

Attitude # 8 - Faith

Matthew 5:10 - Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

I trust in the power of Jesus Christ when I face hardships and trials.

Faith is belief in, devotion to, or trust in somebody or something, especially without logical proof. There will be times in the Christian life that our faith will be challenged. We make certain decisions when we do not always have logical proof for them turning out to our liking. We must understand that ALL decisions in this life should be made by the leadership of God as it pertains to the will of God. There are examples in the Bible that speak of people making decisions that did not always make logical sense. Abraham left the comforts of home and familiar surroundings not knowing where he was going. Moses led the children of Israel for forty years in the wilderness with the promise of a promised land, but not knowing when he would arrive there and came to find that he would not arrive there himself. Simon Peter was invited to step out of a boat to walk on water; Thomas was challenged by the news of the resurrection; John the Baptist was challenged in the biggest trial of his life as to whether Jesus really was who He said He was.

It has been said that a faith that has not been tested may not be faith at all. Walk the journey of faith for a while and your faith, if it is authentic, will be tested. I have noticed that we are rarely excited when our faith is tested until the test is over and we may have passed the test. We could say we pass the test when we are more reliant on God to come through than we are reliant on ourselves to survive it. Regardless of the outcome, we have passed when we trust wholeheartedly on God and not on ourselves and when we do, our faith will be increased.

Our biblical example:

Mark 9:14-24 - And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. 15 And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him. 16 And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them? 17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; 18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. 19 He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. 21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. 22 And oftentimes it hath cast

him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. 23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. 24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

1. Vs. 14-18 - The confusion. And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. 15 And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him. 16 And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them? 17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; 18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

The disciples were not able to do something that they had been given the authority to do. Here we have the confusion of the father whose son desperately needed a cure, and we also have the confusion of the disciples who were given the power to meet the need presented to them.

Mark 3:13-15 - And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. 14 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, 15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils:

1 Corinthians 14:33 - For God is not the author of *confusion* (instability, state of disorder), but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

It can be frustrating and defeating for any follower of Jesus Christ to not experience what God has told them they can experience and even given them the power to experience. By faith we believe what we read in the bible and perhaps never struggle with believing those things that we read. Then we are tested with the difficulties of life, when comparatively they may be dwarfed by what we see God doing in the Bible and yet we still struggle to believe that God will come through for us.

When we think of the challenge of addictive behavior, there are many scriptures in the word of God that speak to our victory. Always remember, addiction may be big, but it is not bigger than God! Yes, we do need to do our part in the process of change, and we should do our part. But while doing our part we must also take God at His word and ask Him to strengthen our resolve to believe Him at all costs.

John 8:32 - And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:36 - If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Romans 6:14 - For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

The Scribes added to the humiliation of the disciples, which we can be sure did not help their confusion. Just because God has not come through does not mean that He will not come through.

2. Vs. 19-22 - The misunderstanding. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. 20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. 21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. 22 And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us.

We now turn to the misunderstanding of the father. He came earlier to the disciples of Christ, and he was disappointed with the result of their efforts and now he comes to Jesus hoping for a better outcome. His misunderstanding was not in what he was asking for but in the way that he asked..... **but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us.**

When we come to God, we can learn from this biblical example that it is not whether God *can* do something, it is whether He *will* do something. God lacks no power and ability to do anything. We know that without faith it is impossible to please the Lord (**Hebrews 11:16**) so then we also know that this man would have much better pleased the Lord had he said, "I know that you can, and I pray that you will."

3. Vs. 23 - The response. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

Jesus made it clear that it was not a matter of "if He could" but a matter of "if the father believed that He could".

One of the most powerful phrases in all the bible follows **If thou canst believe.....**when Jesus says, "**all things are possible to him that believeth**". Is there anything any more profound and inclusive than this statement? All things, we know, means ALL things. What is my lack of faith keeping me from having or experiencing when God tells me that "**all things are possible to him**"

that believeth"? I am not saying that this kind of faith is "name it and claim it," but I am saying that whatever is according to the will of God for us we can experience it by faith.

Jeremiah 32:27 - Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?

Luke 18:27 - And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

4. Vs. 24 - The admission. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

It is very evident that the boy's father was "conflicted." On the one hand he had his doubts about Jesus and His disciples as to whether they could help. On the other hand, he had a grave issue concerning his son and he needed to believe that they could meet the need.

We might also experience the conflict of faith and doubt. Faith tells us that God can do anything, and our doubt might cause us to think that even "if He can" he will not. This father may not have been in the category of those that did believe Jesus could do what He said that He could do and then He did it (**Matthew 8:13; 15:28**), but he did have enough faith perhaps to sustain him and give him the hope that he needed for that day and time.

What great insight we see here because it gives us a biblical example of the unnecessary torment, we can put ourselves through when we refuse to give into God entirely and believe what He says with complete trust and acting upon it in complete faith. True faith that is undivided is a powerful thing, but a little doubt can squash it all.