

Heart-Faith and Not Mind-Faith - Part 2

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith and persistence in prayer, and the need to avoid ritualism in our spiritual lives.

Duration: 10:40

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 12

Topics: "Persistent Prayer", "Spiritual Submission"

Description

This sermon delves into the importance of seeking God persistently for answers, especially in areas where prayers seem unanswered. It emphasizes the need to address any hidden sins or areas of life not yielded to God that may be hindering blessings. The significance of laying on of hands is explored, highlighting the need for submission to the spirit of the person praying. Rituals like laying on of hands, breaking bread, and baptism are discussed, emphasizing the importance of understanding their meaning for them to be effective.

Transcript

You know, I've sought the Lord quite a bit on one of the things that's exercised me. It's still exercised me. I don't have the full answer to it.

You know, one of the things that elders are supposed to do, and that's in James chapter five. And through the years, there are different people who have asked me to fulfill this function of an elder mentioned here. In James five, it says, in verse fourteen, is anyone among you sick? James 5, 14.

He must call for the elders of the church. Isn't that interesting? Anyone among you sick? He must call for the elders of the church. That means it's not a cough and a cold.

He's not talking about that type of thing, because if it was a cough and cold, they would have said he must go to the elders of the church. This is a man who's not even fit enough to walk from his house. He's talking about some pretty serious sickness.

He says he must call for the elders of the church. That means the guy can't leave his bed. So we're not talking about getting the elders to pray for us for every little fever or flu.

We're talking about a case where a person's in bed and he can't even go to the meeting. So he has to call for the elders to come. And let them call and they must pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of

the Lord.

And the prayer offered in faith will, not might, may sometimes, no. Will restore the one who is sick and the Lord might, no, may sometimes, no. Will raise him up.

If he's committed sins, they will be forgiven. It's amazing, isn't it? The prayer offered in faith is supposed to produce some results. And so when it doesn't produce results, like it is with many of our prayers, you know, you can ignore it and say, well, I suppose that's how it is.

Once in a while if it happens, we're happy, but most of the time it doesn't, nothing happens. And the Holy Spirit is not honored when we take that attitude to some verse of Scripture. He sees what does this child of God do when he comes across a situation that doesn't seem to correspond with Scripture.

Here I'm doing what Scripture says and it doesn't seem to happen. And does it mean that's not God's word? Let me try and get an answer to it. And it's such a person who comes to the answer.

So I don't have a full answer to it, but I've said, well, there must be something and I've got a wee bit of an answer. What sometimes the Lord says to me, I ask the Lord, why isn't that person healed? And the Lord says, there's something in that person's life you don't know about and I'm not going to tell you. I said, okay.

That means there's something in that person's life unsettled with the Lord, which the Lord has not told me and I don't want to know also. Or something not yielded, some area not yielded. So no matter how much you pray, you know, the pipe is blocked, so the tank may be full of water, but there's no water flowing out from the tap because somewhere along the line there's a blockage that only that person can deal with.

That is the reason why sometimes the blessing of God does not flow. I can only know what's in my heart. If there's a blockage in my heart, I'll know.

I can never know if there's a blockage in your heart. You can look very holy, look very humble. I don't know.

I don't know whether you've yielded all to God, whether you're humbling yourself, whether you've forgiven everybody. I don't have a clue. But it must be.

I mean, I would be exercised if I sought God for something, which is promised in Scripture and I didn't get it. It would exercise me. It would exercise me for 10 years or 20 years until I get an answer.

You know, Paul had a thorn in the flesh and he prayed for it to be healed and it didn't get healed. He didn't just sit back and say, oh well. He said, God, I've got to seek you.

You've got to tell me. What's the reason for that? And he sought God. You read in the Scriptures three times, 2 Corinthians 12.

I say no. He sought God until he got an answer. That's the point you need to see.

Not three times. If he didn't get the answer the third time, he'd have sought a fourth time. He sought God until he got an answer.

Now most Christians, when they find something doesn't happen, they don't seek God until they get an answer. They give up halfway. You know, it's like the people I've said on the day of waiting for the Holy

Spirit.

Supposing before the day of Pentecost came, somebody got tired and went away, he missed it. Maybe he waited for six or seven days and went away. But there are others who waited all the way and said, God, you promised something, you'll do it.

Maybe I have to wait, but I'm going to get it. That is faith, confidence. You know the two examples of prayer that Jesus gave us.

Both teach, the widow went to the judge and said again and again, you've got to do it for me. And the man went to his neighbor's house and knocked and said, you've got to do this for me. And then Jesus said, everyone who asks like this will get.

Everyone. So if you didn't get, that means you didn't ask like that. You sort of knocked 25 times and gave up.

The guy's not opening the door, forget it. But then you don't get. But the one who asks like this receives.

And the one who knocks like this, the door is always open. So that's the thing. It could be something wrong in our life, which is not some blockage, something not settled somewhere.

It could be a lack of persistence. I also thought a lot about this matter of, you know, laying hands on people. It's described in Hebrews 6 as one of the foundational doctrines.

And I was thinking, what does this mean, this laying on of hands? You know, we can understand some of the other things. In Hebrews 6 it speaks about repentance. And it's primarily speaking about repentance from legalism, by the way.

Not just repentance from sin. Repentance from legalism. Oh, do you know that many people have never repented of their legalism? Dead works means legalism.

Repentance from sin, yes, but we've got to go beyond that to repentance from legalism. Anyway, that's not my subject. And faith, we understand that a little bit.

Baptisms, Washington means baptisms, which is baptism in water, baptism in the Holy Spirit. Laying on of hands. Then finally resurrection, dead and eternal judgment.

So, here it says one of the foundational doctrines is laying on of hands. And that's usually when we are praying for somebody who is sick or for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. And I said, what does this laying on of hands mean? You probably heard me say that you should not allow anybody to lay hands on you.

Because when somebody lays hands on your head, you are submitting to the spirit that is in that man. And to the authority of that person. It's not just a ritual.

For many people it is a ritual. You know, like breaking a bread is a ritual for thousands of Christians. Baptism is a ritual for millions of people.

Laying on of hands is also a ritual for many people. But for some people, breaking a bread is not a ritual. It's meaningful.

For some Christians, baptism is not a ritual. It's meaningful. And for some Christians, laying on of hands is not a ritual.

For many sisters, covering their head is a ritual. They don't even know what it means. Let's do it as a ritual.

But for some it's meaningful. For many brothers, their head uncovered is just a ritual. I just don't cover my head.

They don't have a clue why they don't cover their head. It's a ritual. I don't cover my head.

But for other people, it's meaningful. I don't have time to talk about that now. But everything is meaningful in scripture.

And if you do it with meaning, it means something. It produces a blessing. If you do it in a meaningless way, you miss what God has in it for you.

So, laying on of hands means you're submitting to the spirit of that person who's laying hands on you to submit to you. And I have discovered that when I pray for somebody as an elder, if that person has total confidence in me and submission, very often they get healed. I've discovered that through the years.

And for other people, for whom it's just a ritual, nothing happens. So what can I do about that? Nothing. I can't do anything about it because I'm not here to tell people what they should do.

There are little things like this where we go through something as a ritual and nothing happens and nothing will happen. You can go through breaking a bread. Nothing happens.

It's supposed to bring a blessing. It says about the people in Emmaus that when the Lord broke bread, their eyes were opened. But for many people, nothing happens even in 20 years.

Their eyes never get opened at all because it's just a ritual. So we must fight every type of ritual. We say, Lord, everything must be meaningful.

I want to go from faith to faith to faith. I've got faith for something. I want faith for something more.

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