

Faith – Believe it or Not

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

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.

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!*”

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NKJV)

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.

The Law of Faith

Romans 3:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ Where *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
- Law – “*constant, without fluctuation or variation*” and “*universal*”

We are Already Blessed

You see a seed – God sees a forest!

Ephesians 1:3, (NKJV)

³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,

- Everything we'll ever need has already been provided
- It's not a matter of asking God to do it
- Rather believing its already been done and releasing it to manifest

You have got to realize that everything God has already provided is in the spirit realm

- The physical realm doesn't necessarily reflect what's true in the spiritual realm
- Faith acts like a bridge for what God has already done to cross from one realm to the other
- Just because it hasn't manifested doesn't mean it's not true

Jude 1:3 (NKJV)

³ Beloved, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

The Battlefield

Everything God has provided by grace is already a reality in the spirit realm

Whether or not they ever manifest in the physical realm depends on our ability to receive – Not God's giving

Satan does exist:

Demonic forces are fighting against God and His kingdom

Anyone who truly believes the word of God has to acknowledge that Satan is a real foe

The devil tempted Jesus and opposed Him during His entire ministry

God anointed Him with the same Holy Spirit that is now available to all who believe on the name of Jesus

Acts 10:38 (NKJV)

³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

- The bible is very clear that sickness and disease are oppressions from the devil
- Its important for us to learn how to take authority over him
- Remember: he is a defeated foe!

The only reason the devil is able to do anything is because of our own ignorance, unbelief and fear

2 Corinthians 2:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Remember in Ephesians we have seen that Paul writes from the aspect of everything has been done for us already in the spirit realm

- It's a matter of us now possessing it
- Look how he finishes the letter to the Ephesians

Ephesians 6:10–12 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

- This verse makes it clear we are in a battle
- There have been all kinds of teachings about spiritual warfare that I believe simply are not true
- However, it's important to note that the battle is between our ears
- We are fighting demonic powers and they do exist in heavenly places
- But the battlefield is in your mind

Ephesians 6:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

- Wiles: lies, cunningness and craftiness
- These words imply that Satan's only power is deception
- He doesn't have any actual power of his own to do anything
- We must surrender to him first before he has any power in our lives
- The devil really is a non-factor to those who know and understand the truth
- The goal is to keep you ignorant of the truth and believing his lies

2 Corinthians 11:3 (NKJV)

³ But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

- Satan comes against us by subtly corrupting our minds
- He tries to make us think that the Gospel is harder than it really is
- Remember even in the Garden of Eden the tempter had to deceive them first
- He then convinced them to do what he desired
- “Gas God really said...?” – **Genesis 3:1**

The devil tempted Adam and Eve with something they already had

- They were already like God
- They were more like Him before they ate than after they ate

The devil can't keep you from doing anything

- If he could he would have stopped you from being born again
- We need to come to our senses

Ephesians 6:11, 13-14

¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness. NKJV

- 4 times STAND is repeated
- Stand still and see His deliverance!
– Exodus 14:13, 2 Chronicles 20:17
- The devil will always try to make you think you don't have what you already do!
- Wiles – Strategy of deceit and trickery

Don't let the devil get in your head with doubt, fear and lack

Don't fight for the victory – Fight from the victory!

2 Timothy 2:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.

- Remember we need to believe we are complete in Christ
– **Colossians 2:10**
- We need to acknowledge every good thing that is in us through Christ! – **Philemon 1:6**
- The devil tried to convince Adam and Eve that they were missing something
- Satan lied to them and said you don't have it all when in fact they did
- The truth is that if we've been born again we too have it all!
- We have a battle to fight in the flesh because that part of us has not yet been redeemed

We need to know the truth!

John 8:32 (NKJV)

³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

- The devil will always try to keep us in a state of questioning the promises of God
- If you are questioning you are not in faith
- If God's word says it, that settles it!

2 Corinthians 10:3–5 (NKJV)

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ

- Our warfare is against thoughts, imaginations, strongholds and knowledge that comes against the Word of God
- Most people believe that the devil has more power than us
- This simply is not true

1 Peter 5:8 (NKJV)

⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

- Apart from the power that you give him through believing his lies and deception, Satan can't steal anything from you
- He uses ignorance, fear and unbelief to oppress and destroy
- He is a defeated foe!

The greatest way the devil devours Christians is to get them out of fellowship with other believers

- Self-Pity – Get you to doubt that others care about you
- Pride – Get you to think you're a Lone Ranger and don't need anyone

Colossians 2:13–15 (NKJV)

¹³ And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴ having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵ Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

- Satan, principalities and all other demonic powers have been disarmed
- Triumphant over them refers to a victory parade

The Romans had a custom to parade their spoils of war and conquered people in front of the citizens of Rome upon returning home from their conquest

- The citizens knew through this parade that the enemy that had been terrorizing them had been defeated
- They would drag the opposing general of king through the streets naked
- Sometimes cutting off his thumbs and big toes
- He would never be able to fight in battle again
- The scriptures declare that this is what Jesus did to the devil
- He can only come against us with deception
- Jesus has delivered us

Hebrews 2:14–15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

- True spiritual warfare is done on a personal level
- We still should intercede for others including our nation's leaders
- True spiritual warfare is resisting the lies and deceptions of the enemy
- Understanding the truth is the antidote for deception

John 17:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

- Take the word of God and meditate on it
- Commune with the Lord
- Fellowship with other believers and stay positive, constantly seeking Him
- Rebuke the devils lies when you need to
- Live a life of praise!
- The best defense is a good offense
- True spiritual warfare is bringing the truth of God's word into your situation

So many times, people just want to “pray” over a situation and believe it will change

- Effective prayer combines praying with the power of God’s word
- Our prayer is like water to the seed of the word
- If there is no seed you can water over and over without a harvest of any kind – **1 Peter 1:23**

Many Christians spend too much time rebuking the devil and spiritual forces over their community as well as asking God to send revival

If we want to see our communities changed we have got to pray that people’s ears will be opened to the truth and then preach and live the truth of God’s word

Revival starts in us!

Diana of the Ephesians – Acts 19

Ephesians 6:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel

- Paul didn’t urge them to pray against the spirit of Diana
- Diana’s temple was considered one of the wonders of the world
- He didn’t organize a march
- He asked them to pray that he would have the opportunity to preach the Gospel

2 Timothy 3:16–4:2 (NKJV)

¹⁶ All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1 I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: ² Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

- The word of God gives us all of the spiritual power we will ever need
- If we want to see our circumstance change it will change through the word of God
- If we want to see our communities change it will be through the church sharing the truth of God's word

Paul preaches the Gospel in the area where Diana has the greatest influence

So many become believers that those who made idols were put out of business

Acts 19:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship.