

# The Unimaginable Power of Faith

By

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## **A faithless miracle-seeker meets a faithless miracle-worker: The result is gargantuan failure. No show!**

The criticism was scathing. But then, the Master was aghast! The man's complaint was truly disturbing. He steps forward from the crowd to report: "Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. <sup>16</sup> And I brought him to Thy disciples, and they could not cure him" (Matt. 17:15-16).

Yet the man's own spiritual preparedness was no better. He came to Jesus plagued with doubts. <sup>21</sup>"And He [Messiah] asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. <sup>22</sup>And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if Thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. <sup>23</sup>Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. <sup>24</sup>And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:21-24).

The result was not surprising. By the Master's evaluation, it was a meeting of faithless elements engaged in a fruitless spiritual exercise! Nonetheless, He had harsh words for only His disciples.

## **A bunch of faithless believers!**

He called them "faithless and perverse generation" and bemoaned His long stay and patience with them: "how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?" (Matt. 17:17).

They were believers – the very disciples of Christ – and it was incongruous for them to be labeled "faithless". But then, He explained, things had turned out this way because they were not believers of the ideal type but of a "perverse" category ("generation"), meaning "turned aside, corrupted, twisted". In the Greek "faithless" is '*apistos*' and means "untrustworthy", not worthy of confidence or belief, unbelieving, distrustful.

It's a paradoxical, inglorious label to put on a believer! "A faithless and perverse generation"! Faithlessness turns believers into ugly objects in God's sight. We become untrustworthy, twisted and rebellious! We become poor witnesses of His power, poor conductors of His power.

And to think the disciples attempted to cast out the demon of epilepsy out of the sick boy while God knew them to be "faithless" because they were "perverse" (in their attitude) despite their long stay with Jesus! They went through the motions alright – praying, commanding the evil spirit to leave, some stomping on the ground and shouting at the evil spirit – but they didn't really believe it would work because they remained spiritually immature despite their long stay with the Master and the miracles

they had seen Him do. Instead of gaining in faith, their spiritual development remained stunted and warped – bare of faith and fruit!

So then, religious ritual and observances if denuded of real faith – even if they are Biblical – produce little results or none at all.

### **Be responsive to Divine rebuke**

The disciples' response to the Master's rebuke was not to take offence or umbrage at His criticism but to humbly go to Him for direction and further enlightenment. "Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?" (v.19).

This is the right way to respond to the rebuke of the Lord: "despise not thou the chastening of the Lord." It's a rebuke of love; "be zealous therefore, and repent" (Heb. 12:5-6; Job 5:17-18; Rev. 3:19). So take His rebuke in your stride and use it as a stepping stone to greater faith.

But what should we do?

### **Have true living faith**

The Master's recommendation is to have genuine living faith which vindicates itself by its results.

But first, He pointed out to them their flaw: "[You could not cast out the demon] Because of your unbelief" (v. 20<sup>a</sup>). Then He explained further: "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" (20<sup>b</sup>).

The mustard-seed was the smallest of all seeds, but produced the largest of all herbs (see Matt. 13:31-32). The power of a seed is not its size (though the larger the size the greater the outward impression) but its embryo, the life principle!

So by "mustard seed" the Master calls not for an impressive outward show of faith but for quality faith which "no matter how small, is life, and such a living faith moving in harmony with the will of God can accomplish mighty things. Mountains cannot stand before it" (Herbert Lockyer, *All the Parables of the Bible*, p. 216-217).

The comparison is with the inherent vitality of a true seed: "A seed, no matter how small, contains the life principle, and faith of this nature is vital in operation" (ibid.).

So the point is that genuine, unadorned, unpretentious faith exercised in prayer and fasting - where one makes little show of it but implicitly believes - produces mighty results, out of all proportion to the magnitude of the problem!

So believe Christ, the faithful and true – He says True FAITH WORKS! It's one of the traits of the "Fruit of the Spirit".

And scripture is replete with examples of faithful saints who utilized faith do the impossible! Such was Joshua who by dint of faith ordered the sun to stand still and it did!

"And what shall I more say?, says the apostle, "for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: <sup>33</sup>Who through

faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,  
<sup>34</sup>Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong,  
waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens” (Heb. 11:32-34).

As believers entrusted with the mantle of living faith for today, the question staring each one of us in the face is, Since faith does not fail, do we believers sometimes fail faith?

### **Working faith is a simplistic unyielding faith**

Prayer and fasting are important, but faith is the foundation, the root. Faith is a characteristic of a trustworthy, mature believer.

As a believer, have you thought of all the mountains in your life that will only take a grain of faith to evict from your life?

Only let the faith be true and sure, and it will accomplish the very thing you trusted it to do (Mark 11:22-24; Heb. 11:1, 6). Great faith is a simplistic, unyielding faith like how a military man understood it: Simply obey the word of faith and it'll be done.

The military world is a world of commands and compliance – no room for hesitation, doubts and second thoughts. If anything, it's “do before complain”! How this would stand the Christian in good stead if he/she had the military discipline to obey before he began to wonder if it was all so real!

So here is our military man who is neither a disciple, nor even a Jew or Bible student well versed in the scriptures and the workings of God come to Jesus *armed with only faith to receive*. His servant lay at home gravely ill. He needed the Rabbi's intervention but not to order Him to His house. He only needed the commanding prayer of faith from Him:

<sup>5</sup> “And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

<sup>6</sup> “And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

<sup>7</sup> “And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

<sup>8</sup> “The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

<sup>9</sup> “For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

<sup>10</sup> “When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

<sup>11</sup> “And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>12</sup> “But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

<sup>13</sup> “And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour” (Matt. 8:5-13).

The centurion, a captain of one hundred men, absolutely believed in the Master's commanding prayer of faith for it was so familiarly military-like! It was not a strange idea to him. He was a man of authority under authority. He gave commands as an officer and he took commands from his superiors. And none

of the commands *either way* failed to be executed! So how could a command uttered in the name of the greatest power in the universe by the very embodiment of that power fail to be done, though uttered at a distance away from the sick person?

It possibly could not fail. And it failed not. For “his servant was healed in the selfsame hour”!

And that is an example of the admirable faith that bears the fruit of salvation as well. And it wouldn't matter where you came from. If only you believed in God and what His word asks you to do, you will reign with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. It's not a matter of ethnicity or religiosity. It's about having simple faith in what God's word of truth and having absolutely no doubts about it. This is what the Lord calls “great faith”, uncommon even in Israel, the chosen nation.

Now, can the same be found in your spiritual life? Is it commonly found in the church? Is it present here at this prayer meeting?

However we answer, the fact remains that authoritative living faith in which we have unwavering trust is the kind of faith you and I need to uproot mountains out of our lives and send them plunging into the sea. This is the faith we need to exercise to get things done the supernatural way.

It's the same great faith another Gentile exercised to have her prayer request immediately answered, though in the face of a barrage of discouraging remarks from both the disciples and the Lord Himself, the petitioned! But the woman would simply not budge. Nothing would make her take offence or lose faith in the Lord's ability to heal her daughter. Her faith was as solid as a rock!

It all began with a humble request to the Master:

<sup>21</sup> “Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

<sup>22</sup> “And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

<sup>23</sup> “But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

<sup>24</sup> “But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

<sup>25</sup> “Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me.

<sup>26</sup> “But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

<sup>27</sup> “And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

<sup>28</sup> “Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour” (Matt. 15:21-28).

It was a sobbing plea to *Adonai*, the Son of David, but it was a plea that failed to elicit sympathy from both the disciples and the Lord. In fact, the Lord refused to acknowledge her presence at all. Not deterred, she continued to cry after Him, prompting the disciples to entreat the Lord to send her away. It had ‘ethnic discrimination’ written all over it, for it was so unlike Yeshua—to hear cries of help and ignore them, to see suffering and remain stone-faced. He had only recently healed the servant of a

Gentile military officer and commended his faith. The spiritual barriers between Jew and Gentile were already crumbling under His ministry. Yet the Lord deliberately played along with the ethnic discrimination policy to test the woman's faith.

He retorted that she, a Gentile, was not part of His ministry focus; thus He dismissed her and literally slammed the door in her face! But, to this, she bowed in worship before Him, pleading "Lord, help me"!

In response, He added salt to injury! He suggested she was a dog (i.e. spiritually unfit because she was unclean, Matt. 7:6) and so it was improper to cast the bread of the Word meant for the children (of Israel) to the ground for her. Certainly an unforgivable racial slur. The ultimate in ethnic insult! But the woman replied, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table".

She did not jump to the defence of her national pride but humbly accepted her position and begged for mercy as a "dog". She might not have a place at the table, she admits, but the crumbs that fall from the table are surely hers!

What a show of faith. She passed the test, "and her daughter was made whole from that very hour"!

Her overriding concern was her daughter's healing, and nothing would stop or discourage her from believing in Christ and pestering Him for it.

To this day, the Lord Jesus has the answers to all our requests and problems. Will you continue to rely on Him for your miracle no matter what you see or hear?

Real faith has little to do with histrionics or mere 'faith-speak' just to impress but an unyielding trust in God.

Utilize such faith at this meeting today. No mountain will remain standing before you. Halleluiah!