



Sunday March 03, 2019
Faith
Part-4 : Jesus' Teaching On Faith

Quick review-Last Two Sundays:

Part-1 : An Introduction to Faith

Part-2 : God's Sovereignty, Grace and Faith

While God may do things sovereignly by grace, the norm is that He requires us to receive by faith, what He freely offers us through grace.

Part-3 : Faith And The Ministry of Jesus

Today : Jesus' Teaching On Faith

In this chapter we examine what the Lord Jesus taught specifically concerning faith. We examine His teaching as well as His interactions with people on the matter of faith to draw some insights on how to exercise faith in God. We must remember that the Lord Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith and therefore He is the best Person and best example to learn how to walk by faith.

Truth Versus Facts

As we consider what Jesus taught about faith, truths He presented about faith may seem too high for us to walk in, in relation to the 'facts of life'. One of the objections we will have to contend with is our own experiences or the experiences of other people known to us. We may have exercised faith in God and "failed". That is, we did not see the outcome we desired. So this stands as a stumbling block or hindrance for many of us from embracing what the Lord Jesus taught concerning faith. But we need to keep in mind that what Jesus taught us is truth. Jesus will not change the truth He has spoken. Our experiences are facts. They are factual. We are not denying them. But experiences can change. **We do not have the right to modify truth to accommodate facts or experiences that contradict the truth. We must teach and preach truth just as it is stated. As we journey with God we can raise the level of our experience to align with the truth Jesus presented.** This is our only option.

We summarize Jesus' teaching on faith with simple statements. Each statement encapsulates a truth concerning faith. We restate some insights from the previous chapter once again for completeness.

#1, All Things Are Possible Through Faith

Matthew 17:20



So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

Mark 9:23

Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."

"Nothing will be impossible", "all things are possible" through faith, is what Jesus taught us. Faith connects us to God and gives God the 'opportunity' to work in us, through us and for us. To God nothing is impossible. Therefore, to the one who believes, to the one who through faith is able to see God work on their behalf, nothing is impossible.

We also discover the "power" of faith. A mustard seed sized faith in God can move a mountain - something that seems insurmountable and impossible, because God Himself is infinitely bigger than the mountain. **The "power" or the "force" behind that mustard seed sized faith is the infinite God Himself.** Almighty God works through my mustard seed sized faith to move the mountain out of the way. So it is not really about the faith, but about the God who works because of and in response to the faith we have in our hearts.

#2, We Will Receive According To Our Faith

Matthew 8:13

Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

Matthew 9:29

Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you."

Jesus indicated that we will receive "as you have believed" and "according to your faith". This is a spiritual law. According to our faith it will be done for us. As we have believed, so it will be done for us. We will receive according to our faith. Our faith in God will not be denied.

This should be our expectation. Don't change this truth just because in the past "you tried it and it didn't work". Don't lower your expectation. Hold on to this truth that according to your faith it will be done for you.



#3, Our Will And Desire Is Involved, In The Exercise Of Faith

Matthew 15:28

Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Mark 10:51-52

51 So Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want Me to do for you?" The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight."

52 Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

Mark 11:24

Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.

John 15:7

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

Our will and desire is involved in the exercise of faith. Often believers take the posture "if God wants me to have it, I will get it" in the context of exercising faith. We try to put the responsibility on God. However, the Lord Jesus taught that we have an important part to play in exercising faith and receiving from God.

Notice in the Scriptures quoted above, that the Lord Jesus stated things like:
"Let it be to you as you desire." (or 'will' KJV)
"What do you want Me to do for you?"
"whatever things you ask" (or 'desire' KJV)
"you will ask what you desire"

These clearly indicate that our will and desire is involved in the exercise of faith. We must take responsibility. We must will and desire to have what God has promised. This must be an intense, tenacious, a no-giving-up kind of will and desire to have what God has promised. This is how faith is exercised.

Some may not agree with this and point to these Scriptures:

(A) The Lord Jesus taught us to pray *"Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven."* (Matthew 6:10).

They use this to imply that we must abdicate responsibility, have no specific desire and will of our own, and just accept whatever comes our way as God's



will. But this is not what the Lord Jesus taught us or demonstrated to us. Our prayer, desire and will is for His Kingdom, rule and dominion to come. His rule and dominion brings the fullness of who God is and what He does, which includes provision, miracles, healings, deliverances and all that is of God.

God's will is always consistent with God's nature. The Covenant names of God and the very Person of Jesus Christ reveal the nature of God to us. God's nature is Healer, Provider, Deliverer, Peace-Giver, and so much more. He is impartial, just and fair to all.

God's will is expressed in God's Word.

God's will is revealed in God's promises. Every promise is a revelation of God's will. It is because He willed for us to have it, that He promised it to us.

So when we pray your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, it is not a passive, "drop it on me if you like to" kind of praying. It is an active pursuing, desiring and exercise of our will to see established on earth, things that are consistent with God's nature, God's Word and God's promises.

(B) The prayer Jesus prayed *"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."* (Matthew 26:39).

This is the only record we have of the Lord Jesus praying in this manner "not as I will, but as You will". We know that the Lord Jesus lived His entire life on earth in perfect submission to the Father (Hebrews 10:7). This prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane was an expression of His continued surrender to the purpose of the Father for which Jesus came into the world.

We do not have any record of Jesus praying "if it be thy will" in healing the sick, casting out demons, calming the storm, cursing the fig tree, multiplying food, turning water to wine, getting miracle money to pay taxes, etc. In all of these the Lord Jesus simply demonstrated the power of the Kingdom, without an "if it be thy will" qualifier, because it already was the Father's will. In fact to the leper who came wondering what the will of the Lord was saying *"Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean"*, Jesus' immediate response was *"I am willing; be cleansed."* (Matthew 8:2-3). Jesus did not stop ask what the Father's will was. Jesus did not pray "Father if it be thy will". Jesus responded "I am willing". He knew the Father's will. **And Jesus willed and desired what the Father willed and desired. So must we.**

#4, Faith Is Key To Seeing God's Glory Manifested

John 11:40

Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?"



The glory of God is a revelation of who God is and what He does. It is an expression in our realm of the very nature and power of God. Jesus taught that faith cause God's glory to be manifested. We receive expressions of the glory of God in our realm in response to our faith in Him.

#5, When Things Go From Bad To Worse, Only Believe

Jairus

Mark 5:35-36

35 While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"

36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe."

Lazarus

John 11:39-40

39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days."

40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?"

We see in both these incidents that things took a turn for the worse. The Lord Jesus taught the people involved in these situations to still believe. Would the Lord Jesus teach or speak anything different to us today? Certainly not!

No matter what direction things seem to be going, better or worse, Jesus teaches us to "only believe". Maintain your faith in God regardless of the circumstances.

#6, Faith Is Released Through Words Spoken Out Of A Believing Heart

Matthew 17:20

So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

Mark 11:22-23

**22 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God.
23 For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart,**



but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

Luke 17:5-6

5 And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."

6 So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."

Jesus clearly taught us this very important truth that faith is released by the words we speak out of a believing heart. He taught that "...if you have faith...you will say". We must speak our faith. Speaking our faith is one of the ways we release or exercise our faith to see powerful results. Jesus Himself demonstrated this in speaking to the fig tree, in calming the storm, in working miracles, healing the sick and in casting out demons.

#7, Faith Is Exercised In Prayer By Believing You Have Received When You Pray

Matthew 21:22

And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

Mark 11:24

Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.

Jesus taught us to pray believing prayer. Pray in faith. To pray in faith, Jesus explained, is to believe, at the time of praying, that we have received what we have asked for. That our petition has been granted at the time of our asking. We have received by faith. What we have asked for we have received that moment by faith. As the apostle John put it, "*we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him*" (1 John 5:15).

#8, Faith Must Be Acted Upon

Mark 2:10-12

10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic,

11 "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."

12 Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"



Matthew 14:28-29

28 And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

29 So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

John 4:49-50

49 The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!"

50 Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.

In many of His interactions with people who came to Him in faith to have a certain need met, the Lord Jesus instructed them to act their faith. He told them to do something that was aligned to what they believed. Hence we learn that an important part of having faith in God is to act in accordance to our faith.

#9, There Are Levels Of Faith : No Faith, Little Faith, Great Faith

The Lord Jesus referenced different levels of faith in His interactions with people.

- No faith. With the disciples terrified when caught in the middle of a storm, Jesus calmed the wind and waves. He turned to His disciples and said: *"Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"* (Mark 4:40). Jesus equates 'fear' to 'no faith'
- Little faith. There were other instances when the Lord Jesus referred to people as being of little faith (Matthew 6:30; Matthew 8:26; Matthew 14:31; Matthew 16:8).
- Great faith. To the Roman Centurion and the woman from Canaan, the Lord Jesus called them out as people of great faith (Matthew 8:10; Matthew 15:28).

A mustard-seed size of faith is sufficient to move a mountain. That means the "little faith" must have been so small, smaller than a mustard seed!

We highlight this to teach us that we can move in our level of faith. We can move from being of little faith to great faith.



#10, Worry, Fear and Doubt Negate Faith

Matthew 6:30-31

30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

Matthew 8:26

But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.

Matthew 14:30-31

30 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

31 And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

Worry, fear and doubt are three big enemies to faith. **When worry, fear and doubt come knocking, let faith answer the door!** Don't entertain them! Worry is our human attempt to solve matters that God is well able to handle. Fear is letting the circumstances and situations appear bigger than God. Doubt is thinking God will fail His Word and us. Worry, fear and doubt - none of these deserve any place in us as children of Almighty God.

MINISTRY TIME | SALVATION CALL



LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Sunday March 03, 2019
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This is a simple guide for use in Life Group discussions. Our objective is to focus on the application of the Sunday sermon - how each one is becoming a doer of the Word and building their life on God's Holy Word. The Life Group meeting would normally last for 2 hours. Each Life Group would have up to 12-15 people.

Preparation

To prepare for the Life Group meeting, you can listen to the Sermon Key Points (sermon summary in five minutes) or the full length Sunday sermon. You can also review the Sunday Sermon notes. All these are available in the "All Peoples Church Bangalore" mobile App or online at apcwo.org/sermons. Pray for the Life Group meeting and invite the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Welcome

The Life Group meeting may commence with a time of prayer, worship and a fun activity.

LISTEN to God's Word

Read the following Scripture passages: *Matthew 17:20; Mark 11:22-24*

INVESTIGATE God's Word Together

Please discuss a few of these together, giving time for people to share their insights. We encourage each one individually to make notes of their personal learning during the Group discussion.

Reflect on each of these statements we have drawn from Jesus teaching on faith.

- #1, All Things Are Possible Through Faith
- #2, We Will Receive According To Our Faith
- #3, Our Will And Desire Is Involved, In The Exercise Of Faith
- #4, Faith Is Key To Seeing God's Glory Manifested
- #5, When Things Go From Bad To Worse, Only Believe
- #6, Faith Is Released Through Words Spoken Out Of A Believing Heart



#7, Faith Is Exercised In Prayer By Believing You Have Received When You Pray

#8, Faith Must Be Acted Upon

#9, There Are Levels Of Faith : No Faith, Little Faith, Great Faith

#10, Worry, Fear and Doubt Negate Faith

While we know all of these statements are important, which one of these really stands out for you, in the matter of exercising faith in God?

If time permits, each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share one or two key learning and how they see themselves applying it into their specific life situations. Encourage each one to participate and share.

FELLOWSHIP by sharing your life and spiritual journey

Each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share anything from their walk with God, something God has been teaching them, a testimony of answered prayer or a specific challenge that they would like prayer for. Encourage each one to participate and share.

ENCOURAGE each other by praying and ministering to one another

Get into small groups of two or three and take turns to thank God and pray for each other in the light of what was learnt today. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Expect the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow bringing healing, releasing miracles, prophecy, etc.

Regroup and pray together for:

1, families to be protected and strengthened

2, a mighty outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on us as a church and through us to bless many others in our city and nation. Nothing but a mighty work of God's Spirit can change our city and nation.

3, for the BUILD TO IMPACT project - for God's hand to guide us through the land search and acquisition process, and for finances to be more than enough to get this project done.

Close by thanking God together.