

Help for our unbelief

Matthew 17:19-20 NKJV

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

We all know that faith is important. We get that.
But what am I meant to believe?
What is my faith meant to achieve?

Introduction:

Some days when I look at my Facebook news feed etc I just want to shake my head. There is a lot of negativity out there, but also a lot of things to be negative about. What makes me want to shake my head is not so much the terrible things that happen or the anger and bitterness that people exude. I feel a sense of frustration when I see that so many of us think that the solution lies in the natural - that it is as simple as just getting rid of a dumb guy and replacing him with a smart guy. The problem with the world is not dumb people. The problem is that too many people in our world are broken and chained by bitterness, fear and hopelessness.

We constantly read about this or that decision that was made by some leader and think, "that's the dumbest thing I've ever heard". What if the problem is not his intelligence or competence, but rather the fact that on the inside he is broken, bound and oppressed?

I say that is good news! Because we all know that there aren't any pills for dumbness, but the Spirit of the Lord God is upon you and me because He has anointed us to set at liberty those who are oppressed, heal the broken hearted, proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.... I am convinced that what this country needs is not a patching up or a political revolution, but that the saints of God rise up and, through the power of the gospel turn the world upside down once more.

The "turning the world upside down" was not achieved through people convincing lots of people to adopt a new faith. When I read the book of Acts I must conclude that Revival is about the believers demonstrating God's Kingdom so that people spontaneously come, even running and asking "what must I do to be saved?" If we have faith like a mustard seed, nothing will be impossible for us.

**Turn to your neighbour and say, "Your country and the world out there needs you ".
Your faith can spark the revival that turns this country on its head.**

When I was a student, the art of serenading was a major part of the student culture. Each residence had an official serenading group that would practice at least once a week during the year and up to 4-5 times a week leading up to competitions. In Huis Visser, the official group was called the sailors. There was also an unofficial group which called themselves the Pirates. These were typically the guys who didn't possess the vocal talent to qualify for the Sailors. But they were undeterred, because they knew that any lack of singing talent can be overcome by raw passion and taking off your shirt.

Faith works the same way. God honours faith more than He honours talent.
God honours faith more than He honours the rules.

The story of Samson illustrates this. Samson was to live as a Nazarene - the rules stated that he could not drink wine, he could not touch anything unclean and, of course he could not cut his hair. If the rules were to be strictly applied to Samson, he should have lost his strength when he picked up the jaw bone of a donkey or when he ate honey out of a carcass. Yet his strength only left him when his hair was cut. Why?

Because that is what he believed would happen. Samson was an OT example of NT faith which says "according to your faith, let it be done for you". This is the invitation for any believer: God sent His Son as the express image of the Father, demonstrating His heart and His desires. When our dreams are aligned with His heart, we have a blank cheque to dream as big as we want and know that He has promised to over deliver on our expectations. What are you doing with God's invitation to dream?

The cost of our unbelief

Matthew 17:14-17 NKJV

And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him." Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me."

So Jesus came down from the mountain with Peter James and John and found a crowd of people arguing with the other disciples. When He hears what had happened, Jesus does a facepalm. But who was he speaking to when He said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you...?"

He wasn't speaking to the disciples 🤔
He was speaking to the father of the afflicted child.

Mark 9:22-24 NKJV

... Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

After addressing the father's unbelief, Jesus cast the demon out.

Matthew 17:18-21 NKJV

And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" So Jesus said to them, "**Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.** However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

Yet he also said that the disciples were unbelieving... Unbelief is infectious 🤔.

When faced with a situation that seems to out weigh your faith levels or to be better suited to somebody else's strengths/gifts, it is easy to begin to wish that you had somebody else's gifting. Never despise your unique relationship with the Holy Spirit or your unique way of operating in His gifts. In Him is the answer for every situation and every need that you will ever encounter and I'm here to tell you that you know how to access it. The only thing that can prevent you from accessing it is if you choose to hide or dim your lamp.

Matthew 5:14-16 NKJV

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Luke 8:16-18 NKJV

"No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light. Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him."

God has placed His kingdom and His presence within us so that an outward manifestation should follow. That is what the lighting of the lamp signifies. Now He asks, "what sane person lights a lamp, only to try and stifle the light that wants to break forth?"

I am a lamp, lit by God. His kingdom of light is inside me and it wants to manifest on the outside.

What does this manifestation look like?

I Corinthians 12:4-11 NKJV

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. **But the manifestation of**

the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

You and I are each like a big mobile floodlight that has at least 9 different bulbs. We know the light bulbs as the gifts of the Spirit and we often forget that they all tap into the same source.

Testimony to illustrate

Let's go Nepal team presented a 3day conference in Pokhara for about 200 church leaders from the surrounding areas. On the second day, Steven made a healing altar call and Yvette shared a word of knowledge that two ladies responded to. As soon as it became apparent that something was happening, everyone in the venue with any kind of ailment started to go forward for prayer.

I had facilitated the altar call for the previous session and was feeling a little bit like I was all out of good words, but I decided to go forward and pray for some of the people who were responding. Praying for healing has been a little bit of a hit and miss affair for me in the past, but I decided that there was no point in travelling 11000km to come and work on my forward defensive stroke. Taking a big swing was in order. So I went forward, interviewed the first person and prayed a simple prayer, boldly asking Jesus to heal this person from his chest pains. No healing. I said, "no problem, we'll just pray again". After praying again, there was either no difference or perhaps a slight improvement. So at that stage my faith was on a knife point. Luckily I had the good sense to ask God what He thought of the situation. He showed me a picture which I could pray over the person and which flowed into some more prophetic words. That was quite enjoyable as I could clearly hear and follow God's voice and I wasn't so easily distracted by the question of whether this poor person is going to get healed. After I had prayed for a while, the guy described to the interpreter how He had experienced God's presence and His peace and how he was no longer in any pain. He basically listed the things that I prayed over Him in the order that I prayed them and told how he physically experienced each one as I was praying. What a game breaker! All of a sudden I had access to faith for healing and it came via a path that was easy for me.

I find it relatively easy to get a word or a picture for someone. I have always found it relatively difficult to have faith for somebody's healing. We each have a unique relationship with the Holy Spirit. What is easy for me is maybe less so for you and vice versa. That is biblical. Though we each have the same Holy Spirit and therefore a basic capacity to operate in any of His gifts, we will each excell in unique areas. I always thought of the gifts as unique keys that unlock unique doors. Like, if Captain America can't fly, then he won't be any good in a mid air rescue situation - you'd need Iron Man for that job. But it is not so much about the gifts as it is about the Giver. In Him is the key to unlock any door.

Jesus also used the image of a lamp to describe the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 25. The oil in story of the 10 virgins speaks of the unique relationship that each person has with the Holy Spirit. That is why the 5 wise girls couldn't just help the foolish ones with a quick loan.

Matthew 25:6-12 NKJV

"And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'

Don't look at your own lamp and think that the oil in it is any less potent than the pastor's or the worship leader's or the elder's. Nobody else has a lamp that burns quite like yours. You need to commit to making a peace with that here today.

Declaration: my lamp is a treasure, and it is exactly what the church and the world needs today.

Declaration: (to your neighbour) your lamp is a treasure, and it is exactly what the church and the world needs today.