

What Did Jesus Say About Faith?

The world, by enlarge, has lost sight of what real faith is. Many today are saying, “*My faith isn't very strong,*” or, *I just can't seem to work up faith.*” Jesus was looking into the future, to this present generation and speaking prophetically, foreseeing the almost total absence of faith, asked, “***When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?***” (Luke 18:8). When Jesus walked the earth in human flesh, He possessed faith that enabled Him to do the mighty works which He did.. He plainly said, “*of Myself, I can do nothing.*” Few people fail to realize that when Jesus did the miracles He performed, He did not do by supernatural power of His own. Everything He did, every miracle He performed, done through *faith* – setting every believer a beautiful example.

Jesus performed His miracles and accomplished His mighty works through faith. He said, “***The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works.***” And God has made it possible for us also to perform mighty works – through faith!

Jesus was filled with God's Holy Spirit, works God's dynamic supernatural power. This power of God Almighty, the ***same identical power*** that Jesus exhibited on earth as a Man – the ***same power of the same identical Living God – may be within you today!***

All the apostles and evangelists of the First Century performed miracles, even *greater* miracles than Jesus had performed. There were all common, humble, ordinary men, yet they *all had that power – the SAME identical power Jesus had*, because they lived and walked close to God and were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Many Christians lack power today, not because God denies them that power, but rather, because they live so close to a modern, materialistic, world that their minds are filled with the *material* interests of this life, their minds and their hearts far from God, they are so out of touch with Him, through lack of time spent in His Word and lack of surrendered, submissive, to earnest, heartrending prayer. Consequently, they are not filled with the Holy Spirit and lack faith.

What is Faith?

Hebrews 11:1 tells us, “***Faith is the substance (ASSURANCE) of things hoped for.***” Faith comes *before* possession. Once we have received the *possession*, one no longer *hopes* for it. *Before* one receives the possession, he can have it in SUBSTANCE; that substance is the ASSURANCE that he will possess it – that is faith! Faith is an **EVIDENCE** - the “*evidence of things not seen.*” Faith *precedes* the actual receiving of what one asks for.

Faith is the EVIDENCE we *shall* have the possession *before* we even see it. It is the EVIDENCE of things *not yet seen*. We do not have it, but we *see* it and *feel* it. Faith is the EVIDENCE that we have it. Faith is the substance (ASSURANCE) of receiving that which we hope for.

7 Biblical Ingredients for FAITH

Christ's prescription for faith as taught in Mark 11:22-24

Mark 11 22-24, "And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain be thou removed and be cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

(1.) "... faith OF God"

The first Biblical ingredient for faith is to realize that every Christian already has, at least a *measure*, of faith!

The actual rendering of verse 22 reads, "have the faith OF God" – This is a different meaning all together than, have faith IN God. Faith not something we can generate. It must come FROM God!

Romans 12:3 says, "God hath dealt to every man a measure of faith." It is important to remember that God is speaking here to Christians (Romans 1:7). God has given every believer a measure of faith.

- Ephesians 2:8 tell us that "*faith is the **GIFT OF GOD.***"
- Romans 10:17 tells us that, "*faith cometh by hearing the Word of God.*"
- Hebrews 12:2 says that Jesus is the "*Author and Finisher of our faith,*"
Jesus begins and finishes faith in a person's heart.
- Galatians 2:16 teaches, that "*faith is OF Christ.*"

It is important for us to realize that it is not our faith, but rather it is the faith OF Jesus Christ. Paul says in Galatians 2:20, "*I live by the faith of the Son of God.*"

- Jesus refers in Acts 26:18 to, "*the faith that is in Me!*"
- Ephesians 3:12 says, "*we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith OF Him*" ...(That is, of Jesus Christ). It is not our faith, it is God's faith in us! If you are a Christian, *you have faith* – at least a *measure* of faith.
- In John 15:7 Jesus said, "*If ye abide in Me, and My words - (it is His words that produces faith in us according to Romans 10:17)...abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done!*"

FAITH is the GIFT OF GOD.

Many believe that faith is something that one must somehow work up, or strain and strive for, but God's Word tells us to just relax and TRUST God, for faith which we receive from Him.

- Revelation 14:12 speaks of the, "*faith of the saints which is faith OF Jesus.*"

Always remember, it is not *our* faith, but *His* faith – the very faith which Christ performed His miracles God has placed in us and acting in us by the power of the Holy Spirit!

How can one get this faith OF Christ?

The way to receive this faith is to draw closer to God, get to *know* God, surrenders *all the way* to Him in prayer. Many are so close to the *material* things. It is through prayer that comes closer to God and *spiritual* things. And what a happy, joyous experience it is, once one has really done it!

You have a measure of faith, use it!

(2.) "... shall not **DOUBT**..."

The second Biblical ingredient is to realize - that faith is increased as one feeds on God's Word and exercises it!

The word "*doubt*" in Mark 11:23 does not mean the absence of faith, but, rather, unused faith.

When Jesus was speaking to His disciples concerning their faith, He said in Matthew 17:20, "*Because of your unbelief; for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.*"

The original Greek word which is translated "*unbelief*" in Matthew 17:20, actually means "*little faith*"...(as your Bible margin will reveal). **This is an important Bible truth!** The word "*unbelief*" does not mean **no** faith. It is not the absence of faith, but, rather, it means "*little faith*", or, in other words **UNUSED FAITH!**

Jesus never accused the disciples of not having any faith, but, rather, He encouraged them to use the faith that they did have in order that it would grow!

They had faith, however, it was like a *seed* unplanted. They had a measure of faith, but they were not using it!

Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 4:4), "*Man shall not live...(that is "grow")...by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.*" What is it that God's Word causes to grow within us? Romans 10:17 tells us that it is **faith!**

Mark 4:26-28 speaks of a man casting a seed into the ground and then he sleeps. The seed grows, he knoweth not how. The earth simply brings forth **AUTOMATICALLY**. He doesn't go out and examine the seed to see it is growing, nor does he sit and wonder if it is growing, he just plants it and goes to sleep **AND IT GROWS**. So it is, Jesus said, with the seed of God's Word. We just plant it in our hearts and it grows - produces faith - **AUTOMATICALLY**. We don't examine our life to see if faith is growing, we just plant the seed, and "*it bringeth forth fruit of its self.*"

(3.) "When ye stand praying, **FORGIVE . . .**"

The third Biblical ingredient of faith is to realize that, faith will not operate in an "unforgiving" heart!

Mark 11:25 states, "**AND** when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."

This is the **only** qualification Jesus put on the operation of this God-faith in our hearts

God would never ask anyone to do something which they could not do, therefore, with the help of the Holy Spirit, one **can** have a forgiving heart!

Forgiving someone does not have to be a long drawn out affair, taking several days, or even hours, because God said, "When ye **stand** praying..." How long can you stand and pray? That's how long it will take to forgive.

Jesus tells us we are to forgive "seventy times seven," and, then, He follows this statement up with a parable in Matthew 18:21-27, which teaches us that if God forgave us so much, then, we certainly should be willing to forgive others no matter what they may have done.

It is **imperative** that we forgive if we expect God to answer our prayers!

(4.) ". . . shall not doubt in his **HEART . . .**"

The fourth Biblical ingredient for faith is to realize that faith is of the heart and not of the head!

Mark 11:23 states, "...and shall not doubt in his **heart**..."

Romans 10:10 states, "For with the **heart** man believeth..."

In Scripture, man's heart and his spirit are basically the same. Romans 2:29 uses the words interchangeably when it refers to man's "heart," as his "spirit."

When one accepts Jesus Christ as his Savior, he is made new, according to 2 Corinthians 5:17. What was made new? It was the **inward** man...the hidden man of the heart, according to 1 Peter 3:4 and 2 Corinthians 4:16. It is not one's **mind**, that is made new at the moment he accepts Christ, nor is it his **body** which is made new, but, rather, it is his **spirit** which is new in Christ Jesus!

Salvation is a "**spiritual**" experience, because it is one's **spirit** which is made alive at the moment of salvation! **After**, however, one is saved, he needs to do something about his "body"...(that is, the actions of the body)...and his "mind," according to Romans 12:1-2.

God teaches us that man has a mind, he also has a "flesh-nature," and he, also, has a spirit...(or **heart**)...and, it is with "the heart" that he **believes**.

Man's heart, fortified with the Word of God, believes, even when his head may say, "*it can't be done!*" He believes in his heart! Man's **heart** convinces his **head**, not visa versa!

(5.) "...whosoever shall **SAY**..."

**The fifth Biblical fact for faith is to realize that
faith is released as one confesses with his mouth.**

Mark 11:23 states, "...whosoever shall **say**..."

"...shall believe that those things which he **saith**..."

and "...shall have whatsoever he **saith**."

Three times we are told to **say it!** Praying is not enough!

If one believe it, but does not say it, it is not enough. If one says it and doesn't believe it, it is not enough. He must believe it, and, then, he must say it

Jesus said, "*What you **say** will come to pass.*"

I know the danger of "*confessing theology*" and how that some have misused this Biblical truth...the "*name it and claim it*" doctrine that has disappointed so many...however, we must not pass over a Scriptural truth, just because some have taken it and stretched it out of shape and attempted to use it for their own advantage. We don't *claim material* "things" or selfish comforts, but, **in faith**, we claim God's promises from His Word!

Proverbs 6:2 states, "*Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth,*" or, as The Bible in Basic English states this verse, "*You are taken as in a net by the words of your mouth, the sayings of your lips have overcome you.*"

Even though God never intended man to selfishly "**confess**" for material, or, just, enjoyable things in life, His Word does teach that there is great power in what we "**say**."

If one talks **failure**, his words will hold him in bondage and, if he talks **fear**, fear will grip him. It's just a fact of life, that, if one confesses sickness, he opens the door to what he confesses!

David, the Psalmist, prayed to God, "*Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips,*" (Psalm 141:3)...and he, also, prayed..."*Let the words of my mouth...be acceptable in Thy sight O Lord*" (Psalm 19:14).

You can confess "**words of faith**" until they become a part of your heart!

Romans 10:6 tells us that there are things we are **not** to say, when it states, "*say not in thine heart*" and the 8th verse adds these words, "*The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is **THE WORD OF FAITH**...*"

We overcome Satan by the "*blood of the lamb **and** by **the word** of testimony,*" according to Revelation 12:11.

When considering faith, there are three things to consider:

- (1) What do the symptoms say?
- (2) What does God's Word say?, and
- (3) What do **YOU** say?

We are held captive by the words of our mouth, therefore, we must deliver ourselves by our **confession!**

Hebrews 10:23 states, "*Hold fast the profession...(the margin of your Bible tells us that this word is also translated, `confession')...of our faith without wavering; for He...(God) ...is faithful that promised.*"

This text in Hebrews 10:23 tells us that we are to **CONFESS OUR FAITH** boldly. Just believing in one's heart is not enough, he must **say** it!

Notice Hebrews 3:1 also, states, "*Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.*" (Again, the word profession is also translated "**confession**," just look in your Bible margin.) Christ is the High Priest of our "**confession**"...the High Priest of what we **say!**

Job 1:6 states, "*There was a day when the sons of God...(the Old Testament term for `created beings,' in this case, "angels")...came to present themselves **BEFORE THE LORD** and **SATAN** came also **AMONG THEM**.*" The spirit, created, beings of God were gathered before Him - and **Satan** was there with them.

Revelation 12:10 states that Satan is "*the accuser of the brethren, accusing them **BEFORE GOD** day and night.*"

Now follow closely. In 1 John 2:1, we are told that Jesus is our "**Advocate**" (or, pleads our case...intercedes for us...counsel for our defense) *with the Father.*" He is pleading our cause against the accusations of Satan. Remember that, Christ Jesus is our "**High Priest of our confession.**"

Whenever we are going through a trial, test, or temptation, Satan watches, in order that he can accuse us before God, however, Jesus is bending low to hear our confession - **to hear what we will say**, and, if we are grumbling, complaining, or charging God foolishly, we are loading Satan's cannon...giving him ammunition to accuse us with...however, if our confession is, "*thanks be unto God Who always causes us to triumph in Christ Jesus,*" then Christ takes our **CONFESSION** and presents it before the throne of God!

Scriptures says of Job, "*In all this...(that is, in all the trials that took place in his life) ...he sinned not **WITH HIS LIPS.***"

We must "**say**"...confess...that we are **in** Christ...that we **are** redeemed. Confess we **are** a new creature in Christ Jesus. Shout it out! Your words will deliver you!

You are not a poor, weak, staggering, sinning member of the body of Christ, but, rather, you are created in Christ Jesus. The nature of God is in you. Confess it! Say it!

Of the twelve spies who went into Canaan, only two said, "***We can do it, we can go in and possesses the land.***" And, of the twelve, they were the only ones who did!

The time has for us to "say," because there is power in words.

In the very beginning, God **said**, and creation happened...the worlds came into being. Psalms 33:6 states, "*By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,*" and verse 9 adds, "*He spoke and it was done.*" Hebrews 11:3 states, "*God upholds all things by the **WORD** of His power!*"

The miracles, which Jesus performed, came about through the "words" which He spoke. We read statements in Scripture like:

*"Jesus **saith** unto them, fill the water pots with water"...*
*"He **said** to the nobleman, `Go thy way, thy son liveth"...*
*"He **said** to the impotent man, `Rise, take up thy bed and walk" ...*
*"He **said** to the blind man, `Go wash in the pool of Siloam" ...*
*"He **said** to Lazarus who had been dead four days, `Come forth" ...*
*"He **said** to the man with the withered hand, `Stretch forth thine hand."*

It would take all day to bring out all the instances in Scripture where things happened through the power of the spoken word.

The time has come when we need to be doing something about our faith...**say it!**

***"Whosoever shall say...
and shall believe that those things which he saith
shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith!"***

There is power in the spoken word. There is power in our saying it!

Elijah said, "*There shall not be dew, nor rain, these years according to **my** words.*" And, it happened just as he said!

Do you have enough faith to "say the word?"

The reason many do not speak the word, is because they do not think anything will happen!

Goliath stood over David nine feet tall! He had a helmet of brass and a spear like a weavers beam. He yelled down to David, "*I'll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field.*"

Our troubles stand over us, threatening us, roaring down at us like the giant Goliath!

David didn't pray then, he "**spoke**" and said, "*This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand, and I will make thee and take thine heard from thee.*"

That's the way God works!

He has not changed His method. He is still looking for people through whom He can speak the "*word of faith!*"

(6.) "What things soever ye **DESIRE** . . ."

The sixth Biblical ingredient for faith is to realize - that faith exercises importunity!

Mark 11: 24 states, "What things soever you *desire* . . ."

It is imperative that one understands just what this word "*desire*" actually means, if he is to ever clearly understand what Christ is saying here in Mark 11:24.

This word "*desire*" is exactly the **same Greek word that is translated "ask"** in all of the following Scriptures:

Matthew 7:7, which states, "**Ask** and it shall be given thee . . ."

In John 15:7, Jesus states, "*If ye abide in Me, and my words abide in you, ye shall **as** what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*"

Matthew 21:22 states, "*All things, whatsoever ye shall **ask** in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*"

James 1:6 states, "**Ask** in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."

1 John 3:22 states, "*Whatsoever we **ask** we receive of Him . . .*"

1 John 5:15 states, "*Whatsoever we **ask** we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.*"

It is **IMPORTANT** for the student to realize that the verb of this Greek word, which is translated as "*desire*" here in Mark 11:24...[and "*ask*" in these others passages of Scriptures]...is in the **PRESENT TENSE**, thus, implying a **continued** action!

The word literally means, "*to desire so fervently that one keeps on asking!*"

Now, how can prayer be both "*believing*" and "*persistent*" at the same time? Our human reasoning says, "*If I ask God for anything, faith believes it will be done and it is doubt to ask again.*" This is "**human reasoning**," and not what Scripture teaches!

Jesus makes this truth of "**importunity**" very clear in the parables which He uses whenever He was teaching on the subject of prayer.

1. The friend who comes for bread at midnight - Luke 11:5-8

2. The unjust judge avenging the widow of her adversary - Luke 18:1-5

These two parables, which Jesus gave on prayer teaches one central theme, mainly: ***It is persistent entreaty that will win.*** **KEEP ASKING!** - (K.R.O.P.)

We must believe that the answer is **already** given, as Mark 11:24 states (It states, "*believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*") However, to **renew one's request** is not a sign of doubt, but, rather, faith and importunity are compatible according to God's Word.

It is, also, important to realize that **importunity is NOT presumption!** It is not taking for granted, without Scriptural authority, that God will answer just any "*desire*" one makes in prayer to Him!

One must not overstep the proper bounds of Scriptural praying, or, suppose that just any "*whim*" which may flit through his mind will be granted by.

THAT IS NOT IMPORTUNITY!

Neither is importunity just *repetition*, mumbling the formula of a prayer wheel. Nor is importunity just frequently stating a request, or prayers that are freighted with words.

Note, just what Jesus said to the woman of Canaan in Matthew 15:21-28. Jesus answered her persistence by saying, "***O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.***" This faith, which Jesus praised, was a faith which continued to ask until she received what he wanted!

We learn from Matthew 15:21-28 that faith is to simply trust God's heavenly goodness. It simply says to God, "*This is my burden, Father, I spread it out before You.*" And, then, this faith, claims God's promises and lays hold of His willingness.

Faith, trusts, as it submits to God, and, at the same time, it wrestles, as it persists in prayer.

How can one do both? The natural minds would say, "*It cannot be done,*" however, God says one can do both at the same time!

Importunity tests one's **will**. Importunity shows just how badly does one really *desires* his request? Importunity measures the drift of one's faith and how much determination he has.

Going back to the woman of Canaan in Matthew 15, note that in verse 23, she was, seemingly, met with silence on the part of Jesus and, then, in verse 24, Jesus seems to discourage her, however, in verse 25, she simply cries, "***Lord, help me!***" Then, in verse 26, Jesus tests her even farther, however, she would not be denied, and cries out again in verse 27.

Jesus *appeared* to be indifferent to her need, apparently rejected her request, however, she pleads her case. and, as a result, Jesus responded...as He **always** does to a seeking heart...and He said, "*Oh woman, great is your faith: be it unto you even as you will.*"

Why did she persist? The answer to this question is, she persisted because she believed that in spite of the silence, and what seemingly was a rebuff on the part of Jesus, she believe that He really cared about her need.

Do we really believe that God cares about our needs enough to present them to Him again and again...never doubting, but, rather, being ever persistent in our prayers?

One can have the assurance that his prayers are heard...that the answer is on the way ...and, yet, at the same time, have rest and assurance...accompanied with an impassioned importunity that asks, and keeps asking, until the request is a reality.

Importunity is the prayer of faith, not unbelief! It is bringing petitions to God - again and again - like the friend asking for bread at midnight - like the widow seeking to be avenged of her adversary - like the woman of Canaan - not doubting that God heard the first time, but, realizing He is our Heavenly Father, believes in His promises, and spreads the matter out before Him **again!**

Matthew 7:7-8 tells us, *'Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.'*

(7.) "What things soever YE . . ."

**The seventh Biblical ingredient for faith
is to realize - that faith always works!**

Mark 11:24 states, *"What things soever YE desire, when YE pray, believe that YE receive them and YE shall have them."*

There is no exception [*except having a forgiving heart*] to having this faith. It will work for **YOU!**

Psalms 34:9 states, *"...there is no want to them that fear Him!"* And verse 10 states, *"...they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."*

Psalms 84:11 states, *"...no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."*

Matthew 21:22 states, *"All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."*

Mark 9:23 states, *"If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."*

John 15:7 states, *"...ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you."*

John 15:16 states, *"...whatsoever ye shall ask of My Father in My name, He will give it you."*

Mark 11:24 is speaking of **YOUR OWN** needs. Whenever someone wants us to pray for **THEIR** needs, then there are different "*rules*," such as in Matthew 18:19] however, here in Mark 11:24, it is speaking of YOUR OWN personal needs which you are praying about and believing God for.

Mark 11:21-24 teaches that, when one prays, if his answer does not come then it means:

- (1) He is not using the measure of faith which God gave him,
- (2) He has an unforgiving heart,
- (3) He is not letting his "*heart*" rule his "*head*",
- (4) He is not *confessing* his faith, or,
- (5) He is not importune about his asking.

God's Word is true!

It will not let you down!

You have faith.