

By Faith

by Richard E. Bieber

Faith is the choice to trust in God, not just a feeling, and it is necessary to please God, love God and our neighbor, pray, forgive, and give to those in need.

Scripture: Matthew 17:20, Matthew 18:19, Matthew 21:22, John 6:29, John 11:25, Hebrews 11:1, James 2:26

Topics: "Faith In God", "Walking By Faith"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches on the transformative power of faith in Jesus, emphasizing how ordinary, down-to-earth people were chosen by Jesus to become radically committed men and women of God through faith. Jesus repeatedly taught His disciples to believe in Him, not just in religious ideas, but in His very person. Despite initial doubts, the disciples eventually learned to walk by faith after Jesus' ascension, witnessing the fulfillment of His promises and the evidence of His presence in their lives daily. Bieber highlights the importance of faith in pleasing God, loving others, praying, forgiving, giving, and confessing Jesus to the world.

Transcript

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. Hebrews 11 Nobody could ever look at Jesus' disciples and say, "What a bunch of religious freaks!" Nobody looking at those disciples could ever get the idea that to follow Jesus your mind has to have a spiritual twist, because the people our Lord chose to be His disciples were not the kind of folks who made a hobby out of "spiritual things." - They were not mystically inclined. - They weren't even the religious type who went to church every morning at six o'clock to light a candle and say a prayer.

Our Lord deliberately picked ordinary down-to-earth people who knew all about work, money problems, dirty politics, sin, all the things that make up life in this world. He took such people and transformed them into radically committed, single-minded men and women of God. There was one thing of course, that drew these people to Jesus in the first place, that caused them gladly to beach their boats, close up their shops and kitchens, and go out to listen to Jesus: they were hungry for God.

Not religion - God. And Jesus satisfied that hunger, helped them to know God. He did this by pounding one lesson into their hearts over and over and over again: faith. Jesus taught them to have faith in God by having faith in Him, for He was God, revealing himself to them as a human, in human terms.. "Believe!" we hear Him saying again and again. "Have faith!" (Not faith in certain religious ideas, but faith in Me.) They didn't have to study a system of thought. They had to draw near and get to know and come to believe in

Jesus Himself.

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11:25 "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." John 6:29 Jesus was about to open the door of the Kingdom of Heaven to all people, but they would only be able to go through that door if they believed in Him. How would they ever be able to apprehend the forgiving power of His death on the Cross unless they believed in Him? All through those years with Jesus it was the same story over and over: Where is your faith?

Why did you doubt? Believe! Yet, when Jesus got to the cross, not one of His disciples believed. Not one. He rose from the dead, and again we hear the same word, "Believe." "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all the prophets have spoken!" Luke 24 "Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they sat at table; and he upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart....." Mark 16 It was not until Jesus ascended to the Father and was gone from this earth, not until after there was no longer a Master for their eyes of flesh to see, that the followers of Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, finally learned the lesson Jesus took such pains to teach them: to walk by faith.

Now that He's gone from sight, they begin to believe in Jesus as they never believed in Him when He was here in the flesh. They learn to put their trust in things not seen. Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. And as they believe, every promise Jesus ever made them comes to pass. They see the evidence of His presence in their lives every day. "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me, the works that I do shall they do also.

And greater works than these shall they do because I go to the Father." John 14 And so it was. They turned hearts from darkness to light and the power of Satan to God, by faith. It appears that we are about as close to the end of the age of grace as they were to the beginning. And we are seeing a stirring of the Spirit of God on earth which is as wonderful as the things the Spirit did in their day. We are part of a work of the Spirit of God such as our land has never seen. But there is one thing that God demands of us, one thing we so lack: faith.

Our Lord never pities us for our lack of faith. He never says, "I know it's hard. I realize how weak you are!" Our Lord rebukes us for our lack of faith because as far as He is concerned, our lack of faith is not weakness, but the sign of a stubborn heart. "If you will open your hearts to me, you will believe." And so His Spirit is pounding away on us these days, urging us to open our hearts, to lift up our eyes to Him, to fix our minds on His word, to return to His Cross, and believe.

For, without faith it is impossible to please God, without faith it is impossible to love God, or your neighbor, impossible to pray, impossible to have a forgiving spirit, impossible to give to those in need the way we should, without faith it is impossible to stand out there and confess the Lord Jesus to the world. Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. There are three things we need to learn about faith, not just with our heads, but with our lives; 1.

Faith is more than saying, "I believe." Faith is taking hold of the unseen God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind. When they took hold of Jesus by faith, it wasn't a matter of clinging to His physical presence. They were taking hold of the unseen life of God that they knew was in Him. The Syro-phoenician woman took hold of Jesus even though she never touched Him. No one ever held on to Jesus the way she did. "Lord, have mercy on me, my daughter is severely tormented with a demon."

Even when the disciples tried to push her away she still held on. "Lord, help me!" Even when Jesus insulted her she still held on. "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to dogs." "Truth Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their master's table. I may be a dog, but I'm your dog. You're my master." She was holding on to something which could not be seen and for which she got absolutely no encouragement. She was holding on to the fact that Jesus was her God and that He would heal her daughter.

And He did. Anybody can say, "I believe" but how many of us are holding on to the unseen grace of God in the Lord Jesus with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind? "Lord, I won't let go. I know you will fulfill your word." (For Jesus is the very Word of God wrapped in human flesh) 2. Faith always involves doing something. Faith is not passive, it's active. It's putting your trust in God and acting accordingly. By faith Able offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain.

By faith Noah, being warned by God of things as yet unseen, took heed and constructed an ark. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go. By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with God's people. Through faith each one did something. They didn't just sit there with their thumb in their mouths. "Rise, take up your bed and go home."

"Go wash in the pool of Siloam." "Cast the net on the right side of the boat." The doing, of course, is in response to a word which is clearly from Jesus. - You don't go jumping at every nutty impulse that crosses your mind, - Don't be trying to follow some "divine guidance" that comes to you second or third-hand. - Don't move until you know clearly it's the will of the Lord. But once that's clear - and it will be - get up and do what He says. It doesn't have to be a voice or a vision or some dramatic coincidence.

You simply know, for instance, that you have to make that thing right with a brother. You see a man who needs money, or a child who needs a pair of shoes. Do you have to have a telegram from heaven? By faith you get up and do what needs to be done. By faith you say what needs to be said. 3. Faith always opens a door for something redemptive to come in from God's side. "Your faith has made you whole." "Your faith has saved you, go in peace." "Be it done for you as you have believed."

Sometimes it's sudden. Sometimes the result appears years later. But every single time you act on faith in the Lord Jesus, life is released in Heaven and finds its destination on earth. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. Whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. If two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it shall be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name (in faith in me) there am I in the midst of them.

When we come together in the name of the Lord, believing Him, Jesus draws near to us with all the power of heaven. He visits us with everything we need to live in Him and do His will. He brings us forgiveness, healing, the power of the Holy Spirit. Then we go out there to where God is sending us. What a difference it will make if we go out there in faith - believing that, unseen and unheard by human eyes and ears, Jesus is with us, - keeping us in His power, - confirming the word He puts on our lips with signs following. "Believe child, that you are not going alone this time. I am going with you. Believe! Believe!"

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