

Faith

by Oswald J. Smith

Oswald J. Smith emphasizes the transformative power of genuine faith in unlocking God's promises and leading to revival.

Scripture: Isaiah 40:31, Matthew 17:20, Mark 9:23, Luke 1:37, Romans 10:17, 2 Corinthians 5:7, Philippians 4:13, Hebrews 11:30, James 1:6, 1 John 5:14-15

Topics: "Faith", "Revival"

Description

Oswald J. Smith emphasizes that faith is the essential key to unlocking God's power, illustrated by the fall of Jericho's walls through faith. He stresses the importance of receiving a personal promise from God, which empowers believers to act with confidence and assurance. Smith recounts historical examples of individuals who, through fervent prayer and unwavering faith, witnessed miraculous revivals and transformations. He encourages believers to cultivate a deep, persistent faith that can withstand trials and delays, trusting that God will fulfill His promises. Ultimately, Smith calls for a revival of such faith in the present day.

Transcript

FAITH is the key that unlocks the door of God's power. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down." And in revival work one of the indispensable prerequisites is a living, vital Faith. "All things are possible to him that believeth."

The man who is to be used of the Lord will hear from Heaven. God will give him a promise. Not the general promises of the Word that apply to so many of His children, but a definite, unmistakable message direct to his own heart. Some familiar promise, it may be, will suddenly grip him in such a way that he will know God has spoken. Hence, if I would attempt new work for God let me ask myself first of all the question: "Have I a promise?" Has God spoken?"

It was this divine assurance that enabled the prophets of old to go to the people and declare, "Thus saith the Lord." And until God has so commissioned us, we had better remain on our faces in prayer lest He say: "Woe to the prophets that run, and I have not sent them!" But when a man has heard from God, then, "though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come." And even should years intervene yet will God fulfill His Word.

And oh, the joy of hearing and recognizing that voice ! What encouragement ! What faith ! How the heart leaps within! No questioning then. No guessing and wondering after that. For days, for weeks it may be, there has been the earnest pleading in prayer as to God's will. Then from His Word, or by the Holy Spirit there comes His message, and all is perfect rest. Not that the thing is done or the expectation realized; but God has spoken, and there can no longer be any doubt. "He will bring it to pass."

I saw, in days gone by, a vision of a great work in the city of Toronto, and I prayed about it that I might know the mind of the Lord. At last one day He spoke. Yea, a second time came His assuring Word. Forthwith I waited, waited in prayer and faith knowing that He would surely bring it to pass. Three years went by, years of fearful testing. Without His promise I would have gone down, my high hopes scattered to the winds, but God had spoken, and I had only to pray: "Do as thou hast said." Finally when three full years had passed, He established the work of which He had spoken.

An incident is told of a place called Filey in the early days of Methodism, to which preacher after preacher had been sent, but all to no purpose. The village was a stronghold of Satanic power, and each one in turn had been driven out until at last it was decided to give it up as a hopeless task.

Just before the matter was finally settled, however, the now famous John Oxtoby, or "Praying Johnny" as he was called, begged the Conference to send him, and so let the people have one more chance. They agreed, and a few days afterwards John set out on his journey. On the way a person who knew him inquired where he was going. "To Filey," was the reply, "where the Lord is going to revive His work."

As he drew near the place, on ascending the hill between Muston and Filey, suddenly a view of the town burst upon his sight. So intense were his feelings that he fell upon his knees under a hedge and wrestled and wept and prayed for the success of his mission. We have been told that a miller, who was on the other side of the hedge, heard a voice and stopped in astonishment to listen, when he heard Johnny say "Thou munna mak a feal o' me! Thou munna mak a feal o' me! I told them at Bridlington that Thou was going to revive Thy work, and Thou must do so, or I shall never be able to show my face among them again, and then what will the people say about praying and believing?"

He continued to plead for several hours. The struggle was long and heavy, but he would not cease. He made his very weakness and inefficiency a plea. At length, the clouds dispersed, the glory filled his soul, and he rose exclaiming, 'It is done, Lord. It is done. Filey is taken. Filey is taken.'

And taken it was, and all in it, and no mistake. Fresh from the Mercy-seat he entered the place, and commenced singing up the streets, "Turn to the Lord and seek salvation," etc. A crowd of stalwart fishermen flocked to listen. Unusual power attended his address, hardened sinners wept, strong men trembled, and while he prayed over a dozen of them fell on their knees, and cried aloud for mercy and found it."

Well now, do we know what it is to offer the prayer of Faith? Have we ever prayed thus? "I knew a father," writes Chas. G. Finney, "who was a good man, but had erroneous views respecting the prayer of faith; and his whole family of children were grown up, without one of them being converted. At length his son sickened, and seemed about to die. The father prayed, but the son grew worse, and seemed sinking into the grave without hope. The father prayed, until his anguish was unutterable. He went at last and prayed (there seemed no prospect of his son surviving) so that he poured out his soul as if he would not be denied, till at length he got an assurance that his son would not only live but be converted; and that not only this one, but his whole family would be converted to God. He came into the house, and told his family

his son would not die. They were astonished at him. 'I tell you,' said he, 'he will not die. And no child of mine will ever die in his sins.' That man's children were all converted years ago."

"A clergyman once told me of a revival among his people, which commenced with a zealous and devoted woman in the Church. She became anxious about sinners, and gave herself to praying for them; she prayed, and her distress increased; and she finally came to the minister, and talked with him, asking him to appoint an anxious inquirers' meeting, for she felt that one was needed. The minister put her off, for he felt nothing of any such need. The next week she came again, and besought him again to appoint such a meeting. She knew there would be somebody to come, for she felt as if God was going to pour out His Spirit. The minister once more put her off. And finally she said to him: 'If you do not appoint the meeting I shall die, for there is certainly going to be a revival.' The next Sabbath he appointed a meeting, and said that if there were any who wished to converse with him about the salvation of their souls, he would meet them on such an evening. He did not know of one, but when he went to the place, to his astonishment he found a large number of anxious inquirers."--(Chas. G. Finney.)

"The first ray of light that broke in upon the midnight which rested on the Churches in Oneida County, in the fall of 1825 was from a woman in feeble health, who, I believe, had never been in a powerful revival. Her soul was exercised about sinners. She was in an agony for the land. She did not know what ailed her, but she kept praying more and more, till it seemed as if her agony would destroy her body. At length she became full of joy. and exclaimed: 'God has come! God has come! There is no mistake about it, the work is begun, and is going all over the region.' And sure enough the work began, and her family were all converted, and the work spread all over that part of the country."-- (Chas. G. Finney.)

The story is told of an invalid who formed the habit of praying for a Revival, daily, for some thirty towns and communities, and from time to time made this entry in his diary: "I was enabled to pray the prayer of faith for ___ today." After his death Revivals swept over each of these thirty places, almost exactly in the order he had noted them down. God had spoken, and though he did not live to see any of the answers, yet he was given the assurance that he had been heard.

This then is the secret--Faith, the Faith of Hebrews eleven, the Faith of God, His Gift. based on His Word direct to the heart of His servant. Such Faith will remove mountains, and accomplish the impossible. Not the presumptuous faith that believes without the evidence of the Spirit, and costs nothing, and then when time elapses and things do not come to pass rapidly fades away; but the Faith of God which has been born in the agony of prevailing prayer and soul travail. This Faith will rise above the storms of discouragement and adversity, will triumph over time, and continue to burn brightly while waiting for the accomplishment of its object. Oh, for such a Faith today !

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,

And looks to God alone;

Laughs at impossibilities

And cries, 'It shall be done !'

"The thing surpasses all my thought;

But faithful is my Lord;

Through unbelief I stagger not,
For God hath spoke the word.
"That mighty faith on me bestow
Which cannot ask in vain:
Which holds and will not let Thee go,
Till I my suit obtain."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/oswald-j-smith/faith/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net