

THE FAITH OF THE BELIEVER

by Abri Brancken, 4/2/2018

INTRODUCTION

There are many examples in the Bible of God doing extraordinary things in the lives of His people. The only thing is that in almost all of the cases God's people had to demonstrate faith in order to see the breakthroughs that God promised. They not only had to believe by they had to act upon that belief. Faith is a confident conviction that God is who He says He is and that He can do what He says He can do.

Faith is key to every aspect of your life, not just prayer. What you become, what you achieve, is all linked to faith or the lack of it. Many Christians want to know the Bible, but they fail to act upon the truth that they know.

NAZARETH'S UNBELIEF

Jesus constantly demonstrated the power of God to people. He often told the people that it will be done according to their faith.

Matthew 9:28-29

After Jesus had entered the house, the blind men came to Him. "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" He asked. "Yes, Lord," they answered. 29Then He touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you." And their eyes were opened.

Matthew 8:13

Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

Jesus performed many miracles, thereby demonstrating that the Kingdom of God was visibly breaking into history. Jesus also wanted to do miracles in Nazareth. Jesus chose to limit his miraculous demonstrations in this neighbourhood because of their unbelief. It was done according to their faith and because they did not have faith, nothing could be done for them. The stubborn, purposeful disbelief of the Jews of this area was great and Jesus was astonished at their "unbelief."

Matthew 13:57-58

And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown and in his own household is a prophet without honor." And He did not do many miracles there, because of their unbelief.

Think about this. Jesus (God) could not (or chose not to) do miracles because the people's faith was not there to activate the miracles. Without faith no one can please God.

Hebrews 11:6-8

Without faith no one can please God. Anyone who comes to God must believe that he is real and that he rewards those who truly want to find him.

THE FINGER OF GOD

Jesus wanted the people to understand that God is involved in their lives and that heaven's power is in their midst. He wanted them to trust God for the impossible, but they often lacked the faith for the miracles to be released. One time when Jesus was driving out a mute demon, His opponents accused Him of using demonic powers to cast out demons.

Luke 11:14-22

14 Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed. 15 But some of them said, "By Beelzebul, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons." 16 Others tested him by asking for a sign from heaven.

17 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: "Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall. 18 If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebul. 19 Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. 20 But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Jesus' response was interesting. We often miss the point that He is trying to make because we don't know the Bible that well. His response was: "But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

There is another story in the Bible where we read about the "finger of God". When God used Moses to perform miracles in Egypt, Pharaoh's magicians copied some of the miracles, e.g. a staff turning into a snake. But as they progressed, and the miracles became more intense and powerful, the magicians could not keep up. After witnessing God's power in the plagues, they exclaimed,

"This is the finger of God (Exodus 8:19)

Exodus 8:18-19

18 But when the magicians tried to produce gnats by their secret arts, they could not.

Since the gnats were on people and animals everywhere, 19 the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God."

They realised that this was God Himself performing the miracles and that they were beaten. Jesus was alluding to Exodus 8. Just like the magicians had to

admit that God was the one doing the miracles, so the religious leaders of Jesus' day could not but acknowledge that it is God's power at work. Jesus' own power over demonic forces reveal His spiritual authority.

Jesus wanted people to realise that God is in their midst.

HEBREWS 11 – HEROES OF FAITH

Hebrews 11 lists great men and woman who did great things for God. How did they do it? By faith. They believed that God is involved in this life and that heaven's power and principles can manifest in the here and now, and it did. Look at Noah, Moses, Elijah, etc.

EMUNAH

The meaning of faith (Emunah) in our Hebrew Bible is not to assent to a factual statement, to agree with the truth of certain ideas. It has a much broader meaning. It contains the idea of steadfastness and persistence. In Exodus 17 we read that Moses raised his hands all day long until the Israelites won the battle. It says that his hands remained steady (Emunah) until sunset. In this sense the word means "steadfast". We are called to have a persistent and steadfast commitment to God. Taking action into the direction that God leads us. Remember, faith is action!

SATAN KNOWS THE TRUTH BUT IS NOT SAVED

Satan knows the truth about Jesus and God but knowing it does not save him.

James 2:19 (NIV)

You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

Although satan may have the right beliefs, he cannot say that he has Emunah – a committed faithfulness to the truth. What God expect of us goes beyond our academic decision to believe that a certain set of facts are true. He wants faith in his promises that result in steadfast faithfulness to Him. He wants action, a proactive response towards His will.

LIVING FAITH FILLED LIVES

We need to get use to living a lifestyle of partaking in the Kingdom of God on a daily basis.

Faith, a lifestyle of action in God's truth, empowers us to live in such a way that it transforms society. We place limitations to what God can do in our lives, just like the people of Nazareth did in Jesus' day. Jesus rebuked His disciples very often for their lack of faith. Why? Because God's empowering ability is released through our faith. Needless to say, God can do anything without anyone, but He choose to work with us. He provides the guidance, the power and the provision and we need to believe, be faithful towards it.

CONCLUSION

Luke 18:7-8

Will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry out to Him day and night? Will He continue to defer their help? I tell you, He will promptly carry out justice on their behalf. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?"

Today we hear little of the doctrine of faith and still less of the exercise of faith, particularly in prayer, and especially about the coming of Christ, but faith forms part of the basic foundation of the Christian walk. We cannot not have faith for then we have nothing at all.