

Faith – Believe it or Not

In **Luke 17** the disciples ask Jesus to increase their faith.

His response was... “If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could do this.”

What the Lord was telling them was, *“Guys, you don’t need more faith. You don’t have a faith problem, you just aren’t using the faith you’ve already got!”*

Luke 17:3–5 (NKJV)

³ Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴ And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him.” ⁵ And the apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith.”

- Faith is for everyday life
- It takes faith to unconditionally love and forgive your co-workers, your spouse, your children, your parents, and your neighbors

Jesus’ response:

Luke 17:6 (NKJV)

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.”

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NKJV)

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast.

- Yes, our salvation is a “gift” of God
- Yet, this also means that “faith” is a gift from God
- It is not of ourselves, it is of God
- **Romans 12:3** “*the measure of faith*”

1 John 5:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

- Faith is governed by law
- God did that for our benefit

The Law of Faith

Romans 3:27 (NKJV)

²⁷Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.

- Faith Follows God’s Rules
- If we believe it wrong, it won’t work
- It’s not our faith, it’s Gods
- There is a law of faith
 - Law – “*constant, without fluctuation or variation*” and “*universal*”

Faith Speaks

Romans 10:8, 10 (NKJV)

⁸ But what does it say? “*The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart*” (that is, the word of faith which we preach):

¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

- There is power in your words
- Our heart and mouth must agree
- It's not just name it and claim it
- You must believe what you're saying

Your words must have actions that agree

James 2:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

Mark 5:25–26, 28, 30 (NKJV)

²⁵ Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years,

²⁶ and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse.

²⁸ For she said, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.”

- She reached out and touched – faith works
- Jesus said – “*your faith has made you well*” vs 34

By Grace Through Faith

Ephesians 1:17, 18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints

- The whole book of Ephesians is written with the attitude of what Christ has already done for us
- Everything is in the past tense
- It's a finished work

Ephesians 2:1 (NKJV)

And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins

- It's not, *you can* be made alive
- It's He *has* made alive

Even if you haven't seen it manifested in your physical body

- Your spirit *has been* made alive
- Your body may be hurting or your soul wrestling with depression, yet your spirit *has been* made alive the way Jesus is alive!
- You have God's resurrection power inside of you
- Through faith we need to draw that truth out

Ephesians 2:2 (NKJV)

² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience

- You *have been* set free from the power of sin and the authority and oppression of the devil
- If you feel dominated by the devil it's because you really don't believe verse 1
- It has not become a reality to you
- When you truly understand you *have been* made alive it breaks the power of sin and you live in victory
- Victory is a byproduct of the resurrection life of Jesus

Philemon 6 (NKJV)

⁶ that the sharing of your faith may become effective (*begin to work*) by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

- Your faith works as you begin to acknowledge every good thing that is in you in Christ
- You'll see victory manifest
 - Physically, financially, emotionally...
 - Start confessing it
- Start speaking and thanking God for what has already been done

Ephesians 2:3 (NKJV)

³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

- If these things are still dominating your life it's because you don't understand that you have a new nature on the inside
 - You are as complete as you'll ever be
 - Your nature has been changed
 - You don't have an old nature anymore – by “the faith”

Ephesians 4:23–24 (NKJV)

²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

- You must change the way you think about and feel about yourself
 - Put on the new man!

As God's word transforms your mind, you'll experience less of the old desires and more of that new nature

- This isn't something we seek after or try to attain to
- It's something to be received as a gift
 - It's already done!
- You are already in relationship with God
- You are already raised from the dead spiritually and seated with Christ in heavenly places

Ephesians 2:4–6 (NKJV)

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus

- Our salvation is organic
- Its more than a onetime experience
- It is a mustard seed that is planted and grows into a large tree where birds can nest – **Mark 4:32**
- This is how the kingdom of heaven works!

Ephesians 2:7–9 (NKJV)

⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

- You aren't saved by grace alone
- You aren't saved by faith alone
 - It is grace through faith
 - It is a combination of the two
- Its like sodium and chloride
 - Either on alone can kill you
 - Mixed together they make table salt
 - Something you need to survive

God's grace is the same to everyone

- However, not everyone is saved
- The provision for salvation is present – Grace
- Not everyone has believed – Faith

Each individual, must appropriate God's grace for themselves by faith

Faith alone, apart from grace won't save you

- You must put your faith in the accomplishments of Jesus Christ

Holy living, paying tithes, reading the bible, church attendance, alone won't produce salvation

- Your faith is either in what Jesus did – Grace
- Or in what you do or did – Works

Grace people don't like to hear preaching on faith because they look at it as something we do

- They teach and believe that it's all about grace
- Your faith has nothing to do with it

Faith people don't like life to hear preaching on grace

- Because they believe it's all about your faith
- How aggressive you can be to accomplish great things

Any time we take a truth in God's word and overemphasize it at the expense of complimentary truths it leads to error

- There must be a balance
- All of God's word fits together and in harmony
- Grace and Faith complement each other

1 Peter 4:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

- Grace is manifold or (multi-faceted)
- Most people define grace as un-merited favor
- This is certainly true but not exclusively true

Another important facet is that it's something God did for you

- He didn't wait until you sinned to have Christ die on the cross
- It's something He did for you long before you ever came along
- God's grace gave provision for your salvation long before you needed it
- It is prior to and independent of you or anything you could do to earn or deserve it
- That is un-merited favor!

Grace is also consistent

- God is the same toward everyone
- It's not based on our performance, worth, value, or merit on our part
- Christian or non-Christian
- God-hater or God-lover
- God's grace is exactly the same for everyone

Titus 2:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men

- If grace alone saved you, then everyone would be saved
- Jesus made it very clear that people would chose the wide gate and the broad way that would lead to destruction rather than the narrow gate leading to life – **Matthew 7:13**
- You aren't saved by grace alone – you are saved by grace through faith
- You should never pray
 - *“If it be God's will” or,*
 - *“If God wants it to happen, it will”*

God's grace alone doesn't save you and God's grace alone won't heal you or bless you by itself

- Grace doesn't do anything for us alone
- When it is mixed with faith it will accomplish the impossible

One of the major things that people don't receive from God is because they think "faith" is God responding to something they do

- This puts a burden on you to perform
- I hear people pray,
 - *"O Lord bless so and so because they are good and do so much for you"*
 - This will not work
- No one is good enough to move God
- Faith doesn't move God
 - God's not stuck
- Faith is not something you do to make God do something
- "Faith works" is legalism
- It must come by grace through faith

It is the simple fact that God's grace has already done something for us and now by faith we receive it

- If what you call faith is not in direct response to something God has already done, then it's not true faith
- Faith doesn't try to get God to positively respond to us
- Faith is your positive response to what God has already done
- Faith only appropriates what God has already provided by grace

True faith reaches out, receives and takes what God has already done!

1 Peter 2:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.

- Notice, past tense
- It's already done!

Most people are trying to get God to heal them

- We say, *"I'm waiting on the Lord for my healing, etc."*
- This is an unhealthy mindset
- We don't sit back and wait for God to do something
- That's not waiting on the Lord

Psalm 27:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!

- To wait on the Lord means to actively wait on Him like a waiter or waitress
- It doesn't mean to sit back and twiddle your thumbs
- A waiter is attentive
- Waiting to see what you need
- What can I do for you?
- We don't pray and then say, *"well now it's in God's court"*
- God's waiting on us to positively respond to what He's already done

Are you ready to believe and receive?

Acts 14:8–10 (NKJV)

⁸ And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked. ⁹ This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that *he had faith* to be healed, ¹⁰ said with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" And he leaped and walked.

- God has already provided everything you need by grace
- Faith reaches into the spiritual realm and draws out what God has supplied
- Faith is something that can be seen!
- The man heard Paul preaching the gospel and He believed for his healing
- It's up to you to flip the switch

Acts 3:4–6 (NKJV)

⁴ And *fixing his eyes on him*, with John, Peter said, "Look at us."
⁵ So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶ Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

- You can't force God to do anything
- You just receive what is freely given