith was so steadfast that she actually refused to take “no” for an answer. Imagine that. While some would think her attitude smacked of arrogance, Jesus was clearly impressed with her boldness. Notice Matthew’s account of this event.

Then Jesus...departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, you son of David; my daughter is grievously tormented with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she cries after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as you will. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. (Mt. 15:21-28)

Throughout Jesus’ life, the link between faith and miracles is undeniable. The gospel of Mark indicates many were healed because of faith. However, later Mark reveals that in Jesus’ own city He could do no mighty work there because of their unbelief (Mk. 6:6).

But what is faith and how is it manifested in God’s people? The book of Hebrews answers these questions. It first addresses what faith is.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Heb. 11:1)

The Substance of HOPE + the EVIDENCE of things not seen = FAITH

Here God’s word identifies two qualities present in faith. First, it is the “substance of things hoped for.” Therefore, faith is linked to something desired, a hope. Many regard faith as simply believing in something or someone, but there is more to it than that. The demon world is fully aware that Jesus’ exists, but they don’t profess their faith in Him. This is because there is a difference between belief and faith. Belief doesn’t require hope. For example you may believe there will be great acts of terrorism in the near future, but you do not wish it to happen. It is not something you hope for. True faith on the other hand is an affirmative statement. It expresses confidence that a deep desire will be realized. God’s people have many such desires. They desire to be a part of His Kingdom. They desire to be resurrected into His eternal family. They also desire for God to show His favor (grace) on them. But how do these desires become acts of FAITH?

The Power of Proof

The second quality of faith is the “evidence of things not seen.” But what is it that is not seen? Well, in this case it is what you hope for. For example you may have faith that God’s kingdom is going to be restored on earth, but it is not here yet. It is something hoped for but not yet seen. This now brings us to

the BIG question: How can one believe in something that he cannot see? Are God's people simply to believe that their hope will be realized because they desire it to be so? Or, is there more?

Faith is Not Blind

As was just mentioned, a critical element of faith is evidence. The Greek word for evidence recorded in Hebrews is *elegchos* {el'-eng-khos Strong's 1651}. This word means: "a proof, that by which a thing is proved or tested" and "conviction." Therefore, faith is a conviction based not simply on hope but also evidence that this hope will be realized. But what is this evidence that allows God's people to exercise unflinching confidence in Him and His will? The answer to this question is illustrated in a wonderful story about a young boy and the father who loved him.

"A Boy and His Bike"

There once was a young boy who wanted a bicycle with all his heart. The other children in his neighborhood had bikes and he thought how terrific it would be if he could share all the excitement of having a bike of his own. One day his father told him that he was going to buy him a brand new top-of-the-line Mountain bike. You can't imagine how excited this boy was at that announcement. He immediately ran out to tell his friends. He even called relatives to break the news.

However, several days went by and there was no bike. This however, did not shake the young boy's optimism. The days then turned to weeks and still no bike. Despite this fact he spoke of his treasure as if he already had it.

Eventually his friends began to question whether the young boy would ever get a bike at all. But he remained unshaken. He insisted that the bike was a "done deal." At this point one of his friends asked him how he could be so sure he would get this "fantastic gift." Without hesitation, the boy said, "I have proof." His friend then responded, "What proof?" What would follow is a lesson for all of God's people today. The young boy said, "Well first I know my dad has the money to buy my new bike." When asked if he had any other proof, the young boy smiled and said, "Yes I do. And it's the best proof of all." His friends then all leaned forward to hear it. The young boy then said, "My dad told me he would get me a bike and he has NEVER lied to me. That bike is mine."

The next morning the first thing he saw as he awoke was a brand new top-of-the-line Mountain bike in the middle of his bedroom. It was even better than he had imagined. His father had ordered a model that was just being released which explained the delay. As the boy gazed at this great treasure his eyes became fixed on a note that was taped to this wonderful gift. It had two words written on it

"Love, Dad"