

Have Faith in God

by Paris Reidhead

Faith in God means trusting and obeying Him, even when we don't understand the situation.

Duration: 38:50

Scripture: Isaiah 43:18-21, Matthew 6:33, Mark 11:12-14, Mark 11:20-21, John 5:1-9

Topics: "Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of God's new thing and the importance of having faith in God. He emphasizes that the old ways are being done away with and a new establishment is taking place. The speaker references the story of the fig tree to illustrate God's attitude towards Israel and the consequences of unbelief. He also highlights the power of God's word and the importance of receiving and honoring it. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the need for faith and obedience in order to manifest God's glory and power in a new way.

Transcript

I am pleased to mark chapter 11 and verse 22. And Jesus answering, saith unto them, Have faith in God. Now, there has been a matter of question about this translation of the King James translators, because the Greek in the text says, Have the faith of God.

There has, as I said, been a school of thought that have said, No, this is to have the faith in God. And others said, No, it isn't that, it's have the faith of God. And I'm not here to settle discussion.

I don't consider that it is a serious problem in any way at all. Take your choice. You can say the text says, Have faith in God, and if you're satisfied, very well and good.

If, on the other hand, you feel that it should be, Have the faith of God, very well and good. There's only one thing. It's in the imperative mood.

And whichever one you choose, you have to obey it. It isn't a question of textual exactness that we're concerned about. It's a matter of obedience.

And so, if you say the text says, Have faith in God, that is a commandment. A sovereign is speaking. He's speaking to you, to me, and he's expecting us to do it.

On the other hand, if you do feel that it's the correct text is, Have the faith of God, again, it's a commandment. In the imperative mood, and a sovereign is speaking to you and to me, he's expecting us to do it. I asked to have read for us today Isaiah chapter 43, verses 18 to 21.

I think it would be profitable if you were to turn to it for just a moment. Isaiah chapter 43. Now, God is speaking to Israel, and he is saying, Don't talk about the good old days, Israel.

Don't talk about how wonderful it was. Remember not the former things, consider not the things of old. And then, this marvelous declaration.

I'm going to do a new thing. Now it shall spring forth, and you'll know it. I will make a way in the wilderness, and I'll bring rivers into the desert.

Now bear in mind, Peter's sheep let down from heaven. Remember the vision he had when he turned to the Gentiles? Now notice the next words in Isaiah. The beasts of the field, the unclean beasts, the ones that had claws, and cloven hooves, and didn't chew a cud, the beasts of the field shall honor me.

The dragons and the owls, those were the kinds of things that Peter saw in his vision. Now what's he saying? I'm going to go to those people whom you said were unclean, and were pagans, and heathen. I'm going to do a new thing.

I'm going to bring nations that have not known me, because I bring water into the wilderness, streams of the desert. And I'm going to give drink to this people whom I'm choosing, and this people whom I shall form for myself shall show forth my praise. Now let's go back to the event that we find preceding verse 22.

The Lord Jesus has come from Bethany, and he sees a fig tree with leaves. Now the strange thing about the fig tree, it puts out the fruit, and then it puts out the leaves. So if the leaves are there, it means certainly that the fruit is there also.

But it wasn't the time of the figs, and here is a fig tree with a profession and no possession. The fig tree is advertising, I got figs. But the inspection showed that there weren't any figs, that it had deceived itself.

Now Israel is described, Judah, the Jews, people of God, are called by him a vine of his planting. He also uses the type of a fig tree. So in effect, what he is saying here in verses 11 to 14, 20 and 21, Israel is like a vine without grapes and a fig tree without fruit.

Oh, they've got leaves of profession, phylacteries on their forehead, fringes on their garments, fasting, tithing, praying. In fact, they've got everything but the fruit of reality. Now God had judged Israel in the past.

In fact, he had scattered the ten northern tribes, dispersed them. We don't know where they ended up. Oh, there's a lot of theories, but we don't know where they ended up.

We do know, however, that there had been a whole series of declensions and fall and judgment and return, and then he had only the Jews and they also got into terrible trouble. And finally under Isaiah, God says, I've had it clear up to here. I'm going to do a new thing.

I'm going to get a people that will show forth my praise, that will honor me, that will glorify me. And so, all through these 400 years of silence until the Lord Jesus has come, God has been patiently waiting and now he is here, coming to Israel, the means of deliverance, the means of restoration, the means of

blessing from God, and he knows what's going to happen. There's nothing been hidden from him, and so he illustrates God's attitude toward Israel on the fig tree.

Now remember, he spoke to a fig tree and it died from the roots up. When a tree has disease, it dies from the top down, but this didn't have a disease. This had a curse, this had words spoken against it, and the heart of it died, so it's dying from the roots up, quite different than the normal course of just a disease caused death.

And in effect, he is saying to his disciples, you're going to see people come to me and they're going to take me, I'm going to be led away, but I want you to know that I'm the one who spoke and the tree died, and I want you to know also that the Israel that is the institution, the Jews who are the institution here, Judaism, of my death, I could speak just as I have to the tree, but I have not, but it does illustrate what God thinks about Israel. Now he says I'm going to do a new thing, and he is speaking to the new thing, because the seed of the new thing is in that little company of people that are following him. He has 12, and then there were a few others, maybe 50, 40, 50 that were in the company that had gone with him, and that's the seed of his new thing, this wonderful thing that he's going to do, and so what he is doing is illustrating two things.

One, the old is being done away with, and the new is being established, but in effect he is also saying do not let the unbelief that brought the ruin to Israel and Judah be a curse to you. This new thing, this new group, is to have faith in God, the faith of God. God's new thing is to manifest God's glory, God's power in a new way.

I want you to turn to 1 Peter chapter 2. I think it would be well for you to read it, because this is of such crucial importance. Right after James, then you come to 1 Peter, and chapter 2 in verses 4 to 10. To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, you also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood.

To whom is he writing? He's writing to the church. He's writing to the believers, Gentiles and Jewels. He's writing to the new thing, the new group.

And he is saying, you are a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, behold I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect and precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious, but unto them which be disobedient the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.

Even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient. Where also they were appointed, but you, you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar, a purchased, pecuniary people, that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Now, which in time past were not a people, the beasts of the field, the owls and the dragons, but are now the people of God, which have not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Now these are God's new things, Jews soon to be cut down and the new thing to be manifested. And there's to be a new way. This new thing is to have a new principle.

He says, as you can see here in the text, have faith in God, have the faith of God, if you wish to look at it that way. How did God create? He spoke. He spoke and the worlds came into being.

First he saw what he wanted and then he spoke what he saw in his mind. And all he had to do was speak a word. In John 17 verse 8, verse 2 and then again verse 8, I have given them thy word.

I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me and they have received them. I have given them thy word and the world hated them. Well, why? Well, remember the ancient foe, the one with whom we're doing battle.

And he doesn't want God's people to have God's word, have the word given to them. And so he's done everything he could to reflect upon God's word. How did he start with Mother Eve? Yea, as God said.

Do you mean to say God said that if you ate this fruit you'd die? He knows better than that. There's no poison in this fruit. Look at it.

It's good to eat. Pleasant to look at. You see, the real problem is you think God loves you.

He doesn't love you. He's trying to cheat you and keep you from joy and pleasure. He doesn't want you to be like Him.

Oh, and look what he's doing. He's robbing them of God's word. The authority of the word and the reality of the word and making them doubt the word.

And the consequence? They said, No wonder the Lord Jesus said, He that heareth my words and doeth them, he it is that loveth me. Why? Because Mother Eve and Father Adam have heard His words and they didn't do them. Now He's come again and He's come as He came the first time and He's given them His word.

My word said, He is spirit and it's life. And I've given them Thy word. I want you to look at the apostles.

Once in Acts 3, verses 3-10, they've been in prayer in the temple and as they come out of the temple there's a lame man who's been seated there yea, how many months, four years, it isn't said. But he was well known in the community. The lame man who sat at the gate of the temple.

Now what did Peter do when he came? Did he say, brethren, this poor man here seated at the gate of the temple, why, we ought to have a time of fasting and prayer to pray for his healing. Is that what he said? No. Else there were other times when they did go to fasting and prayer.

There were other places for prayer and there were other events. But what did he do here? He looked at him and the man said, have mercy upon me. And Peter said, silver and gold I have none but such as I have, I give you in the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk.

And what happened? The man rose up and walked. Why? Because what did the Lord Jesus say to the father? I have given them thy word. He said, but he was Peter.

But what did he say? What was the difference between the Peter that cringed when a little maid pointed his finger at him? He says, you're one of those that were followers of Jesus. And he slinks away and says, I never knew him. And now, in the sight of all the authorities of the temple and the soldiers of Rome, he says, in the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk.

The man rises up and walks. What's taking place? Well, first, there was a place called Pentecost. And the Spirit of God came upon the apostles.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Secondly, being filled with the Spirit of God, Peter, who may have passed this man day in and day out, week in and week out, before he spoke that day. Now, I want to go back, remember, Pool of Bethesda.

The Lord Jesus is walking. He comes down. There's the pool.

And there's the company of the infirm and the sick, lying about in the apron surrounding the pool. And the Lord Jesus walks in. He walks over them.

He looks at one. He looks at the other. He speaks to them.

And then, finally, comes to one man, one man, only one. And he says, Will thou be made whole? And the man says, There's no one here to take me to the water when it's troubled. By the time I get there, somebody is in.

And when the angel troubles the water, only the first one in is healed. And I've not been there first. But I want to be made whole.

And so the Lord Jesus says, Thy sins are forgiven thee. Rise up. Take up thy bed and wash.

And the man does as he's told. And later, the apostles say to him, Lord, this afternoon when we were there at that hospital at Pool of Bethesda where all the sick were, how come there was just that one healed? And all these other fellows, I happen to know some of them. They're nice guys.

How come you didn't do anything for them? Were his sins greater than the others or less than the others? How come you said his sins were forgiven? How come you picked on him? And the Lord Jesus said, I can do nothing of myself. I only do what I see the Father do. Peter may have passed that man day in, day out as they'd gone to prayer in the temple week in, week out.

I don't know. I only know this. This is the day he spoke and he didn't speak earlier and he didn't speak later.

He spoke then. And I believe it's because the Spirit of God had shown him that this man could be healed. And I believe, therefore, that we have a condition that the Lord Jesus put on this use of word.

Certainly, if you speak to this mountain, be removed, be cast into the sea, and doubt not in your heart, it'll be as you say, but dear friend, there's going to be an awful lot of doubt about mountains moving until you get some inside information from headquarters. If you think so. If you don't think so, you just go around and get a little practice.

I got some hills out near us that I'll let you work on before you get to the mountains. They're spending a lot of money leveling them and you could earn the thanks of some developers just to sort of fill in the holes. But I'll tell you where the problem lies.

If thou shalt say unto this mountain and doubt not in thy heart until you're absolutely clear that God wants that mountain moved from point A to point B, you are going to doubt in your heart. And that mountain is going to just sit diddly squat. It's not going to even shake when you talk to it because you didn't meet the condition.

You didn't meet the condition. Now look at the next verses. And then he said unto you, Moreover I say unto you, what thing soever you desire.

Now here. What thing soever you desire. But in the text, in the Greek, it says, what thing soever you intensely desire.

Oh, listen. When God put that word desire in there, he certainly put the one condition that is to be inescapable. Why? Because if you have been born of God, your past sins are forgiven, and you've passed from death to life, and are the partaker of his grace, you cannot want intensely anything that you're not sure that God wants you to want.

How can you? How can you want something if you're not sure that God wants you to have it? Oh, a couple of times I've really stormed God, stormed heaven, and I've gotten, I've said, Oh God, I've got to have this. I've got to have it. I've got to have it.

And I got it. And I couldn't wait to let go of it. Because he gave me the desire of my heart, but he sent leanness to my soul, and I knew that I, it wasn't right.

I had gotten the cart before the horse. I asked for it before I found out whether he wanted me to want it. So he said intensely desire.

Friend, you can't, as a child of God, you can't intensely want anything that God doesn't want you to want. And so the first thing you've got to do is pray about it before you pray for it. You've got to pray about it until you pray for it.

I met years ago in Louisville, Indiana, a young Baptist preacher, some kind of a Baptist, I don't remember what. He was in a little church. He'd started himself.

He built the building, and he paid his own salary, and he had a company of people. The only one thing that characterized him was he loved God with all of his heart. And God picked up that little fellow who worked for the Indiana Forest Service.

He was a forester in southern Indiana just living in Jeffersonville, across from Louisville. And God did marvelous things for him. His name was Billy Branham.

And God gave to Billy Branham an anointing, a gift, an enabling, and he would see miracles before they happened. He'd see people. And then they'd come, and he'd pray for them, and they were marvelously delivered.

Why? Before the person ever got there, God had shown him what was going to happen. Just like the Lord Jesus said, I don't do anything to myself. I only do what I see the Father do.

And the Father, the Lord Jesus, he had been waiting, I'm sure, as he'd been worshiping the Lord in the night hours. He had a vision given to him by his Spirit. Remember, everything done by Christ was done by the Father through the Spirit.

So that in all points, he was like us. And he could say, As the Father sent me, so send I you. We are born of the Spirit.

He was conceived by the Holy Ghost. He was filled with the Spirit. And his whole ministry was done by the Father through the Spirit.

And the Spirit of God showed him one man being healed. And he came to that man. He recognized that man.

Wilt thou be made whole? And the man was healed. Now the Scripture doesn't tell us that, but the Scripture does tell us that Peter was with the Lord at the Pool of Bethesda. And personally, I believe that that's what happened.

Now there's another ministry of word in Acts chapter 16 and verse 18 when Paul is being followed by a demon-possessed woman who's screaming at him and trying, making, calling all kinds of attention to him that he didn't welcome. And Paul turns and he commands the evil spirit to come out of the woman. He'd been given the Word of God, the Word of authority, in the same way the Lord Jesus had delivered the demon-possessed, so did Paul.

He didn't pray for her. He commanded in the name of Christ. So we see the place of the Word.

And we see the place of prayer. And these two things are not to be confused. What things however you intensely desire when you pray has to do with prayer.

So until you have that inner assurance... When I was pastor in New York, many times at the doors I greeted people, someone would say to me, Pastor, this week I'm going to do so-and-so. Please pray for me that I'll get this job. Being a benign, sort of affable, pleasant, cooperative sort of fellow, I would quickly say, Sure, I'll be glad to.

Except when I got back to my study and was going to do what I promised to do at the door a few minutes earlier, I didn't have any liberty to pray for. And I'd say, she doesn't need that. That's not the best for her.

How can I ask God to give her something that isn't... How can I ask God to give him a job that's not going to... No, that's not right. So when people came to me after that, I would say, They'd say, will you please pray for me? I'd say, wait just a moment. I'll tell you what.

You tell me what it is that you're concerned about. And I will pray as to how to pray about this. And I'll let you know.

I'll pray about how to pray. And then I will follow the Lord. Because unless I had His peace, His confidence, His expectation, my words of prayer were going to be just sound, just words.

So early I learned that one has to pray about before they pray for. Pray about something so that you get the mind of the Lord. Years ago, back in 19... Let's see, this would have been 54 or 55. I had been asked to leave the society, the mission society that Marjorie and I had been members of for about 10 years for the very reasons that made me welcome in the Alliance.

I was unwelcome in the society, though I have great love and respect for the society, in spite of that. They've done a great job in many places in the world. But at any rate, they didn't want me because I believe what makes me part of the Alliance.

And so, I didn't know what I was going to do. Didn't know what ministry the Lord had for me. And three national opportunities came to me from three people whom I respected and appreciated.

And I prayed about them, prayed for them, prayed one way and another. And I got so confused. My guidance system was so mixed up, I couldn't tell up from down, rather, much less northeast and west or south.

My compass was just spinning. I did not know what to do. But I went to see R.R. Brown at the Omaha Gospel Tabernacle, and he said, I'll give you something.

And he then shared with me what he'd been taught by the Lord, that the peace of God is to rule in our hearts. And if you don't have peace to ask for it, you can't ask for it. If you don't have peace to accept the new challenge, you can't accept it.

The peace of God must rule. That's Colossians 3.15. Let the peace of God, empire, referee, rule. So, what does Christ say? Therefore I say unto you, what thing soever you intensely desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them.

But, friend, if you love Jesus Christ, if He is your Lord, you can't intensely want anything that you're not quite sure He wants you to want, because you just might get it. Then you wouldn't know what to do with it. So, the best thing to do is to pray about it until you have His peace to pray for it.

And then, when you're sure you can intensely desire it, this verse comes into play. Now, I suggest that it's very, very good, very wise, for us to think of this as not just a soul type of exercise, individual. He said two or three are gathered together.

There am I in the midst of them. The church, His body, which He is the head, and therefore it would seem to me that when there's some important issue, husband and wife, that's the minimal form of the church, isn't it? Two. Family.

A group of friends. Pray about it until you have His peace, His expectancy, His Word, click into your heart. Then you can say, then you can pray with intense desire.

You know it's going to be, but you have to pray about it until you have His peace to pray for it. We used to say to our children, when they had a little money, they'd get it from friends, from birthdays, from work, and we had a jar we'd put up in the cupboard, and they'd come in with a catalog and say, I'm going to buy this. And we'd say, fine, that's great, but you know the rule, two weeks, if you still want it, we'll get it.

It was astonishing how at the end of two weeks, they weren't the least interested in what had been so exciting two weeks earlier. They just didn't really want it at all. Something else was there.

Oh, they got a lot of mileage out of that because they could have everything that they intensely wanted, but after two weeks, they found they didn't want it anymore. They wanted something else. So he said, what things whoever you intensely desire, maybe take a couple of weeks.

We're talking about big issues, big matters. Let's believe God. Now, for instance, I've been challenging you, saying, you know, we're going to trust God together as a congregation for that fund that we need, that \$850 every week.

Why? Because given His practice, we can intensely desire that. Absolutely intensely desire it. And they see it there.

It ought to be there. It ought to be there. And you know what's interesting? They read for us today from Malachi, the third chapter.

Isn't that interesting? When the Lord Jesus was taken by the enemy up to the pinnacle of the temple, and He said, cast yourself down and you'll become, you'll get spectacular public relations out of it and they'll already know who you are. He said, it's written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Did you know that the only place in the Bible where God invites us to tempt Him or test Him or try Him is in respect to the time? He says, bring it into the storehouse and test Me and see if I won't.

Well, we can intensely desire certain things. We need all the practice we can get proving. Why? Because this new thing that He's creating is not to be like the Jews who were masters of the words without any exercise of the word.

Lived by words and ceremonies, ritual and taboo, but they said they've made my word of none effect by the tradition of the elders. This new thing was to have faith in God, the faith of God. And our weapons were not to be carnal, but mighty to the tearing, pulling down of strongholds and the casting down of imaginations and bringing every thought into the captivity of Christ.

Have faith in God, a commandment with responsibilities. Why? Because we are to be His new thing to show forth His grace and His power and to mourn His name, to glorify Him. I have created them to be my witnesses.

Doesn't He have a right to have a new thing? And we therefore should take this very, very seriously. Have faith in God. Have the faith of God because we are to be His centerpiece of testimony as to who He is and as to His power.

Father in heaven, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we come to Thee today. Each of us have in our lives someone like that lame man by the gate of the temple, someone like that woman that calls some problem that's so enormous that only the risen Christ is enough to solve it. Each of us know people in those needs, with that kind of need.

Father, we're asking that we may, as a people, not be those who are hearers of the word and straightway forget what they've heard, but that we may become doers of the word. Grant to us, Father, the joy of becoming those who not only have the word, but believe the word. He that heareth my word and doeth them, he it is that loveth me.

Oh, Father, may our love for the Lord Jesus Christ be manifest by our implicit confidence and trust in Thy word, the use of it in prayer, the use of it in authority, Lord, to demonstrate again to our day and our generation in this hour that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of Thy precious holy name. We ask it with thanksgiving. Amen.

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