

The Faith that Works by Love

I have a Nissan Pathfinder and I'm happy with it. I fill it up with gas. I treat it right. And it takes me where I need to go. Once however, we accidentally put diesel into the tank. Wanna know what happened? It didn't GO. It STOPPED! And it was a big mess to get it cleaned-out and back into working condition.

For in Jesus Christ,
neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision;

but faith which worketh by love

Galatians 5:6

A lot of us have made the same mistake with our faith. We have tried to fill it up on a belief in God's POWER; but faith doesn't work by power – *It functions* (produces results) *by unconditional love*. And if we 'fill' our faith with anything less than the mercies of God's love, it will leave us stranded by the side of whatever spiritual path we find ourselves on, **going nowhere**.

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God; but that faith produces nothing until it anchors itself into an 'expectation.' And as you will see in the following verses; the hope you anchor your faith into is very important.

When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed (Jesus)

And behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying,

"Lord, **if you are willing**, you can make me clean."

And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying,

"I am willing; be cleansed."

And immediately, his leprosy was cleansed.

Matthew 8:1-3

Jesus taught us that 'from the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.' The Apostle Paul said, '...we also believe, and therefore speak.' On the basis of these truths, it is fair to say that this leprosy man spoke two very specific and important things from his heart that day which we should all take a very close look at.

1. I believe you have the **power** to heal me [as the Son of God]
2. I am not sure that you will do it [as the **Perfect Love** of God]

This man's faith didn't doubt who Jesus was because, *he worshipped him*. It is obvious to me that his faith did not doubt Jesus' power either, because he said, "...you CAN make me clean.' What is equally obvious to me however by the words he spoke, is that in his heart, this man genuinely doubted Jesus' willingness (His motive to act or refrain from acting.) *His faith couldn't discern the motive of Jesus' love*. And that is our problem as well.

Are We Close Enough?

We really need to take a close look at this in ourselves. Yes, we worship. And we are sincere in giving that worship to God. Yet, it doesn't make-up for a subtle unbelief in His love which often chokes off our ability to 'receive' as well as give.

This often annuls the greater testimony God wants to bring forth in our lives. Yes, we easily believe in the all-powerful nature and ability of our God; but do we have an intimate enough knowledge of His love to see...not only His ability to work miraculously in '**anyone**,' but also...His yearning to manifest a testimony of love '**in us**' unto His own glory? (There is a huge difference between the two)

At the heart of this doubt is the idea that we are accepted or rejected by God on the basis of our 'own goodness' in some way. That is not however how God's love works.

Our God is a God of justice. And the highest and most perfect justice ever known is the mercy which proceeds from His nature of love. If once we look toward God with a mind that considers merit instead of mercy, we can't **SEE** His Person. His Perfect Love disappears from sight because, in reality, we are looking at ourselves; at our problem; and at our need.

All of these things block us from **SEEING** the Lord of glory. And this up-side-down perspective causes us to fall short of the faith that allows miracles to manifest within our lives.

Faith worketh by love. It is designed to produce an outward testimony in the world. And the secret to seeing this testimony realized or not is about how a particular spirit of love works in (capacitates) our faith - **A love that wants to see God recognized; God honored; and God glorified ahead of our personal benefit from that very testimony.**

The man said to Jesus, '*I know you can, but I don't know if you will.*' Beloved, anytime there is an 'if' like that in your faith, there is a debilitating unbelief and double-mindedness there that will cause your faith to crumble.

Marvelously, Jesus' response to this man demonstrated His love in spite of the man's doubt. And He did so before He ever spoke a word to him; for though the man was a leper, Jesus reached out and touched him. And if you have eyes to see it...*the words that followed were simply an affirmation of the love expressed in that touch.*

The critical point you must see here however is that, it was not just the man's attitude of worship. It was his intimate proximity of relationship in that worship. *He was close enough to be touched.*

Posture & Proximity

The man worshipped Jesus because he '**saw**' something. He '**saw**' his Messiah. He '**saw**' the truth. He saw something outside of all natural experience with the inner eye of his faith. And in the Greek, the Bible doesn't say, he worshipped. It says he literally fell prostrate (*proskyneô*) and said, "I know that if You want to, You can heal me."

I can't say what was in that man's heart or mind, but I can tell you from personal experience that one of two things are SEEN from that position of worship.

In the light of the face of the glory of God, I can see my own utter powerlessness and 'hope' He will COME and help me. Or, when I see that powerlessness, I see Jesus in the very center of it; holding out a blood-bought testimony for me to accept which will glorify the Father.

Over time, the Lord has helped me to adjust my focus of faith to the understanding of this new view. I am learning to bow down in my weakness. To literally bow down 'into' it. And from that prostrate posture of personal worship; I don't ask for or long for miracles anymore.

I don't need to experience anything that feels powerful to my feelings or looks powerful to my eyes. Instead, I find that all I want in my proximity to Him is for others to SEE what I am SEEING - **The Lord in His glory**. *How He manifests that glory is entirely up to Him.*

Again, I can't speak for others, but personally, when I realize that the Lord is present 'in my weakness' to show forth a testimony of Himself; I lean deeper into that weakness to embrace His Person there. In my weakness, an intimate connection takes place. It is grounded in a desire for Him to be seen and known as I see Him in His glory. And when that connection takes place by the love that wants Him known...things happen!

God is urgently trying to get us to grasp this truth. "Don't focus your faith on My power" He is saying. "Draw near to My Person. Get close to Me in an attitude of intimate worship. *Reach for Me. Long for Me. Yearn for Me til you're close enough to see the love in my eyes and feel My heartbeat in your own. For when you are that close, I WILL touch you.*"

The Lord wants us to understand something. It is not about having a perfect faith or a large faith or even a sacrificial faith; *at least not first*. It is first about having a humbled, 'rightly focused' faith that yearns first after a relational experience of intimacy with His Person.

Adjusting Our Priority of Focus

Faith worketh by love; but the love spoken about in that verse has a particular focus on God Himself being seen and known 'in testimony.' What comes forth must be birthed out of an unselfish and unconditional love - *A love that wants to see God recognized; God honored, and God glorified ahead of our personal benefit from the testimony He realizes in us.*

For a fallen human being, this is an altogether un-natural posture. In this posture of unconditional love, God being seen and known by other men in undeniable testimony takes precedence over all self-benefit. And if humbling ourselves into this posture is not the first and center focus of our personal faith; then our faith is in spiritual breach.

Sadly, it is a very common expectation (perspective) of many people's faith that they are to wait for 'power' to come down upon them to 'do something for them.' Yet, all along; Jesus is seated on His throne waiting for them to come in unto Him to 'obtain' (receive) what has already been purchased at the cross; a waiting testimony that will glorify Him in the earth.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace,
that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need.

Hebrews 4:16

Jesus seated forever as High Priest wishes for us to 'come in' unto Him to receive an inherited treasury of such testimonies. They were purchased for each of us with His redeeming blood over 2000 years ago. And His Word is clear. It distinctly says that 'we are to come' in unto God to obtain what already exists. And this we are able to do on the basis of the shed blood of Jesus.

Faith in Breach

When we seek to connect with God on the basis of His power, what we are doing is calling Him to 'come down to us' and do something more in the earth...*something unfinished*. We are asking Him to add something to the finished work of the cross. And when we do this, *we declare the sacrifice of the cross to be insufficient!*

Having our faith ill-positioned in this way is like having a baby in the womb in a breach position. Before he can be born, he must be 'turned around.' And for us to turn our faith around to the proper biblical identification with Christ, and the more perfect will of God; we must understand and begin to live three things:

We Must Judge Ourselves in Mercy

If we do not love ourselves from a perspective of mercy; we cannot love our neighbor as our self and we cannot effectively love God. Only from the foundation of mercy (in lieu of any merit-by-works) can we love others; love ourselves; and love God. Only in the nature of mercy can we be found truly made into the image of God.

Mercy Must Become Our Nature

We must become what we hope to obtain. "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. [For] Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy." *Mercy is the foundation for our identification with the nature of God.*

Mercy Must Be Understood as Our Authority

Instead of seeing mercy as some sort of passive force; we must come to see it as the identifying substance of our co-ministering authority. We are forgiven, healed, and liberated with the purpose of being 'crowned' with loving-kindness and tender mercies. And with this authority, we are not only to live free, *but set others free as well*.

Not Somebody Else

The world didn't believe Jesus for His words alone and they won't believe you or your church for just words either. Jesus will watch over His Word it to perform it in your life however if you will believe with your faith for Him to actually do so.

You have to get it into your head that, it is not somebody else that God wants to manifest His testimony in - **It is you!** Yet for that testimony to take place; your faith is going to have to be looking for His Person, not His power.

There is no long line of 'Obtainers' standing in front of you. (I wish there were) Instead, God is desperately looking for someone...anyone merciful...who will humbly offer their life to Him as a platform for a testimony which shows His Word to be true beyond theory.

If you are reading this, then I'm telling you -**You are the person He's looking for.** And your impossible situation is the very platform upon which He desires to manifest the Father's glory.

I encourage you to make a decision in faith to humble yourself; to believe; and to draw really near to Him in a most personal way. Get close. *Get closer.* Get 'intimately' close. And let yourself be touched with a testimony that will glorify God.

"I will do it" He says

Do you believe Him?