

Life in the Red Letters – 5

“Praying in Faith”

God is not moved by our needs; He is moved by our faith!

Jesus did more than simply encouraged faith; He demanded faith!

Matthew 9:29 – “According to your faith it will be done unto you.”

This is one of my favorite verses in the Bible. What are you expecting God to do in your life?

This is a law (spiritual law) that God has established. It’s called the law of faith:

The law of faith says we tend to get what we expect out of life. We tend to see what we expect to see. We tend to hear what we expect to hear. We tend to feel the way we expect to feel.

We inevitably accomplish what we expect we are going to accomplish.

In more than one instance Jesus says you get to choose because “According to your faith it will be done unto you.”

Scriptural Examples:

1) The Faith of the Blind Men

Matthew 9:27-30 – “And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying aloud, ‘Have mercy on us, Son of David.’ **28** When He entered the house, the blind men came to Him, and Jesus said to them, ‘Do you believe that I am able to do this?’ They said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord.’ **29** Then He touched their eyes, saying, ‘According to your faith be it done to you.’ **30** And their eyes were opened...”

2) The Woman with the Issue of Blood

Matthew 9:20-22 – “And behold, a woman who had suffered from a discharge of blood for twelve years came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His garment, **21** for she said to herself, ‘If I only touch His garment, I will be made well.’ **22** Jesus turned, and seeing her He said, ‘Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.’ And instantly the woman was made well.”

3) The Canaanite Woman with the Demonized Daughter

Matthew 15:28 (ESV) – “Then Jesus answered her, ‘O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.’ And her daughter was healed instantly.”

4) Blind Bartimaeus

Mark 10:49-52 – “And Jesus stopped and said, ‘Call him.’ And they called the blind man, saying to him, ‘Take heart. Get up; He is calling you.’ **50** And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. **51** And Jesus said to him, ‘What do you want Me to do for you?’ And the blind man said to Him, ‘Rabbi, let me recover my sight.’ **52** And Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your faith has made you well.”

A Lack of Faith limits God’s power

Matthew 13:57-58 – “... **57** And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, ‘A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household.’ **58** And He did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.”

A Faith Filled Prayer Life

1) Reaches for the Impossible

In Luke 18:27, Jesus says what is impossible with man is possible with God.

Read Mark 9:20-24. “And they brought the boy to Him. And when the spirit saw Him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. **21** And Jesus asked his father, ‘How long has this been happening to him?’ And he said, ‘From childhood. **22** And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.’ **23** And Jesus said to him, ““If you can”! All things are possible for one who believes.’ **24** Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, ‘I believe; help my unbelief!’”

a) Jesus is always trying to get His followers to come to faith!

Sometimes Jesus gently encourages faith and sometimes He sternly rebukes his followers for not having faith. Nevertheless, it takes faith to please God.

b) Jesus places such a high value on faith that perhaps the opposition you are facing in life is meant to be a blessing to you. Perhaps God is working to connect you with Him in way that would never happen if you did not need to trust God!

2) Pushes the Immovable

Mark 11:22-24 – “And Jesus answered them, ‘Have faith in God. **23** Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, “Be taken up and thrown into the sea,” and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. **24** Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.’”

a) A mountain in Scripture often represents unmovable opposition of the enemy.

Mountains are demonically constructed obstacles that stand in opposition to God’s best in our lives.

It is way too easy for us to give up when it comes to opposition. We become defeated too easily and a defeated spirit always manifests in our:

- Mood – of course there are a lot of things that affect our mood but nothing affects it worse than a negative, defeated spirit.
- Mouth – the words that come out of our lips are indicators of what’s going on inside our spirit.

b) Your words matter when it comes to faith. “whoever says...”

Use the authority that comes by faith in Christ and speak to your mountain.
“You have got to go!”

Self-pity gets you nowhere when it comes to mountain moving faith!

c) A Caution: Lets be mature in our application of the word “whatever” in this text.

Jesus is not giving us a “blank check” promise in our faith life.

i) The context of a passage is very important.

ii) The Biblical Context of Praying in Faith

(1) The praying person must not approach God with un-confessed sin.

Psalm 66:18 – “If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.”

God does not demand perfection; but He won’t deal with rebellion!

(2) The prayer must be in conformity with God’s will.

(a) James 4:2,4 – “You desire and do not have... **3** You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.”

(b) 1 John 5:14 – “And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us.”

(3) The praying must be persistent.

Luke 18:1 – He told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

Luke 18:5-8 – “Because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’ **6** And the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unrighteous judge says. **7** And will not God give justice to His elect, who cry to Him day and night? Will He delay long over them? **8** I tell you, He will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?”

Jesus is looking for faith-filled people who will not give up in prayer!

3) Focuses on the Believable

The Storm: Matthew 14:29-31 – “He said, ‘Come.’ So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. **30** But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, ‘Lord, save me.’ **31** Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’”

To natural minded people, what we see is more believable than what we cannot see but we are not just natural. We are spiritual beings with the capacity to know God. We all have a knower and God speaks directly to our knower and calls us to come to faith.

a) When trusting God, we must keep our eyes above the waves!

i) “when he saw the wind”: Seeing the wind and waves from inside the boat is quite different than walking on the water and seeing it in the storm.

ii) Faith is easy to talk about until you are out of the boat in a sink or swim situation. Our perspective changes when the storm rages.

b) The word “doubt” (from Greek *dístazō*) suggests the idea of trying to go in two different directions at once.

Jesus is saying to Peter, your focus was being pulled two ways.

(1) Your mind says – “You’re gonna sink.”

(2) Your spirit says – “You can trust Jesus.”

c) Will you choose to believe God more than the circumstances of your life?

Will you continue to live by sight?

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