

The Doorway to Faith

by Richard E. Bieber

Faith is the doorway to connecting with God and experiencing His power, but it requires humility and a willingness to seek His glory rather than human recognition.

Topics: "Faith In God", "Humility Before God"

Description

Richard E. Bieber emphasizes the importance of faith in God that connects us to Him in a living way, enabling our prayers to come alive and empowering us to do His will. He highlights how faith is the key to everything in Jesus' teachings, citing examples of miraculous healings and interventions based on individuals' faith. Bieber stresses that faith in God alone is essential, warning against mixing it with faith in money, self, or even preachers, as it leads to spiritual bankruptcy. He urges humility before God as the gateway to true faith, citing biblical examples of individuals who humbled themselves before God and received His transformative power.

Transcript

Lets take a few moments to think about faith.

Faith in God.

Faith that connects you to God in a living way.

Faith that causes your prayers to come alive.

Faith that gives you the power to do God's will.

Faith that can discern the difference between a false prophet and a true.

As far as Jesus is concerned, everything hinges on faith. Faith is the way in. There is no other.

"Go your way, your faith has saved you," said Jesus to Blind Bartimaeus. And he received his sight.

"Woman, great is your faith. Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed.

"Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe."

"Sir, come down before my child dies!"

"Go your way, your son will live."

And the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went his way.

His son was healed.

"Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. But only say the word and my servant will be healed."

"Nowhere in Israel, have I found such faith." And the servant was healed.

Faith. If you have it, you connect. If you don't have it you don't connect. You can go to church for a hundred years, and do all the proper things. But if you lack faith, you remain as blind and earthbound as when you started out.

He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1:11-13

And now he comes to us, looking for faith. And what does he find? Some of us have faith that keeps us alive in God. Some of us once had faith that kept us alive in God as long as we walked in it. Perhaps some of us never had faith. Plenty of religion, but no faith. Lots of great teaching, but no faith. Strong opinions about God and his ways; but no faith.

We're talking about faith in God. Not faith in faith. Not faith in something less than God. Misdirected faith is bankrupt faith. It always takes you down a path that leads to nowhere.

You could say that the suicide bomber, who drives his truck loaded with explosives into the police station and blows himself up, along with fifty other people, has extreme faith. He believes what the clerics have told him: that this gives him an express ticket to Paradise. Did God tell him to do this? Have the clerics ever given him an example of this faith with their own lives? How come the clerics never drive the suicide truck? Misdirected faith is bankrupt faith. It takes you down a path that leads to nowhere.

Here's a faith that's very popular in North America these days----"Believe in yourself!" Politicians use it. Athletes use it. "If you're going to win the race, you have to believe in yourself." Even preachers proclaim this "faith," because it sells. It fills churches. The Gospel of Self-esteem. Believe in yourself! If that's all the higher our faith can reach, we're in serious trouble.

Another popular faith in our part of the world is contained in a simple creed that drives General Motors, Enron, AOL, Wal-Mart, and too many churches: Money Is The Answer.

Money is the answer! If we had more money, we could do more good. The work of the kingdom is being hindered through lack of money! So we focus on money: Mammon. What a pitiful idol to worship. Money!

Strange thing about faith in God; it cannot be mixed with any other kind of faith.

Faith in God mixed with faith in money does not work.

Faith in God withdraws from the scene, and only Mammon is left.

And where does that lead?

Faith in God mixed with faith in yourself does not work.

Faith in God evaporates, and only Self is left. And where does that lead?

Faith in God mixed with faith in the preacher does not work.

Again faith in God slips away, while the preacher becomes an idol.

Faith in God stands completely alone.

Faith in God as he reveals himself in Jesus, the Incarnate Word.

Faith in God as he manifests himself through his life-transforming Spirit.

Faith that takes hold of the word which God speaks; and lives it, and is transformed by it.

"Every one then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock."

This person has faith.

And every one who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it.

This person has no faith. He may go to church every Sunday and never miss a

Bible Study, but he has no faith.

So where do we stand in all this? Who of us can say, "My faith is just fine...."

I have the faith that can move mountains!

My faith in God is solid as a rock!

When I pray, things always happen.

I know how to deny myself, take up my cross daily, and follow Jesus.

By faith I'm bearing fruit by the hundredfold!"

Who of us can talk like that? Who of us could even secretly think like that? Who of us is not still crying out within, "Lord, increase my faith!"

So what's wrong? Where are we missing it? What is it that we need to do to enable the Lord Jesus to work the miracle within that will ignite our faith and cause it to burst into flame?

Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he marked how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, "When you are invited by any one to a marriage feast, do not sit down in a place of honor,

lest a more eminent man than you be invited by him; and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Luke 14:7

.....What does the above passage have to do with faith? It has everything to do with faith. The thing that stifles faith is not our scientific knowledge, nor our advanced understanding of the universe. Nor is it the fact that we are so "practical and realistic."

The thing that chokes faith to death is our distorted view of our own importance.

Our obsession with getting recognition from people.

Our need to "be somebody" in the eyes of those whose respect we crave.

In the 5th chapter of John is a little verse, spoken by Jesus, which we don't hear quoted very often these days, but which is the doorway to faith. Jesus says:

"How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory which comes from the only God."

How can you have faith, when you're obsessed with getting honor at the banquet table, the office, the factory, the church, perhaps even in your own home. Jesus is talking to us, just as he talked with his disciples of old, because we have the same problem they had. Again and again Jesus found his disciples arguing over which of them was the greatest.

Every time Jesus tried to tell the disciples that he was going up to Jerusalem to die, they'd get into another row over which of them was the greatest. And Jesus would have to remind them again, "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant. Whoever would be first must be the slave of all."

And now our Lord gives us the same message:

You want the gift of faith?

You want your faith restored?

You want to be able to love God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind and your neighbor as yourself?

Step #1: Humble yourself before God.

Let's be honest with ourselves. How much of what we do, how many of the best things we do in our churches, our homes, out there in the community, are done with one eye on the spectators! "How am I doing?" is written all over our souls.

We're looking for approval.

We're looking for a little recognition.

Notice how upset we get when nobody's impressed!

No appreciation!

No gratitude!

After all the effort I put into this ministry!

So who am I doing it for? For God? Or for me.

My image.

My reputation.

Look at any man or woman of faith in the Bible. Before they stepped out into the miraculous life of faith they had to learn to humble themselves before God.

"Take off your shoes, Moses, you're standing on holy ground!"

No miracles, no leadership from this man who had once been an Egyptian

Prince, until he humbles himself before the holy God.

"Here I am, Lord, ready to go to work!" says Joshua, "What do you want me to do?"

"Take off your shoes, Joshua, you are in my presence."

Mary was doubtless a humble young woman to start with. But she passed through the doorway into the realm of faith the day she said, "Behold I'm the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word."

Before our Lord Jesus preached a single sermon or performed a single miracle, he submitted to the Way of the Cross out there in the wilderness.

"And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross."

And now our Lord Jesus tells us, "When you go to the marriage feast, deliberately sit in the lowest place. So that when the Lord of the marriage feast comes to you, he may lift you up."

How does he lift you up?

By giving you what he gave to Moses, and Joshua, Mary and Saul of Tarsus:

by speaking a word to you that creates faith.

A word which you will only hear when you're in that lowest seat.

"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." But you will truly hear the word only when you have found that lowest seat.

When Jesus and three of his disciples were up on the Mount of Transfiguration, the rest of the disciples were down in the valley waiting. Along comes a man with a terribly sick demon-possessed boy. "Help me!" he cries to the disciples.

But the disciples find themselves where we find ourselves so much of the time. We can talk about it, but we can't do it.

The disciples command the demon to come out of the boy. But nothing happens.

While the man is still begging the disciples not to give up, "Please keep trying!" here comes Jesus. The man runs to Jesus and kneels before him.

"Lord have mercy on my son. He suffers terribly. He falls into fire and into water. I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him."

Jesus looks at his disciples and shakes his head with disappointment. "O faithless and perverse generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me."

Jesus rebukes the demon and the boy is cured instantly.

After the disciples were alone with Jesus, they asked him, "Why couldn't we cast it out?"

"Because of your lack of faith," says Jesus. "If you had the faith of a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mountain 'Move!' and it would obey you."

And what about all the troubled souls who come to us with their demons and their fears, their sickness and their heavy loads of guilt.

"Why can't we help these people as we know we should, Lord?"

"Because of your lack of faith."

"Then help us, Lord! Help us! Lead us to the place where we get that faith!"

"Go to my banquet hall and take the lowest seat you can find, and wait until I come for you."

The door to a living faith is closer to us now than our own breath. That door is wide open. But it's a low door. You won't get in unless you bend down.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that in due time he may exalt you. Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you.

I Peter 5:6-7

The only door to God's kingdom is faith.

And the only door to faith is this:

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that in due time he may exalt you. Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you.

The Spirit of the Lord Jesus longs to pour into our hearts the faith that moves mountains, longs to transform us even now into prophets of the kingdom whose light is no longer hidden under a bushel.

The miracle will begin the moment we give up seeking glory from one another

and begin to seek the glory which comes from the only God.

If we're willing to do that now, the Lord will begin the miracle now.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/richard-e-bieber/the-doorway-to-faith/>

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