

INTRO: Passage after passage could be cited from the Bible concerning the faith of individuals and how God moved on their behalf. We read of healings where the blind could see, the lame could walk, the deaf could hear and even the dead was raised unto life again. Jesus Christ spoke about great faith and also about those of little faith. In the 9th chapter of Matthew He tells the blind men **“According to your faith be it unto you.”** So it would appear we have something to do with this faith that “moves mountains” as much as Christ did. Matthew 21:21, **“...Verily I say unto you, if you have faith and doubt not, you shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if you shall say unto this mountain, Be removed and be cast into the sea, it will be done.”** Certainly the Word of God says that nothing is impossible with God, therefore why do you not receive what we ask for, when we ask for it and without hesitation? Many of today’s minister’s teach that it is “always” God’s will to answer your prayers concerning every issue in life that you face, but it seems as if these are not answered some time so we are left to wonder why, where is the problem. Corrie ten Boom once wrote **“IF ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE WITH GOD, THEN ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE TO HIM WHO BELIEVES IN HIM.”** But remember, this lady went through WWII in a Nazi Prison Camp, so did she really have faith? Most individuals of today think that “faith” will bring about every “good” thing that one can imagine for themselves as they “rub” the Bible “genie” and He comes out to answer every beck and call of the one rubbing the Bible. We, as Christians, want to believe, but when that believing becomes difficult, we start doubting if we are not careful and eventually we end up with “weak” faith or no faith at all. Our modern concept of faith has been distorted into some kind of theology that places “faith” above everything as we place our “faith” in the concept of “faith” while we forget we must have “faith” in something or someone if it is going to be the kind of faith the Bible speaks about. Our modern teaching says if we have this “faith”, we can have whatever we want, whenever we want and wherever we want; but, this is not the examples set forth in the Word of God. Certainly looking at many verses in the Bible concerning “faith” with a biased opinion, I can arise at that conclusion, but looking at the Word of God with understanding, we can see there are some requirements that need to be satisfied if we be considered men and women of “faith”. Now we must live by faith and we are Christians because of our faith in Jesus Christ so we need to understand what we are talking about when we speak of having faith. Samuel Shoemaker once said **“ETERNAL LIFE DOES NOT BEGIN WITH DEATH; IT BEGIN WITH FAITH”**. With this I can be in agreement, so let’s look for a while at this “faith” and see what is expected of us in order to receive whatever we ask in faith.

- A.** Now I am going to dispel some of the mystery around this verse that has been quoted so many times in order to “prove” that if we not doubt, we shall have whatever we ask of the Lord. This certainly appears to be teaching exactly that as we do read, **“...let him ask in faith without any doubting...for let not that man (the doubter) expect that he will receive anything from the Lord.”**
- I do agree that if we are to receive from the Lord we must know for certain that the Lord is able to do as He has said He will do and there are many scriptures in the Word of God that agrees that “nothing is impossible” with God. (Luke 1:37; Matthew 19:26).
 - Genesis 18:24 is a companion scripture for when Sarah doubted the birth of a son by her husband, Abraham, the Lord replied to Abraham, **“Is anything too difficult for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son.”** When Israel and Judah were about to be invaded by the Moabites, the prophet Elisha said to King Jehoshaphat, **“And this is but a slight thing in the sight of the Lord. He shall also give the Moabites into your hand.”** Also look at Jeremiah 32:17; Luke 1:36, 38.
 - There is no doubt in my mind that the Lord is capable of doing all that He has said, purposed or promised. His power is limitless and what He desires He can do and nothing and nobody can prevent His will from being accomplished. Notice I mentioned HIS will in this sentence.
 - But back to the scripture we were discussing in James – always look at the context and note in verse 5 James states, **“But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God...”** And why is this wisdom needed? Looking even previous to verse 5, we see James speaking about encountering various trials and tribulation. So in the context, **we are speaking about wisdom** to handle the trials and tribulations we are often called upon to face and we can be certain that if this is the will of God in our life, He will most certainly fulfill that request – but only to those that do not doubt! IN order to receive we must KNOW that God is able and willing to give as He has promised.
- B.** We know that faith is necessary in order to receive salvation from the Lord in the first place for we must be certain that He is who He says He is, we must know for a fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God that came down to this earth to live in the form of Man and we must be absolutely convinced that He died on the cross as a substitute for us to forgive us of our sins and we must

know without a doubt that He rose again on the third day and is alive today and will return for us at the proper time. This is something we believe by faith based upon the evidence that we have seen and heard and even by the change we have seen in the lives of others and even ourselves when we do accept Him as our Lord and our Savior. This is not unusual as we believe in things we do not see every day because of the evidence – we do not see the oxygen we breathe, we do not know why electricity works the way it works, we do not know how life really started nor do we understand the human body, we do not see the wind but we see the effects, etc.; so, faith in the Creator God is not a hard stretch of the imagination, it is simply believing what we have not seen but knowing to be true and living according to those promises He has given to us. Faith believes even when it cannot be proved. John Baillie wrote **“FAITH DOES NOT MEAN BELIEVING WITHOUT EVIDENCE. IT MEANS BELIEVING IN REALITIES THAT GO BEYOND SENSE AND SIGHT-FOR WHICH A TOTALLY DIFFERENT SORT OF EVIDENCE IS REQUIRED.”**

C. But we love to quote Matthew 17:20 about faith moving mountains and **“...nothing shall be impossible to you”** if we just have the faith the size of a mustard seed. These words occurred after the disciples were unable to exorcise the demon from a man's son and Christ was using this instance as an example of what faith could do, if that faith was properly focused. But let me give you another verse in James that explains why sometimes we receive from the Lord and other times we do not.

a. In James 4:3 it says, **“You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.”** The first question that should be asked when we decide we want to move some mountain is “why”? What purpose, what is the motive, how will it glorify God or am I asking simply because of something I want to receive. God is not in the business of granting requests just because we think we need something but we can be certain that if it is the will of God, if it is a promise of God, then we can be certain that if we ask, it will come to pass. The Lord seldom answers a prayer that we can do ourselves. The little boy got up one morning and sat on the edge of his bed –he prayed Lord, put my shoes on. Needless to say, his prayer was not answered, he was just being lazy and could do that himself. We may pray “Lord, Bro. Or Sis. So-and-so need some finances, would you send them a little help?” Maybe we have the means to help so perhaps we can answer that one ourselves. Can you see where we are going here? I have always believed God has given us abilities and provisions to do a lot of things, but when it is really necessary for more and we have exhausted our provisions, I am convinced the Lord will take care of the rest. And if it is a promise of God, I KNOW He will answer for I believe what He said.

b. I fear that some of our modern preachers have stressed the “power of faith” so much that we have made welfare Christians that expect to sit back and do nothing and God is supposed to provide over and above what we need and even fulfill our greatest personal desires in life. This does not appear to me to be Bible faith, rather this is selfishness.

c. Then another thing we may not realize is, when we pray in faith, perhaps God answers but we do not like the answer. Perhaps God faithfully answered your request but His answer was “no” and not “yes”. If we believe God knows what is best in every situation, we will even accept the “no” and still believe. Oswald Chambers wrote, **“FAITH FOR MY DELIVERANCE IS NOT FAITH IN GOD. FAITH MEANS, WHETHER I AM VISIBLY DELIVERED OR NOT, I WILL STICK TO MY BELIEF THAT GOD IS LOVE. THERE ARE SOME THINGS ONLY LEARNED IN A FIERY FURNACE.”** Always remember the Hebrew Children in the fiery furnace, deliverance or not, they still had faith in God!

CONCLUSION: So many of you may say, but I have so many doubts in my life. Everyone has had doubts and even now, still do at times, but faith is forged through doubt. Even though we are not certain, we believe anyway and eventually those doubts will give way to certainty in the promises of God. As we see the hand of God work more and more, we will increase in our faith and soon as so many before us, we will learn to walk by faith and not by sight. Let me help you find faith in the words of D.L. Moody, **I PRAYED FOR FAITH AND THOUGHT THAT SOME DAY FAITH WOULD COME DOWN AND STRIKE ME LIKE LIGHTNING. BUT FAITH DID NOT SEEM TO COME. ONE DAY I READ IN THE TENTH CHAPTER OF ROMANS, “FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD.” I HAD UP TO THIS TIME CLOSED MY BIBLE AND PRAYED FOR FAITH. I NOW OPENED MY BIBLE AND BEGAN TO STUDY, AND FAITH HAS BEEN GROWING EVER SINCE.** Patrick Henry, **MY MOST CHERISHED POSSESSION I WISH I COULD LEAVE YOU IS MY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST, FOR WITH HIM AND NOTHING ELSE YOU CAN BE HAPPY, BUT WITHOUT HIM AND WITH ALL ELSE YOU’LL NEVER BE HAPPY.** Faith is necessary in the Christian life for we will face many trials in our life that we see no way out, that we have exhausted all of our limited resources and nothing but darkness appears on the horizon; but, faith says, “joy comes in the morning” and “this too will pass” and when all else has failed, we still have Jesus and with Him, “nothing is impossible”. When we do not see an escape, He will make a way – believe it and you will receive!