

Great FAITH for GREAT Miracles

PETER YOUNGREN



CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	THE FAITH DILEMMA	7
CHAPTER 2	TWO WITH "GREAT FAITH"	21
CHAPTER 3	GREAT FAITH IS A GREAT JESUS	29
CHAPTER 4	FAITH OR MENTAL BELIEVING	39
CHAPTER 5	FAITH FLOURISHES BY GRACE	49
CHAPTER 6	FAITH IS RESTFUL	61
CHAPTER 7	FAITH AT THE END OF THE ROAD	71

CHAPTER 1



THE FAITH DILEMMA

The nineteen-year-old preacher was crouched on a rock just behind the little country church. Desperate to remain unnoticed by the people entering through the front door he agonized, “Oh God, give me faith. I’m trying so hard to believe. How can I have the faith of those early disciples?” He was clenching his fists in turmoil until his knuckles began to turn white, sincerely pleading with God. That young preacher was me.

Oh, how I wanted to experience God’s power just as I saw in the Book of Acts. The healing ministry of Jesus intrigued me. I wanted to see miracles, but I knew from Scripture I needed faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God, and I sure wanted my life to be pleasing to the Lord.

Many people feel they have some faith, but not enough. In spite of sincere attempts at producing faith, they find themselves coming up short time and again.

Others have experienced anguish over their per-

ceived lack of faith; especially those sick and needy, who may feel that a miracle has eluded them due to their lack of faith. That's why I invite you to join me on a discovery. We will look at two people, the only two, to whom Jesus ascribed not only faith, but "great faith." By the time you finish the pages of this book you will be rejoicing because you will know that you too can enjoy this "great faith."

If you have received Jesus Christ as your Savior, you will see that you already have faith. God has dealt a measure of faith to every person (Roman 12:3). Just like a car must have an engine to be a car, a believer has faith; otherwise he is not a believer. The moment we respond to God's love through Jesus, He imparts faith to us. You will discover how the faith you already have will increase and flourish: it will be made easy. *Faith will flow through you as freely as the blood flowing through your veins.* This "great faith" will not depend on your performance, but instead it is fully wrapped up in Jesus. Once you experience this kind of faith, a new world of possibilities will open to you.

One of the two to whom Jesus ascribed great faith was a mother crying out for her child, and the other was a Roman military officer desperately looking for healing on behalf of a paralyzed servant. Who were these two? What were their secrets? What is "great faith?" How can we enjoy this kind of faith today?

Faith is the key to everything God has promised

us. Jesus stated that even the smallest measurement of faith, a grain of mustard seed, is enough to speak to a mountain of impossibilities and it will be moved. Consequently, to enjoy "great faith" is a key to God's unlimited blessings. We certainly want to know what "great faith" is, but more importantly, *how* do we get it?

The answers may surprise you. In fact, the two individuals Jesus referred to as having "great faith" didn't even seem to know that they had "great faith." Interestingly, they appear to be unaware that they had any faith at all, and neither one of them showed any concern about attaining faith. Still, Jesus said they had it.

THE STRUGGLE FOR FAITH

To some the issue of faith poses a dilemma. On the one hand, God is the Source of everything. Everything we need is already available by God. If we need healing, joy, prosperity, blessings or miracles, God has all of these for us and the Bible gives us numerous promises about God's willingness to give. Jesus said, "Ask, and you shall receive." James writes, "You have not because you ask not." Jesus states that God's willingness to give far exceeds that of a parent desiring to give good things to their children. "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father *give* the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:13)

If God is willing to give to us, then why are some not receiving? This is a valid question. You may have heard

the statement, “God is not the problem: we are.” Let’s examine this statement for a moment. First, God has never changed. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. When we read of Jesus’ ministry, He never refused healing or blessing to anyone who came sincerely asking of Him. Jesus was never the problem.

Are we at times the problem? Yes, without a question. The only instance that someone did not receive a miracle from Jesus was because of their own unbelief, as was the case with the people in Jesus’ hometown of Nazareth. Jesus marvelled at their unbelief and He could not do any mighty miracle there. Jesus was not the problem; the people of Nazareth were.

However, in what way could we be a problem, since all we want is to receive from God, and He is willing to give to us? We need to be careful that this statement, “God is not the problem: we are,” does not lead to self-loathing and condemnation which are never from God. Jesus stated very clearly that He did not come to condemn people (John 3:17). We may erroneously surmise that we ought to look within ourselves to see what hindrances to faith may be in us. Introspection will not produce positive results or miracles in our lives. I caution you that to look inwardly will only lead to disappointment and insecurity. True miracles are only found in looking to Jesus Christ. The problem of the people of Nazareth was simply that they did not view Jesus properly. If they had only recognized Him for who He is, they could have received the same miracles people in

other towns enjoyed.

Frequently people will question, “Why don’t I have the blessings of God, especially since He wants to give them to me?” Many determine the problem is their own lack of faith, questioning how they can acquire more faith in order to access the promises they have heard are readily available from God. This idea of lacking faith is reinforced by people who tell you, “Well, you need more faith.” At times the struggle for this elusive quality called faith seems endless.

People study the principles of faith: reading and confessing God’s Word, visualizing God’s promises, rebuking the devil, and so on. When the answers to their prayers still elude them, they are told repeatedly, “You need more faith,” and so their struggle heightens.

Some work very hard at controlling what they say so as not to speak anything negative. Others put Scripture verses on prominent display in their home and car to always remind them of what God has said. This is important and good. I also display Scripture verses and statements by Jesus to keep them ever before me. However sadly, some do everything they can possibly think of to do, and yet still it seems nothing is happening. Faith appears increasingly to be an enigma or a mystery. “How can I get faith to work in my life?” becomes the nagging question.

If you pay attention to the words of Jesus, you notice how important faith is. Jesus rebuked the disciples for

their lack of faith. His words were, “Oh ye of little faith,” or “Why do you have no faith?” In fact, the only time you see Jesus slightly irritated is when He notices lack of faith in the disciples. So much more reason for us to pursue faith, since we certainly do not want to frustrate Jesus.

The Book of Hebrews says, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:6) Again, we are faced with the crucial necessity of faith.

THE “FAITH POLICE”

Some may have encountered what I call the “faith police.” These are individuals who think they have great faith and like to point out lack of faith in others. They seem to have all the answers and explanations for those who have seemingly not received an answer to their prayers. “You were not healed because you need more faith,” is their explanation. These individuals are often well-intentioned, but their words still condemn others for not thinking, confessing or imagining the promises of God as they should. The problem is further compounded because many of these “faith police” do not themselves enjoy the blessings of God. When they face impossible circumstances they also become discouraged and find themselves unable to obtain the answer to their prayers.

Do you see the perpetual problem we encounter on this treadmill of the pursuit of faith? The more we try to

have faith, the more it seems we never quite have it. It seems as elusive as the rainbow. You see the rainbow in the distance with its beautiful colors and majestic arch; yet as you race toward it, it vanishes out of sight completely unattainable. Some simply give up. You can hear them sigh, “Faith is not for me. It works for others, but I can’t get it to work in my life.”

MOVING MOUNTAINS

Jesus said, “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.” (Matthew 17:20)

There is no ambiguity in Jesus’ words. Faith in the mere size of a mustard seed will enable you to speak to a mountain to move, and it will move. We must take Jesus’ words at face value. There are only two possible explanations of His statement. Either Jesus was telling the truth or He wasn’t. Since Jesus is the truth, what are we to make of the fact that many people claim to have faith, but their “mountain” has not moved? Could it be that what we may have called “faith” is not the kind of faith Jesus spoke of at all?

At times people confuse the God-kind of faith, mountain-moving faith, with mental believing.

The difference between faith and mental believing is like night and day. Mental believing is exercised by every person on a daily basis. Our whole system of society whether banking, postal service, or business is built

on mental believing. When we open a box of cereal to eat breakfast, we do not logically and scientifically scrutinize every fiber or every flake; we believe what the package claims about the content. When we drop an envelope in the mailbox, we believe it will be delivered. With little exception, when we hear something on the radio, television, or read it in a newspaper we believe it to be true. This kind of believing has to do with the mind. It is metaphysical, which means it has to do with reason, logic and mental comprehension. Obviously it is not the kind of “faith” Jesus is speaking about when He refers to faith as a grain of mustard seed, the kind which enables you to speak to a mountain and it will move.

Jesus doesn’t say that if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will *at times* be able to move mountains. No, Jesus makes a blanket statement that “Nothing will be impossible for you,” and the mountain “will move.” This seems totally unrealistic and illogical to natural thinking. After repeated attempts at exercising this kind of faith some shrug it off saying, “It doesn’t work for me.”

In many churches today if the pastor were to announce a series of teachings on faith, there would be little excitement. The reason being, that people have already heard numerous teachings on faith and feel disillusioned when it has not worked as told to them it should.

I have seen thousands of people healed: the lame, blind, deaf, mute, lepers, cancer cases, humanly impos-

sible cases. At the same time I walked away from many a service with shouts of rejoicing echoing in my ears as people celebrated the miracles that happened. I rejoiced with the others, but in my mind’s eye I could also vividly see those who had not been healed. My heart ached for them. I have seen the lame walk, but I have also witnessed scenes where concerned Christians gathered around a wheelchair encouraging the sick person, rebuking the devil, even lifting the suffering one out of the wheelchair and trying to get them to walk only to have to put them back in the chair.

This is a far cry from Jesus, who said that faith in the smallest measurement conceivable meant “nothing will be impossible.”

I don’t claim to know everything, but the truths I share in this book are answers to questions I have had. My own soul has been satisfied by the answers I bring to you. Jesus has ministered these truths to me and faith has become easy. When we cease our pursuit of faith and allow the sweet presence of Jesus to flow through us, astounding miracles happen. All things are possible when Jesus’ own faith becomes our faith. *This is the only faith that works.*

JESUS’ OWN FAITH

The apostle Paul said, “I live by the faith *of* the Son of God.” There is a giant step between faith in Christ and the faith *of* Christ. It was no longer the apostle’s attempt at having faith in Christ, but now the very faith

of Christ had become his. Simon Peter gives a similar testimony when he explains how the lame man was healed not by Simon Peter's faith or holiness, but by the faith that works through Jesus (Acts 3:16).

Maybe you, my reader, have struggled and wondered what could be the obstacle in your life. Possibly you have been encouraged to look inwardly to discover and root out hindrances. A lady recently approached me, "Pastor Peter, I am concerned that there are hindrances in me and that's why my family is not enjoying healing." I responded gently to her, "Surely there are hindrances in you, and furthermore there are hindrances in me and in every person that ever sought for God's healing and miracle supply. In fact, we could find some hindrance in every person if we looked hard enough. However, we are not to research and try to discern the hindrances within us because we will only discover more and more reasons why we should not experience the blessings of God." I continued, "Rather, we look at Jesus in whom there are no hindrances. All the promises of God are ours in Christ Jesus, not on the basis of what we have done, but because of Him." God's promises are received by us, not because of our obedience, but because of Jesus' obedience.

This is what Paul proclaimed, "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you...was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes. For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us." (2 Corinthians 1:19-20) Notice that

God's promises are "yes" and "amen" in Jesus. This way God gets all the glory as He works through us. We cannot credit our own diligence or any goodness in us, but all the credit goes to the Lord Jesus Christ.

IT'S DIFFERENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Don't construe my words to mean that we should not obey God's Word. On the contrary, when we discover the promises of God are already ours in Jesus, we will want to be even more obedient to His Word. In the Old Testament, before the death and resurrection of Jesus, people tried to obey God in order to obtain His promises. We, who live in the New Testament after the death and resurrection of Jesus, do not work to obtain God's promises. These promises are already ours because of what Jesus has done. We obey God, not to obtain His favor, but because all God's favor belongs to us in Jesus.

In the Old Testament people made sacrifices and prayers in order to obtain blessings from God, while now in the New Testament we do things because of all Christ has done for us. They were obedient to God in order to please Him; we are obedient to God because He has saved us and given us a new life. God is now pleased because of what Jesus has done.

Before Jesus' death and resurrection, people petitioned God for His blessings. This kind of prayer is no longer appropriate because the apostle Paul says, "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.” (Ephesians 1:3) Here we clearly see that God already has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. We don’t need to ask for that which we already have. This is an eye-opener to many. God has already blessed us. Now the proper prayer is to thank God for the blessings we have in Christ. When everything around us looks dark and hopeless, we still praise God for what His Word says we already have.

At times we need to ask the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to see what we have *now*. Paul the apostle prayed, “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, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.” (Ephesians 1:18-19) Do you see the stark difference? In the Old Testament people prayed in order to get blessed. Now in the New Covenant, we ask God to show us more clearly the inheritance we already have.

In order to have great faith it is very important to recognize which side of the cross we live in. We live after the cross; Jesus has already put away the world’s sins and carried our sicknesses. This is vastly different from life prior to Christ’s death and resurrection. Christ’s righteousness has now been credited to our account, and on the basis of His righteousness we inherit all of God’s goodness and promises.

We no longer love in order to obtain God’s love; we love God because He first loved us. We pray *not* to obtain the victory or the blessing, but because the victory is already ours in Christ. Similarly, we don’t try to have faith by our own effort, but *we have faith because we are linked with the author and the finisher of our faith, who is Jesus Christ Himself.*

The two individuals who enjoyed “great faith” connected with Jesus and saw their “mountains” move. How did they tap into this Jesus-kind of faith? What was their secret? The purpose of this book is to help the reader discover Jesus just like the two people who had “great faith” discovered Him. Almost invariably before I preach or even speak one-on-one with a needy person, I ask the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus to people. My best sermons will be ineffective and my prayers will be powerless unless Jesus is clearly shown to people. That’s my prayer for you, that the Holy Spirit will reveal Jesus, and that He will become big to you.