

Principles of Faith

H L WOOD - DON ROSS

H. L. WOOD

PASTOR

MIRACLE LIFE CENTER
REV. H. L. WOOD PASTOR
ALSO WITH HIS SONS OF THUNDER
A CHALLENGE TO YOUTH

CHICAGO'S NEW REVIVAL CHURCH
EIGHTLY 8PM

FOR ALL PEOPLE



Principles of Faith

This book is written for your blessing; in hopes that it will cause you to inherit the precious promises contained in the Word of God.

Credit for this message must be given to Rev. H. L. Wood, for it has been through years of seeing "faith in action" in the dedicated lives of Rev. and Mrs. Wood, that the writer of this text has come to realize the genuine meaning of faith. Their service to God has been one of sacrifice, yet they have reaped great blessings in God. Their purpose always has been, and is yet today, to see many souls won into the kingdom of God.

Many of Bro. Wood's messages have been used in portion, and it has been because of the teaching of a life of faith, that I, Don Ross, have been able to put these words together, that you also might enjoy the same benefits from this faith-building message as I have.

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"For by faith the elders obtained a good report."

Open the Door

"... And when they had opened the door; and saw him, they were astonished." Acts 12:16. Many people pray for the move of God in their lives. They seek the Lord for answers to many problems. They believe that God will answer their petitions, but they fail to receive that which the Lord wants to do for them.

Peter had been thrown in jail by Herod in order to please the Jews. It was the intention of Herod to have Peter beheaded just as he had had James beheaded, because he saw that this brought happiness to the religious leaders of the Jews. Peter was left in prison and heavily guarded because it was the Passover, and was against Jewish law to execute on a holy day.

The saints of God went to pray for the deliverance of Peter. They knew that it would take the hand of the Lord to deliver Peter from the intentions of Herod. They had faith in the Lord and pleaded continually before Him. The Bible states in Acts 12:5 that they had faith, they knew God heard and answered their prayers. The Bible states that if we pray and *believe* we will obtain the answer.

God answered their petition and sent a miracle to Peter. The angel of the Lord delivered him from the fate of the executioner. He was set free and came to the house where the saints of God were praying for his release. But now a strange story unfolds before our eyes. As Peter tried to gain entrance into the house he found the gate locked and no one

there to admit him. He knocked at the gate but still there was no answer.

Meanwhile inside, the saints of God were still praying earnestly for the release of Peter, not realizing that he was standing at the door of the very house in which they were praying. God had already answered their prayers, but they had not yet become conscious of the fact. "*And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.*" Isaiah 65:24. An evangelist was ministering in our church and gave this testimony. Each night at the close of his ministry as he was leaving the platform, one of the saints would bring him a glass of water to quench his thirst. This particular night he finished his ministry and was turning to leave the platform, and he told the Lord in his heart, "Lord, I would like to have a glass of strawberry cool-aid tonight instead of water." He had not told anyone else but the Lord for he did not want to seem unappreciative of the saints gesture. No sooner had he said this in his heart to the Lord, but the little saint came up and said, "Brother, we have a surprise for you tonight! We have prepared a glass of strawberry cool-aid for you instead of water." God had given him the desire of his heart, even though it was only a small glass of cool-aid. God is concerned with the little things in your life as well as the big things. But most people do not expect to receive, and therefore their doubts keep them from receiving the fullness of God's blessings. This evangelist had received the desire of his heart, even before he ask God. God knew his desire and had already moved on the heart of those saints to prepare him the glass of cool-aid. But, he needed to ask to receive.

Peter was standing at the gate waiting for the saints to open the door. "And when she (the damsel) knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in . . ." Acts 12:14. She became so excited over hearing his voice that she failed to let him into the house. Here was the answer to their prayers standing outside the door, but he needed to be let in. He needed to be received by those who were praying. When these saints would finally open the door and let in the answer from God, they would be "astonished." Acts 12:16.

A NEW THING FROM GOD

Rhoda ran up to the praying saints and began to exclaim to them that Peter was standing at the door waiting to come in. The first response by these people was to question God. You say, how did they question God? They did it by their unbelief that it was indeed Peter at the door. "*Thou art mad,*" was their first reaction to the words of Rhoda. They had been praying for the release of Peter, but now when news came that he was standing before the gate, and that God had answered their prayer, they could not believe that it was possible. They could not conceive in their minds how God could get Peter out of Herod's prison and past all those guards. They no doubt, had been planning that God would change Herod's heart, and that by this means they would find him released. *God had moved in a way they had not at all expected Him to, therefore they found it difficult to accept the answer the way God had sent it to them.*

The church world as a whole, and especially those who have remained faithful to the Lord, have been praying for many years for God to send revival. Many hours of prayer and fasting have gone up before God that He might send a mighty, Holy Ghost outpouring of His Spirit upon all flesh. God is answering that prayer, but not in the fashion that many have imagined He would. They are finding it difficult to accept the move of God in this hour because it is not the same move that took place in years gone by. God is moving in a new dimension and many are saying to those who are hearing the knock at the door, "*Thou art mad! God moved this way 30 years ago, and He is going to move that same way again, or it won't be Him.*" They cannot accept the new thing from God. "*Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall not ye know it?*" Isaiah 43:18,19. You must first become conscious of the move of God; even though that which is now taking place is different from the way God moved before. It is indeed God at work in the midst of His people to fulfill His promises and bring about the consummation of the ages.

THEY WERE ASTONISHED

Rhoda had heard the voice of Peter at the door, but in her excitement and in her doubt she had failed to let him in. Upon telling the saints who were praying for his release that he was standing at the door, they would not believe. But she insisted and continued until they were willing to open the door and see. "*Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will sup with him, and he with me.*" Revelation 3:20. Christ was not talking to sinners and unbelievers here. He was talking to a cold and indifferent church that did not recognize their need for a revival. The Lord, like Peter, has been left outside the gate while church members have continued to pray for His coming. They have asked God to send revival and *open the door*. God has already sent the answer to the prayer for revival. Now we must let the move of God come into our lives.

"And when they had opened the door . . . they were astonished." Acts 12:16. The Church will be astonished at the move God has sent to them, as soon as they open the door. Opening the door is an act of faith. It is action, and action is always connected to faith. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." James 2:17, 18. Faith will always bring about action, and the result will be the working of the will of God.

Confess the Word of God

"I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; *but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind*, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Romans 12:1-2.

Paul learned the secret of a successful Christian walk. He learned how to overcome and maintain a constant victory in his life in spite of difficulty, hardship and persecution. He could say, "*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day . . .*" II Timothy 4: 7-8. Paul could truly say, "*for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*" Phillipians 1:21. And again in Galatians 2:20, we read, "*I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*"

What could cause Paul to have such confidence in his spiritual state? Paul was a man of unshakable faith. He had met Jesus. From that experience his whole life, thoughts and ambitions had been converted into the perfect will of God. His writings reflect his faith in the Lord. Paul was not just living in the hope of some future ecstasy in heaven, but he literally had heaven on earth. For him life meant only one thing, to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. He did not relate his

life with Jesus Christ to some futuristic event. He became consumed with a day by day walk, talk, and fight with Christ as his supreme commander. He received the orders from the Lord, and then quickly pursued their fulfilling.

It is possible to live in this world with its evil forces around you, and yet to be so changed in the processes of your thinking by the power of the Holy Ghost that you are not affected by that which is around you. You can come into the victory of the Lord in your daily life until you will become a constant victor. But it takes an effort on your part to come to this place in God where you become an overcomer. Paul spent time with the Lord in the early part of his spiritual life, and it was here that he came to know the Lord, whom he served, and the way in which He moved. Paul did not speak of the circumstances around him as affecting the work of the Lord that had been entrusted to him, and neither can you. You must come to a place in your life where the words from your mouth will only echo the Word of God. It is the Word that builds faith. (Romans 10:17). Faith is speaking what God said He would do. Faith does not reason the solution, neither does it seek to find the manner in which God will move. It merely takes God at His Word and receives the answer. Job said, "Thou shalt decree;" that is your part - you must first make up your mind as to what you want from God; and then God said He would *establish it*, and that light (understanding) would come to you. Job (22:28). Jesus said, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matthew 16:19. Jesus was speaking of power, and that power came by revelation of who Christ was - that it was through His name that all these things could be accomplished.

Many people seek God for deliverance in their life. It may be for sickness, oppression, prosperity or for many other things. They ask the Lord for guidance and help. They say they have faith. They have no sooner uttered these words, than out of their mouth will come forth a negative statement of doubt. The two are opposite and doubt will always cancel out faith. James said in James 1:6-8, "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed.

For let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord." You cannot pray to God one way, and then talk to man another. Your conversation must reflect the positive promises of God. You are not speaking a lie, you are speaking *faith*, that God will do exactly what you have asked of Him.

IT IS WELL

Elisha had prophesied and a woman in II Kings 4 had brought forth a son. She loved the boy. She had been barren but through a supernatural miracle she had been made fruitful. One day when her son was in the field with his father he was struck with a sunstroke. His dead body was carried to the upper chamber which had been prepared for the man of God. In faith the woman started out to the house of Elisha. As she approached, Elisha sent Gehazi his servant, to ask her three questions. Let us examine these questions and her answers.

"Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with thy child?" II Kings 4:26. Her reply was simple, and full of faith. "*It is well.*" Some carnal minded person would say, "that was a lie for she knew that her son was not well, but dead." My friend, that was not a lie, that was faith speaking. She did not look at the circumstances, she looked at the promise of God and took hold of that promise. God had given her a son and she said to God, "He is well, he is alive. I do not care what it may look like, I am speaking that he is alive." Faith takes God at His word and leaves no room for any other thought to enter. She confessed that her boy was well, and God restored him to her. You must confess, in spite of every lie from the devil, that you will receive from God that which you have need of. It does not make any difference what the circumstances tell you. God is able and He will perform it. Tell God, "*It is well.*"

POWER OVER FEAR

In the beginning, God created man to have fellowship with Him. He would come into the midst of the Garden of Eden each afternoon, in the cool of the evening, and fellowship with Adam. Genesis 2 & 3. It was no doubt during these times with the Lord that Adam acquired the knowledge as to the beginnings of creation. Adam demonstrated no fear

whatsoever, for God had made him to have dominion over all the earth. "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Genesis 2:18-20. Yet Adam was afraid of none for he had dominion, and there was no fear.

And he (Adam) said, I heard thy voice in the garden and I was afraid . . ." Genesis 3:10. For the first time in the history of the creation, fear came into the man that God had created in His likeness. What caused this fear? Look back into the previous verses and you will discover the cause. The cause was sin - disobedience to God. When Adam disobeyed God, the resultant sin caused fear, doubt, and also distrust. "*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*" II Timothy 1:7. God is not the author of fear. It is the work of the enemy to "steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they might have life, and that (you) might have it more abundantly." John 10:10. Fear will destroy you and cause you to lose your mind. "But let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus . . ." Phil. 2:5. "*Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand, stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take unto you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication for all saints.*" Ephesians 6:10-18. Note that God has made provision for our battle, and has equipped us for the warfare. Faith is the shield for your protection. Faith will resist the darts of doubt, fear and unbelief that satan will hurl at you. But your confession must be the Word of God, for therein lies your faith.

OVERCOMING FAITH

"And they (the blood washed saints) overcame him (*Satan and his evil forces*) by the blood of the Lamb, (that is the atoning work of Calvary) and by the *Word of their testimony.*" Revelation 12:11. The blood of the Lamb has been shed for every man, woman, boy and girl. Yet many thousands will wind up in hell because they never did appropriate that blood to their sins. Salvation necessitates more than the Blood. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the *mouth confession is made unto salvation.*" Romans 10:9-10. Confession is a vital part of your salvation. It is an active demonstration of your faith in the Word of God. It says, "Lord I believe, and I receive."

Your confession with Christ and His word will cause you to overcome all the work of the enemy. Align yourself with the Word of God. Speak what Christ would speak. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Phil. 4:13. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even our faith.* Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" I John 5:4-5. Can you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? If so, then you will believe and act upon His words, and you will overcome. You will confess that by the help of Jesus Christ, you will be victorious. "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Now Faith

"*Now faith* is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1. God places emphasis on believing Him when you pray. Believe that you immediately receive the answer to your petition, even if time is involved in the carrying out of that answer. God will immediately respond to the prayer of faith. It may take time to bring to completion the petition sought, but from the moment faith is decreed, God began to move in your behalf. "Therefore I say unto you, what things soever you desire, when you pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11:24. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." John 14:13. Jesus never left any doubt in His statements. He always revealed the will of the Father, and that will was to bless and not curse. "I am come that (you) might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly." John 10:10. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: (the revealed will of God) I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Matthew 5:17. Christ did not come to do away with, but rather to fulfill or bring the plan of God into its perfect form. Sin had blotted the plan of God, but now the atoning work of Jesus would bring about the restoration of that plan. It would unite man and God once again.

Hebrews states that *now faith* produces results. It is faith that God will hear and answer your petition now! Many people put God's work in their life way off in the future. They have *someday faith* that God may move for

them. They never come to the place where they can believe God to do it now! Recall the death of Lazarus, and how Jesus was delayed in His coming. When He finally arrived, Martha met Him. She was broken over her brother's death. Jesus comforted her with these words: "Thy brother shall rise again." Jesus was trying to stimulate faith in Martha, just as He is trying to stimulate faith in you today to take Him at His word. Martha replied, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." John 11:24. She had faith that God could raise the dead, but not now. It would have to wait for some future event. She had future faith, or what I call "*sometime faith*." This put little demand on her belief right now. This event would take place sometime - but not now. God says to have "*now faith*." Faith that believes God can and will do it now!

"And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, go, and he goeth; and to another, come, and he cometh; and to my servant, do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it he marvelled, and said to them that followed, verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel." Matthew 8:5-10. Jesus was so struck by the demonstration of faith that this centurion manifested, it caused even Jesus to marvel. He had not seen this kind of faith, even in all of Israel. Here was positive faith in the power of Jesus, to just speak the word. This centurion recognized authority, for he himself was vested with a certain degree of it. In Jesus he realized was the power of God, and all Jesus had to do was speak and action would result. We must realize that Jesus *does* have the power to solve our problems. Speak positive faith, that God will do the work for you *now*.

I AM

"And Moses said unto God, behold, when I come unto the children of Israel and shall say unto them, the God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say unto

me, what is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, *I am that I am*: and he said, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, *I am* hath sent me unto you." Exodus 3:13-14. God identified Himself to Moses and to the children of Israel, as the *I am* God. He is the ever-present God, able to perform His word right now. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Hebrews 13:8. Moses had met the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but he now found out that He was an ever-present God for Moses too.

Moses could not serve God, and deliver the people from the bondage of Egypt on a past-tense God. He could not rely on the experiences of Abraham, and the many other patriarchs. He needed God to move for him, and he had to have faith that God would. You cannot rely on the experience of your parents and grandparents. Just as you needed a personal experience of the saving power of Jesus Christ in your own life, so you need a living tangible faith in God to work-for you today. You cannot rely on the experience you had from the Lord many years ago, or even last week. You maintain an updated experience with the Lord and believe Him for your daily substance. Jesus, in His prayer that He gave to the disciples to pray said: "Give us this day our daily bread." Matthew 6:11. Another place Jesus said: "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Matthew 6:34. Many people are so concerned with the needs of tomorrow, they cannot accomplish anything today. We have no guarantee of tomorrow, so why should one continually worry about it? You need to become concerned with the need in your life today. Believe, and ask God to give you your daily "bread" - that substance and faith that will sustain you for this day. If God can keep you through today, then certainly He will be able to do likewise tomorrow.

In Genesis the 28th chapter, we read of the account of Jacob at Bethel. Jacob was fleeing from his brother Esau, from whom he had taken the blessing of Isaac deceitfully. As he ran from his brother he came to a place known as Bethel. There he decided to stay for the night. During his sleep that night God visited him in a special way. God had ordained to bring forth the promised nation out of Jacob. "And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of

Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. . ." Genesis 28:13. Note that God identified Himself as the *I am* God. Not the I was, or the I will be. God said, I am - right now thy God. Jacob's life was changed from this experience with the Lord. Until now, God had always been his father's God, or his grandfather's God. But now, God became Jacob's God. "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, if God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." Genesis 28:20-22.

"And Jacob awoke out of his sleep, and he said, surely the Lord *is* in this place . . ." Genesis 28:16. Jacob came to realize that he was serving the "*I am God*" and God was continually with him and supplying his every need. He became conscious of this, and said, "Surely God is (present tense) in this place. His dream had ended, and the vision was gone from his eyes, yet Jacob knew that God was still present with him.

"And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, then follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him." Elijah put God on the spot, and he also put himself on the spot. He came to the end of himself over the indifference of the people to the worship of the true God. He declared a contest to decide once and for all whom should be served. "And the God that answereth by fire, let Him be God." I Kings 18. Elijah needed a God who would answer right now! Elijah could not, and neither can you, gain great victory in your life, nor in the life of others, as long as you put God's answer way off in the future sometime. You need to become specific. Set a definite time in which God is to answer, and then declare it in faith. Be open, just as Elijah! Then God will have to answer you and send your petition.

The prophets of Baal could not obtain an answer from their god. They, like so many today, did not know the real source of all blessings. God is your source, and you must come to Him with your needs. Many people would not do as

Elijah did for they do not have living faith to believe God to bring an immediate answer. They would criticize a man of faith who would declare the promise of God and call him a "sensationalist," while they themselves are filled with pride and jealousy.

"And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day (notice that Elijah is specific when he wants the answer from God - not tomorrow or some future time, but *this day*) that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou hast turned their heart back again. *Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.* And when all the people saw it, they said, The Lord He is the God; the Lord, He is the God." Elijah got his answer while he was still speaking, because he dared to put God in the *now*. It will take that kind of faith to obtain the same kind of results in your life. Not only did Elijah get his answer, but the people were convinced the Lord would be their God. You cannot convince others of the power of God unless they first see that power at work in your own life. Begin to believe and receive from God. Set a target date. Set a specific time in which God is going to give you the answer you have been seeking Him for. When you do this, you begin to exercise your faith, and that faith will produce the results that you are seeking.

All through the Old Testament God manifested Himself as the *I am* God. He was always present in the time of trouble or need. When Jesus Christ came in flesh as the manifestation of God among men, He likewise identified Himself as the *I am* God. As you study the life of Christ, you will discover He often referred to Himself as the *I am*. To the woman at the well, Jesus said: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messias (the Messiah) cometh, which is called the Christ: when he is come, He will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He." John 4:24-26. This woman, like so many people, put the events of God off in the future, while standing before

her was the One of whom she spoke. Jesus corrected her thinking, and identified Himself as the *I am*. He told her, "Don't look to the future for your salvation, deliverance, and blessing, look to me now, for behold, now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation." II Corinthians 6:2. "Why put off until tomorrow what God can do today; let the Saviour bless your soul right now."

To the contrary Jesus said: "*I am* the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." John 6:35. In John 9:5 He said: "*I am* the light of the world." "*Then said Jesus unto them, verily verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep . . . I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep . . . I am the good shepherd; and know my sheep, and am known of mine.*" John 10:7-14. In John 15:1-5, Jesus again said: "I am the true vine, and my father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." Notice how many times in the above scriptures that Jesus Christ referred to Himself as the *I am*. He spoke in the same terms that He had always identified Himself to man. He was and is still the same "yesterday, today, and forever."

In the Revelation of Jesus Christ, given to the apostle John on the Isle of Patmos, Jesus again identified Himself as the *I am*. Clear down to the very end of the work of God, He still is the ever-present God to perform His word. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying *I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last . . .*" Revelation 1:10-11. God, in giving His final instructions to man has still identified Himself as the present tense God, to work in the *now*! God hasn't changed

at all. Clear back in the Old Testament God identified Himself similarly. He said: "Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and His redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God." Isaiah 44:6. Also in Isaiah 48:12, "Hearken unto me, Oh Jacob and Israel, my called; *I am He; I am the first, I also am the last.*" If God be the first, and He is also the last, then certainly He must be everything in between. There is nothing before the beginning; neither is there anything after the ending; for God fills all and is all. Believe and serve a present God. Put your thinking into the present. Begin to exercise *now faith*. You will be astonished at the results. It is the "substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1. It will "bring forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Psalms 1:3.

Persistent Faith

And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians and had spent all that she had, and was nothing better, but rather grew worse, when she heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched His garment. For she said, if I may but touch His clothes, I shall be made whole. And straight way the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned Him about in the press, and said, who touched my clothes? And His disciples said unto Him, thou seest the multitude thronging about thee, and sayest thou, who touched me? And He looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth. And He said unto her, Daughter, *thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.*" Mark 5:25-34.

This woman had a real need in her life. This was a matter of life and death to her. Jesus was the only one left who could help her. She had traveled from doctor to doctor for twelve years. She had heard promise after promise, only to be disappointed as she grew worse. Now out of money, with no one else to look to, she heard of the miracles of Jesus. She heard how the lame walked and the dumb talked, how the blind had been made to see. She decided in her heart that if these could receive from Jesus, she could also. She began to speak faith.

Many people begin to speak faith because they hear what God has done for others. They see God moving in the midst of His people, His wonders to perform, and their faith is inspired to believe God. Like the woman here, they decide they will go to Jesus for help. As this woman came closer to where Jesus was, she encountered difficulty. She was weak and tired. Yet standing before her was the multitude of people that had gathered to see Jesus at work. Now her faith was going to be tested. Did she believe enough to press her way through the crowd? How would she get Jesus to pray for her?

Her faith was now inspired in the power of Jesus Christ to heal her. She decided that at any cost, she would press her way to Jesus. It might mean inconvenience, and trial. It might mean being rebuffed by those in the crowd. She would have to pay a price for her touch. Here is where so many people fail to press through. I have seen sick people who really needed a touch from the Lord come into a service for prayer. They desperately needed the Lord to heal them. Some of these people would, during the course of the meeting get up and leave before they had received that which they came for. Their flesh had cried out to be pampered. Instead of pressing through at any cost and obtaining the promise of their deliverance, they chose to tell God, "You will have to heal me on my own terms and when I want it." These people go year after year in their sickness and bondage, and finally die, still believing God can heal, but never really pressing their way through the crowd, and receiving the touch from the Master.

This woman pressed her way to Jesus. Now, close enough to touch Him, she had to make another decision. What could she do to get Jesus to pray for her, that she might be healed? Suddenly, faith swelled in her. Why, it would not be necessary for Jesus to pray. All that would be needed was to touch Him, and believe that in so doing the Lord would grant her petition. She demonstrated persistent, active faith. Jesus stopped the procession, and said, "Who touched my clothes?"

The natural-minded disciples looked around Jesus and began to rebuke Him for His question. Like so many people today, they could not realize the supernatural touch of faith that Jesus was speaking of. All they could see was

the huge crowd. You must fasten your eyes upon the Lord and realize that He is the *only* source of your blessing. The touch of faith of this little woman brought her deliverance that day. That same act of faith today will cause the fetters of sin and sickness to leave you. That same faith will cause you to be set free. Press through the crowd of disbelief and natural thinking. Look to Jesus, who is your hope.

TOTAL COMMITMENT

There comes a time in every person's life when God finally backs you into a corner that He might teach you faith, and complete trust in Him. Some go through greater trials than others. Many times it is because they find it harder to yield unto the Lord their complete trust. This does not mean they are not saved. They just need to learn to depend on the Lord as their source of help. Jacob came to such a place in his life. He was a crafty man, shrewd in his business dealings, and always looking out for "Jacob." Like many Christians, he relied upon the Lord to save him, but he felt he could manage his own life better than the Lord. He always wanted to "help" the Lord solve his problems. But there came a day in his life when he ran out of solutions. God finally got him to the place where He could deal with the carnal nature of Jacob.

"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Gen. 32:24-26. Jacob was engaged in a struggle with the Lord. He needed God to work for him. In desperation he sought the Lord for help. There came such a struggle, that apparently it actually involved a literal, physical battle. Jacob wanted God to move for him, yet he did not want to yield totally to the Lord. But God had brought him to this place for that very purpose. In the course of the battle, the angelic being touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, and that dislocated his leg. Now, Jacob had to come to the end of his own ability. He no longer could win, he had to submit to the Lord. Many times, God brings us to a place in our life when we run out of answers. Like Jacob, we must realize that we

cannot solve this problem, but we are going to have to trust in the Lord completely for the answer to our heart's cry.

Jacob did something in the battle now that would win for him the victory he needed. He had now submitted his will to God, but now he "hung on." Realizing that he now could not win, he still refused to disengage the angelic being until he first received the blessing he wanted so desperately. Here is where so many people fall so short of receiving the total answer they are seeking. They persist in the battle and finally yield to God, but they fail to hang on and obtain the blessing. Jacob said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." He received the blessing that morning because he was willing to hold on. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Matt. 7:7. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to His will, he heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." I John 5:14-15. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." John 14:13-14. "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt lose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Mathew 16:19. We have the promise of God from His Word. It takes fervent belief in that word to produce the answer. "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16. You must become determined in your faith you will receive nothing less than what you ask from God. You must take what is rightfully yours from the enemy of your soul, satan, who would try to deceive you and make you settle for something less demanding. Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

UP THE MOUNTAIN

"And Elijah said unto Ahab, get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel, and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his

face between his knees, and said to his servant, go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, there is nothing. And he said, go again seven times, and it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, go up, say unto Ahab, prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain." I Kings 18:41-45.

Elijah did not say unto Ahab there might be, or it possibly could rain. He spoke a positive word of faith. It had been his decree some three to three and one-half years earlier which had caused the drought. Now he declared, "there is a sound of abundance of rain." But the natural mind looked around and could hear or see nothing. Just like the servant who went to the top of the mountain, the world comes and says, "I hear and see nothing." There is no faith to believe the Word of God. Elijah heard the rain, because he was speaking and acting out his faith that God would bring the rain at his command. He decreed, "there shall be rain, for I can already by faith hear it coming down."

The servant did not believe, and therefore when he went to the top of the mountain, he could see nothing. His faith only went as far as his five senses could help him. He could not believe the Word of a man of God. Like Thomas, he would have to "see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." John 20:25. But Jesus would say unto you today, just as He did unto Thomas that day, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." John 20:29. The servant climbed to the top of the mountain; but seeing nothing, in the natural, he could speak only what was in him. His faithless testimony has been recorded as an admonition for us today.

Elijah refused to take anything but that which he had decreed. Rather than become discouraged with this negative report, he spoke faith to the servant. "Go again seven times." Elijah was persistent. He knew the answer was already on the way, but he had to get his servant to become persistent too. The servant went as he was told. Finally

that word of Elijah began to get in him. Many times the preacher will tell you to do something that your faith might reach out to prove God. You must begin to press your way through the crowd, and touch Jesus with your infirmity.

On the seventh time, the servant came running back to the man of God, and gave this report. "Behold, there ariseth a *little* cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand." But Elijah, you said there would be an abundance of rain. All I see is just a little thing. You said the work of God was great; you said the Lord was going to do such great things; you said my healing was coming - but it seems so slow.

There is an abundance of rain in the air. You must begin to run and make preparations for it. There is no time to be lost. The rain will fast be upon us. The natural mind cannot fathom the ways of God. God will not be understood by natural minds. His ways are past finding out. He works in the supernatural.

Many people have prayed for things in their life. Ministers have laid hands on them and prayed the prayer of faith over them. They have looked around at circumstances, and failed because they did. God did not tell you to look at your circumstances to see if He is working for you. To the contrary - God says, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths . . . It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones." Proverbs 3:5-8. You must become persistent to your faith in the Lord until you will only accept that which lines up with the Word of God. Anything else cannot be trusted. Only the Word of God, and that which honors that Word can be true.

The apostle Paul was in the midst of a storm. He was a prisoner aboard a ship heading for Rome which was seemingly destined to fall apart in the fury of the sea. But he stood on the deck and declared this report of faith, "And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that

it shall be even as it was told me." Acts 27:22-25. Can you have such faith in the promises of God today? Can you stand and say, "God has declared it, and I know I shall receive it?" This is faith in action. It is persistent, positive faith. It brings into existence that which you need in your life. It changes the course of history, if necessary, in order to solve your problem and give you your victory. Believe God - be persistent - receive nothing else, and you shall have that which your heart desires.

the next day Moses said unto him, "Lord, I have heard you say, 'I have chosen you to be a prophet to the children of Israel.' How can I go unto this people and tell them, 'Your God sent me unto you,' if I do not know myself what to say unto them?"

What is in Thy Hand?

"And Moses answered and said, but, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, the Lord hath not appeared unto thee. And the Lord said unto him, *what is that in thine hand?*" Exodus 4:1-2.

Moses was fearful! He did not have living faith in God. He felt that it would take skill on his part to help God, and he did not feel he possessed that skill. He placed his faith in God at the same level he placed faith in his own natural abilities. Like so many, Moses was to find out it is "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord of hosts." Zech. 4:6.

Soon God began to inquire of Moses. God questioned, "What is in thine hand? What do you have that I can use?" You see, it is not what you can do yourself, but what will you yield into the almighty hand of God, and let Him use. It doesn't have to be much. It might just be an old stick used for sheep tending. But when placed in the hand of God, it can become an instrument of deliverance.

Moses did not see anything in his hand that could be used for deliverance. He thought he would need an education to be used of God. He thought he had to possess a great talent before God could use him to deliver the children of Israel. But God asked, "What is in thine hand?" The smallest thing yielded to God can become a great blessing and delivering force. This is faith in action - yielding that which you possess to God and saying, "Lord, take this insignificant

thing and make it a great blessing."

And when it was evening, his disciples came to him saying, "this is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said unto them, they need not depart; give ye them to eat. And they said unto Him, we have here but five loaves, and two fishes. He said, bring them hither to me." Matthew 14:15-18. The disciples, just like Moses, and many other Christians today, did not have a spiritual understanding of the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. When Jesus commanded them to do something for the people, they looked at the natural circumstances around them and decided it was an impossible task. "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Luke 18:27. "Jesus said unto him, if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Mark 9:23. "... for with God all things are possible." Mark 10:27. You may have looked at the circumstances around your problem and decided that it was an impossible thing for God to do for you. But if thou canst believe, all things are possible. Here is a real secret to the working of God. It is your faith, coupled with God's power that will perform the task. Jesus said, so many times in dealing with people who had needs, "According to your faith, be it unto you," or, "go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole." You see, it is *your faith* that must unite with the power of God to bring about your deliverance. How do you unite your faith with God? Simply by putting that which is in your hand into the hand of the Lord. Take that which you need and let Jesus begin to use it for your blessing.

The disciples looked at Jesus and in unbelief stated they could do nothing to meet the needs of the people Jesus had commissioned them to feed. They did not feel qualified in themselves. But Jesus would never ask anyone to do anything that He, with the power of God, in faith, could not do. With God there is nothing that cannot be accomplished. Paul said, "*I can do all things* through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13. Paul said, "*I can do.*" He placed what he had in the hand of God, and then said, *I can do.* Will you say the same thing? Are you willing to place what you have in the hand of the Lord, and the man of God?

From five loaves and two fishes, five thousand men, women and children ate that day and were filled. "And He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and break, and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children." Matt. 14:19-21. Not only were all the people that needed feeding filled, but there was more left over after they were all filled, than there was when Jesus began. Jesus will always give the increase when you place your substance in His hand. "Give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." Luke 6:38. God takes what you put in His hand and multiplies it to be a blessing to all, including your own personal needs.

"Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house." I Chronicles 29:3. David received back more than he gave to prepare the house of God. Because he had set his heart to build the house of God, and had laid aside great wealth to complete the task, God blessed David as well. And even after giving huge sums of wealth to the house of God, David could say he had more left over, because God had increased him. God will always increase you as you are faithful in giving to the house of God, as you put what is in thine hand into the mighty hand of God.

"Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord; and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondsmen. And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? Tell me, what hast thou in the house? II Kings 4:1-2. This woman had a genuine need for God to move in her behalf. Her husband had been in the work of God. He had suddenly died and left his wife with a stack of unpaid bills. The bill collectors were ready to take her sons, and sell them

on the auction block to pay the past due bills. She desperately needed a financial miracle from God. She exercised her faith in the right direction and called for the man of God, Elisha. She knew when he prayed and gave her direction from God, that God would solve her problem.

Many people today find themselves in the same condition. They have come to the end of their sources and need God to intervene for them. If they seek the counsel of the Godly, they will find the answer to their problem. The first thing Elisha did was to ask what was in the house of the woman. God will move for you in your difficulty when you yield that which you do have into His hand. As this woman thought, she said, "well I do not have anything that God could use." Again you must search, and see you do have something that can be used by God. It may be very, very insignificant compared to the supply you need; yet if you possessed the power to solve your own problem, you would not need God to move for you; God would not give you your miracle.

"Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house, save a pot of oil." II Kings 4:2. But that is all God needs, just a little bit. If you will obey the prophet of God, that little bit will multiply until it more than supplies the great need. But you must first yield it to the prophet of God. "And she poured out, and it came to pass, when the vessels were full, (remember she had only one little pot) that she said unto her son, bring me yet a vessel . . . Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest." II Kings 4:5-7. She not only received enough to pay the debt she had, but God gave her enough blessing, that she and her children could continue to live for some time. God will give you beyond your immediate need, and into the realm of the complete blessing. "Now unto him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Ephesians 3:20. God is not desirous to just barely supply your need. He wants to give you beyond that, that you might become a blessing. When your faith reaches out and you place in the mighty hand of God your substance, God will use that to be a blessing to those in need around you. And more than that, will come back to you in a greater blessing than when you first gave it unto the Lord. This is a principle

with God.

FEED ME FIRST

"Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? or, what shall we drink? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness;* and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:31-33. One of the great principles with God is to first seek His kingdom. When you put God totally first in your life and activity, then the blessing of God will be upon all that you do, and God will see to it that your needs are supplied. The Lord will not leave you in trouble: but in the time of trouble He will become your great deliverer.

The prophet Elijah was sent to a widow in Zarephath to be fed for many days. I Kings 17. Elijah had declared a great famine over the land because of sin and wickedness. God had shut up the windows of heaven and there had been no rain. Not only had the unjust been put under judgement, but here we find a just woman was suffering. God determined she should not suffer and die because of the sin of others. God began to send her deliverance. "And the word of the Lord came unto him, (Elijah) saying, arise, get thee to Zarepheth, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zarepheth. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, as the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, fear not; go and do as thou hast said, *but make me thereof a little cake first,* and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah, and

she, and he, and her house did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah." I Kings 17:8-16. Here is a beautiful picture of the sustaining power of the Lord, as you yield that which you possess in your hand into the hand of His servants, and believe it shall be made a blessing.

This woman needed a real miracle from God. I believe she had been praying for the Lord to do something for her plight. She may have asked God many times to send someone with the answer to her need of deliverance. No doubt, when she saw Elijah coming she thought within herself, "at last, God has sent someone who is going to give me some food that I and my household may survive." She was no doubt looking to Elijah to come up with some food. Little did she realize that Elijah was thinking the very same thing. God had told Elijah to come to this woman's house and be fed. He had come to eat many days, but now when he approached her about feeding him, she gave him her plight. From the natural everything looked like a disaster was about to take place. But then faith arose in the man of God. God had sent him there and God does not make mistakes. The word of prophecy came forth, challenging the little woman to make a step of faith. "But make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son." Here was a challenge, as well as a promise of a blessing. The woman had declared there was not enough to feed three, yet Elijah said, "You make me a cake first, and then go about and do what you started out to do." This meant God was going to have to give this woman a miracle to fulfill the words of the prophet Elijah.

Then came the promise of the sustaining power of God. "For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth." God would not only give her what she was already about to receive, (one meal) but, He would continue to feed her beyond that until the land was once again able to bear food. God would be her sustaining power if she would just take one simple step of faith, and yield that which she possessed into the hands of the man of God standing before her. What did she have to lose? She only had one meal left, and then certain

death. But here was the promise of life. Why not believe and receive the blessing of God?

You too have need of the blessing of God in your life and home. You need that sustaining power of the Lord to continue to serve Him. You, like this woman, have in your possession the key to your own blessing. As you yield that which you possess into the hands of those whom God is using to bring a blessing to many thousands, God is going to remember your plight. God will not see you go down when you have done what He spoke to you to do. You must yield that which you have into the hands of the Lord, and His servants, before it can be multiplied to meet the need of many and become a greater blessing to you as well. What is in your hand? Do you possess land, houses, or just a handful of meal, and a little oil? It is not how much you possess, or how valuable your possession is, but you must yield what you do possess into God's hand. Two loaves and five fishes is just one person's meal. Yet in the hands of Jesus it fed five thousand men, plus women and children, and still yielded twelve baskets full when gathered up at the end. Are you courageous enough to yield in faith to God?

Be Strong

Sometimes, in the heat of the battle, God has to take time out to give us a word of encouragement. He sees that although our trust is in Him; that we are fighting on the front line for the Kingdom of God, yet we are weary in our spirit from the heat of the battle. Like any good soldier, a man of God will expend himself for the cause of the work of God. But there comes a time in his life too, when he is in need of being lifted up above the battle lines for a little while, and encouraged. The Lord came to Joshua with these words: "Be strong and of good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper wheresoever thou goest." Joshua 1:6-7. Here was a man who was to lead. Not only was he to lead, but he was to "divide for an inheritance the land." Joshua was almost in. He had almost led the people to the completion of their journey. They had come through many hardships, battles, and victories. But now God spoke and said to be strong!

Many times the most difficult task is the wrapping up of the task God has given you. Many are able to start the job with great enthusiasm, fight through the heat of the battle, then fall just short of total victory. Many young Christians have started to serve God. Many have learned great lessons, sometimes the hard way. Then just before coming into the fullness of the Lord, they grow sour with

Him, and have failed to complete the task.

With the same faith in God you began to serve Him, you need now to be strong and very courageous to complete the task. It is not enough to begin. It is not enough to fight the hard battles. You must possess the thing God has sent you to do. You must divide the inheritance. Twice in the recorded conversation God told Joshua to be strong, and to be very courageous. He knew that the tendency would be to quit just short of complete victory. God knew Joshua would have to put forth an extra effort to see the land divided for an inheritance. Even though the land had been given to them by God, and God would fight their battles for them, yet they would have to become involved. They would have to possess. "Every place that the soul of your feet shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses." Joshua 1:3. But Joshua and the people would have to possess the land. They could not sit back and say, "Well, if God will work everything out, then I will certainly move in." God expects and demands that your involvement become so great, your actions will prove your faith in the promise of God. Your feet must show your faith by being strong and courageous. Courageous enough to walk on the ground and possess it. Even the natural laws of the land bear out this divine principle. The law states that possession is nine-tenths of the law. If you have possessed, it is much more difficult to do anything against you than if you are on the outside looking in.

Your faith in God must be strong enough to carry you into the battle, risking your life and reputation, in order to accomplish the will of God in your life. Your dedication must be great enough that you become totally involved with God's program in your life. If you do, then you will be in a position to divide and inherit.

You cannot divide something you do not actually possess. You must first take hold of that thing, and make it yours. Then it is yours to divide to those around you. You cannot give someone else help in their spiritual life, until you have become a partaker of that spiritual life first. In your faith lay hold of the legal inheritance, of the promises in the Word of God. Then you, after having received them yourself, will be able to impart them to others.

Faith That Works

"What doth it profit my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works . . . For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." James 2:14-18,26. There has never been recorded an incident in the Bible where faith existed without producing results, and this always involved works. The very definition of faith as given in the scripture, Hebrews 11:1, involves your works. If there is no action to back up your words of faith, you are nothing more than a hypocrite. Your actions will prove what you say to be true in your life. A person can claim salvation but must produce some fruit in their life to show that salvation. You cannot go on living in sin and claim to be saved. There must be some sign of a "new creature" living within.

Hebrews 11 is filled with people of faith. It is known as the great "faith chapter" of the Bible. Look at the lives of the people recorded for the benefit of us today. Why did God choose these people and say they were people of faith? "By faith Abel offered . . . By faith Abraham . . . obeyed; and went out, not knowing whither he went . . . Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was

delivered of a child when she was past age...by faith, by faith, by faith." These men and women were recorded in the Bible because their faith made them do exploits for God. They took what knowledge they had received from God and that trust they had in Him and went into action to produce what God had challenged them to do. Many of them gave their lives in fulfilling the call of God. They went through many hardships and loneliness. They had to count the cost in their service unto the Lord. But they earned a place in the great hall of faith God had established. Their souls made it into the glories of heaven because their faith was counted to them for righteousness. Hebrews 11:7.

Do you think God, if He required such great steps of active faith from these, would be just and fair in letting you float into the glories of heaven on a breeze. No, a thousand times no! It is going to take an effort on your part to show your faith. You will never advance in the work of the Lord until you first show, by your actions, you are worthy of being entrusted with a greater responsibility.

Many people desire to do great things for the Lord. Many feel a genuine call of the Lord on their lives. But many never enter into that call because they never pass the test. "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. Likewise he that had received two, he also gained another two. But he that had received one went and digged a hole in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliverest unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His Lord said unto him, well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of the Lord." Matthew 25:14-21. Here is a picture of God's promotion plan. If you wish to advance in the Lord you must first use what you have. That means action, which demonstrates faith that is living.

This man took the five talents, and put them to work. He was no special man; he just used what he had for the Lord. Every one of these servants received some portion of the wealth of the Lord, according to each ones ability. But two servants used what they had, and each was able to double that which was originally given to him. What was the matter with the third? Like so many, he was fearful if he did use what he had, he would fail. No one else failed, so why should he? Others became active in their faith, why couldn't he? He had dead faith. He could not produce what he said, it was just a lot of words.

He was fearful of losing that which he had. In the end though, he lost even more. You had better use what God has given to you. He holds you accountable. "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." I Cor. 4:2. Faithfulness, and active faith will produce the results. You may not possess the know-how to use what God has given to you, but if you will begin to act in faith that which you can do, God will teach you how to complete the task. "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in the same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not that ye speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Matthew 10:19-20. This is a work of the Spirit. We must realize this is a work of God and not of man. God is doing the work, our part is to become yielded vessels. We have been chosen to carry out the gospel to all the world. We have been chosen to usher in this Kingdom of God - but it takes action. It takes faith that goes beyond the talking stage, and gets into your life in actions that produce results. You plant the seed and God will water and nuture that seed into fruit. Then you must pick it for the harvest. This is the works that James was talking about. It is your life being put into the Kingdom of God. It will become a blessing to many, including yourself. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5:16

Mustard Seed Faith

"... For verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you...." Matthew 17:20.

Pure faith in God will accomplish the impossible. It will overcome every obstacle, and gain the victory over every enemy. Like the mustard seed, your faith must be pure, and uncompromising. "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all of his ways." James 1:6-8. Your faith must line up with the Word of God. That which you ask of God must be in keeping with His Word. If it is, then there is no question as to whether it be God's will to do it. "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He will hear us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask we know that we have the petitions that we desire of Him." I John 5:14-15. You need have no doubt in your mind that God will hear and answer your request when it lines up with the Word of God. If you are seeking healing, God said He would heal you. If you desire salvation, God said He would save all that come to Him.

Your faith, when it is pure, will bring about the absolute victory you desire in your life. God is pleased when you exercise pure faith, or complete, unquestionable trust in

His promises. "For by (faith) the elders obtained a good report." Hebrews 11:2. You need pure faith to obtain a good report with God. You need to show complete confidence in the Lord, and you must learn to trust the Lord, and take Him at His Word. Jesus said: "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." Luke 18:17. Jesus was drawing a graphic picture of the attitude that you need to have about the Lord. You need to be simple in your faith toward God, trusting Him completely at His Word. "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak thing of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence." I Corinthians 1:27-29. God will use that which the natural mind cannot understand just to keep the natural from having any part in it. God's ways are beyond our finding out. His methods are not according to our natural thinking. This is why Paul said to be not conformed to this world, with all of its natural thinking and planning, but to let God change and transform our thinking process so that it will begin to understand the ways of the Lord. As you do this, your faith is becoming pure. It is learning to completely trust in the Lord and in no other source. You must first become convinced there is no other source of help for you, before you will look to the only One who can bring about your deliverance. This is erasing the double-mindedness that so often is prevalent in the Christian. His words say, "I trust God," but his actions often prove quite the contrary. If your faith can come to the place of total trust and complete confidence in the Lord, then you will see every mountain in your pathway moving and the Lord performing miracle after miracle for you. You must first expect to see this taking place before God will begin to act. God will not give you your miracle until you become desirous and seek after it. Expect your miracle - think your miracle - and receive your miracle.



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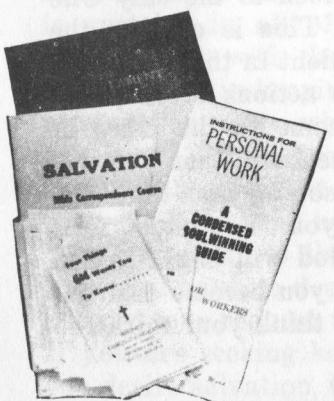
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