

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
- Not just miraculous healing and financial deliverance
- Our daily interpersonal relationships place the greatest demand on our faith
- Faith is not primarily for impossible situations
- We need our faith active when dealing with people we live with and work with
- It takes faith to unconditionally love and forgive your co-workers, your spouse, your children, your parents, and your neighbors

The disciples where so overwhelmed at Jesus' command to forgive – even up to seven times in one day – that they exclaimed, *“Lord increase our faith!”*

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.

- In a sense Jesus didn't even answer their question
- He told them they already had all the faith they needed
- A mustard seed is one of the smallest seeds there is
- You can barely see it in your fingers
- In other words, you don't need “Big” faith or “More faith
- We need to learn how to use what we already have

Most Christians believe that faith works but think that theirs is deficient

- That is a lie from the devil
- Satan has blinded us to what we already have
- On the inside of every born-again believer is the same faith that was in Jesus when He walked the face of the earth
- Some people think they don't have enough or that it comes and goes
- We think it's something that we can't get a handle on or control
- The truth is, that right now you have more than enough faith

Luke 17:7–10 (NKJV)

⁷ And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down to eat’? ⁸ But will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink’? ⁹ Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. ¹⁰ So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’ ”

- In our “*touchy feely*” culture we don’t like words like, “*command*”
- Jesus was talking about the fact that slaves, *during His day* did what they were told
- Jesus was likening faith and the use of what you have, to servants that are obedient

Faith is something that needs to be put to work

- Ever wonder why your faith isn’t producing anything
 - You haven’t put it to work
 - You’re not using it!
 - Put your faith to work the way a master uses a slave

We all would agree that someone could be raised from the dead

- But which of us would pray for them?
- Like most people we don’t believe our faith is adequate

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.

- 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

God’s Words Carry Faith:

Romans 10:14–17 (NKJV)

¹⁴ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “*How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!*” ¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “LORD, who has believed our report?” ¹⁷ So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

- You simply cannot believe unless you hear the word of God
- Gods words carry faith
- Every word that comes out of your mouth is a container
 - Words carry faith or unbelief
- God Himself is *faithful*
 - The words He has spoken are *faith-filled*
 - God’s faith is supernatural

God's faith isn't limited by some kind of physical proof
He speaks forth and acknowledges things "before" there's physical proof

Romans 4:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ (as it is written, "*I have made you a father of many nations*")
in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;

- God makes things alive
- He calls things that are not into being
- That's God's kind of faith
- It is creative

Genesis 1:3 (NKJV)

³ Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

God created "light" before there was a source for it to come from

- He simply spoke it into being
- This is the kind of faith God has placed on the inside of each of us
- God's faith isn't like "human" faith
 - Chair, paycheck, fly in a plane, intersection
 - We all have "human" faith
- God's faith isn't limited the way human faith is

Remember both salvation and the faith to receive it are gifts from God – **Ephesians 2:8,9**

1 Peter 1:23 (NKJV)

²³ having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever

- It takes “supernatural” faith to believe that God came in the flesh
 - Lived a perfect life
 - Suffered our punishment in His death
 - Rose from the dead to forgive our sins
- You used “supernatural” faith to receive salvation
- You didn’t just put your faith *in* God
- You were born again by the faith *of* God

Galatians 2:16 (KJV 1900)

¹⁶ Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by *the faith* of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Jude 3 (NKJV)

³ 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.

Galatians 2:20 (KJV 1900)

²⁰ I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

- We now live by “the faith” of Jesus Christ
- That’s why Jesus said, “*you don’t need more faith, you just need to learn how to use what we already possess*”
- We have the same potential to do anything Jesus did

John 14:12 (NKJV)

¹² “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

- We can work miracles, receive words of wisdom and knowledge
 - Walk in unconditional love
 - Cast out demons
- It’s accomplished by the supernatural faith of Christ
- *It’s* capable of doing anything He did

Yes, the flesh part of me is still capable of failure

- The spirit part of me has *the faith* of the son of God
 - Stay focused on this
- When you truly believe you have this potential inside you won’t put up with discouragement and defeat
- You have and now live by *the faith* of Jesus Christ Himself

Romans 12:3 (KJV 1900)

³ For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man *the measure* of faith.

- It's not *a* measure but *the* measure
- God gives each believer the same measure

Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke – Evangelist – preaches to crowds well over a million strong in Africa

In an interview was asked,

“Why do you see so many more miracles happen overseas than here in the United States? Is it because they have more faith?”

His Answer. *“You Americans are the only people I’ve ever encountered who have this concept of ‘more faith.’ Either a person believes or they don’t. You don’t have to have ‘big faith.’” Then he gave some examples of people who had just heard God’s Word for the first time and received.*

- This whole concept of ‘big faith’ and ‘little faith’ is wrong!
- In the Old Covenant, Jewish believers put their *human* faith in the promises of God
 - Gods Spirit came upon them at times
- He didn’t live in them the way He does in New Testament believers
 - We receive a born-again spirit
 - We have a new nature and the faith of Jesus living on the inside

We don't have a faith problem we have a knowledge problem
In order to see your faith work, you need to understand and
acknowledge what you have

Philemon 6 (NKJV)

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

- You don't have a faith problem
- Yet, to see supernatural results you need to use it

The Apostle Peter understood this:

The Blind Beggar at the Gate Beautiful

Acts 3:6–8 (NKJV)

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.” ⁷ And he took him by the right hand and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. ⁸ So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God.

Acts 5:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them.

Acts 9:39–40 (NKJV)

³⁹ Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought *him* to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. ⁴⁰ But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up.

Peters Instruction on Our “like precious faith”

2 Peter 1:1–4 (NKJV)

Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have *obtained like precious faith* with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: ² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ as His divine power has given to us *all things* that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the *knowledge of Him* who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be *partakers of the divine nature*

When we study the Bible, and hear God's word preached as a Christian, faith is already present

- We are discovering what we've been given and how to use it
- Reading and understanding the Word gives you knowledge of what you already have
- The word teaches us how faith works so we can cooperate with it

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
- There is a law of faith
 - Law – “*constant, without fluctuation or variation*” and “*universal*”
- Faith works for everyone – like the law of gravity
- God will not break His laws
- They are there to govern and produce His desired results
- We just agree with them

Most people just ask God for something and then “believe”
They don’t understand there are certain restrictions God has placed upon Himself

- Gods faith always abides by Gods laws

1 John 5:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Now 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
- He doesn’t want us to die of sickness, fail financially, or suffer emotional problems

However, if we don’t learn how faith works and begin to cooperate, the same laws which are meant to bless you will cause you to fail

- God cannot and will not violate His laws
- We must speak the language of faith

Romans 10:8 (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):

- There is power in words
- The ability to speak God’s words reflects God’s image in us
- In a sense, our words have the ability to create