

8th March 2015

Faith is needed to war in this battle (Pt 3 Faith)

Introduction:

This is our third study on the topic of faith in the Scriptures.

Previous points covered in Pt 2.

1. Faith is needed for a person to please God.
2. Christians are justified by **the faith of Jesus** Christ.
3. Christians live by the faith of Jesus Christ.

Three points are established from the Scriptures for this study.

1. At the time of Christ, faith in the visible Messiah healed a person.
2. Faith in Christ sanctifies a man.
3. Once sanctified a man who struggles in his faith is **not** equipped for the battle.

Our three points in more detail.

1. At the time of Christ, faith in the visible Messiah healed a person.

Supporting Verse.

Mt.9: 22 "But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour."

Context and meaning of our verse.

- * In verse 11 Jesus sat with sinners, and verse 18 a ruler comes to Jesus and says "My daughter is dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live,"
- * On His way to the ruler's house "a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment." In verse 21 the woman said, "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." And then our verse, where Jesus "said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was whole from that hour." And it was her faith in the visible Messiah that healed her.

Other scriptural support.

Mt 9:29, 15: 28, Mk 5:34 & Lk.8: 48, 17:19.

Scriptural examples.

Paul also performed miracles (Acts 14: 9) to the point where they brought unto the sick "handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them" (Acts 19: 12).

Application of our verse today.

- * We know that God can heal, as Christ did when He walked the earth (Matt.4: 24) and after His resurrection the disciples preached the gospel with signs following (Mk.16: 20), and the early church had "gifts of healings", as was the example of Paul.
- * The gospel today does not however have signs following, as a man is saved by faith in Christ.
- * Do people routinely get raised from the dead or miraculously healed today? No. And if a person says they became a Christian after attending a healing meeting, then they did not get saved by believing the gospel of Christ crucified (1Cor.1: 23 & 15: 1-4).

Illustration.

* There are those who make their career from regular "Miracle Crusades" today. Internationally you have Benny Hinn, and locally, here in New Zealand we have Bill Subritzky from Dove Ministries. Why doesn't Dove Ministries make its home in the hospital wards, such that when the sick come unto them they are all healed? Surely, there would be no need for hospitals today if healing evangelists could replicate the healings that the Lord did through Paul.

Learning from our Illustration.

* Let us not be seduced by signs and wonders, let us not encourage the lost to look for signs, before they believe. Today there are some "Christians" who cannot look to a time when they believed the gospel of Christ, but rather got "healed" and believed in Jesus. Remember, what we

do know from Scripture: that the wicked one shall “be revealed...whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (2Thes.2: 8 & 9).

Challenge & or encouragement.

* Beware today of faith-healing ministries who encourage sick people to come to meetings and experience the healing power of the Holy Spirit. Beware, when a man says he was healed and therefore believes, then he is unlikely to believe the gospel of the grace of God. Today salvation is received by believing in the miraculous good news of Christ crucified. Today if you pray and get healed thank the Lord, if you do not then that is no reason to abandon your faith in the risen Lord.

2. Christians are sanctified by faith in Christ.

Supporting Verse.

Acts 26: 18 “to turn [them] from darkness to light, and [from] the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”

Context and meaning of our verse.

* Paul had been sent to appear before king Agrippa and has pointed to the unreasonableness of a prisoner not knowing the crimes laid against him (Acts 25: 27). And so in Acts 26: 1 Agrippa gives Paul permission to speak. How does Paul answer? By giving his testimony, with snippets of his life before his Damascus road experience, and then details what took place when Christ appeared to him. Our verse is **not** part of Christ’s instruction to Paul recorded in Acts chapter 9 which details his Damascus road account in verses 4–11.

* Verse 17 sets out Paul’s commission from the Lord, to go to the Gentiles, and verse 18 (our verse) speaks of the Lord’s objective in sending him, “to turn them...from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive...inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”

* So, we are sanctified by the faith that is in Christ.

Application of verse today.

* In our verse in Acts Paul’s commission from Christ is to go to the Gentiles and preach, that their eyes may be open, that they would be turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, that they (Gentiles) might receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me (Christ).

* A Christian is saved by faith, justified by faith, washed clean by faith in Christ (1Cor.6: 11), specially in Christ’s blood that He shed on Calvary, and our verse affirms that we are also sanctified by faith in Christ.

Illustration.

* When a Roman Catholic (RC) goes to MASS each Sunday, Easter, or Christmas day, he trusts, he has faith in the wine he drinks being changed into the blood of Christ (by the priest), and so cleaning his past sins. So he is trusting that the priest who hands him the wine is pure and clean.

Learning from our Illustration.

* How does a RC show God that he has faith in the blood that Christ shed on Calvary (Rom.3: 25) when he drinks wine that a man mysteriously changes into the precious blood of Christ? Let us remember that faith is believing what we cannot see, and if, as part of our faith in Christ, we have “faith in his blood”, how can that be true for the RC if he can see the blood that he drinks? Because for a Christian he cannot see the cleansing blood that he has faith in, that sanctifies him.

Challenge & or encouragement

* The next time you sit next to a RC at the bus stop or on a plane ask the Lord for courage and wisdom to ask him: “how can a RC drink the wine which apparently changes into the blood of Christ, yet the Bible says that a Christian has faith in Christ, that His blood on the cross sanctifies him, and washes away his sin (Rev.1: 5).

* Let us affirm this truth to the young that they be not beguiled by the wiles of Rome, and her enticing words of love, but remember that Christians are those in Christ, those who are sanctified by faith in Christ.

3. Once sanctified a man who struggles in his faith is **not** equipped for the battle.

Supporting Verse.

Mt.17: 20 "And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: 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 unto you."

Context and meaning of our verse.

* Verse 16 the man takes his sick son to Jesus' disciples but they could not cure him. Verse 17 Jesus responds by telling them that they had little faith. And verse 18 Jesus rebukes the devil.

* Verse 19 His disciples ask Jesus why they could not cast out the devil from the man, and in verse 20 He replies: because of their "unbelief". He then goes on to say that they only need as much faith as a grain of mustard seed, and they will say to this mountain, "remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." Then Jesus says that "this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (verse 21).

Other scriptural support.

Mt 8:7-10 & Lk 7:9.

Scriptural example.

* Acts 19: 13-16 where some vagabond Jews thought they would take on the evil spirits that were in a man, but the spirits said "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" (verse 15).

Application of verse today.

* The disciples required faith to battle with Satan, even if they had the smallest grain of faith like a mustard seed that would be enough for them to say to the mountain, move and it would move.

* We can apply this verse today, in our warfare, where the saved of earth war "against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph.6: 12). We do not war by our own faith, but by the faith of Christ (Gal.2: 20). And if a Christian is going through a crisis of faith, struggling in his own faith then he is not in a fit state to be a soldier in the battle.

Illustration.

* I know believers, saved by faith in Christ's blood, who have gone to Laidlaw college and been taught that their Bible has errors in it, and come out with a degree, but clinging to faith in Christ by a thread. When a person believes God, goes to Laidlaw only to find that the scholars and teachers that they pay money to learn about the Bible, do not believe the book, then if they are true believers they will either abandon such instruction, or persevere and end up in a crisis of faith, believing only that Christ died for their sins.

Learning from our Illustration.

* Believers exist on this earth to glorify and serve God, to fight in the battle against the devil and his ministers, but when a person who is saved is going through a period of "unbelief", which is what the Lord identified to be the case with the disciples, then we, like the disciples cannot expect to take on the devil when our faith is struggling. For a believer to battle daily against Satan they need to be in constant communication with the Lord Jesus (their commander and chief), they need to be praying daily and immersed in His word, not in a crisis of faith.

Challenge & or encouragement.

* Sort out your own crisis of faith by resting and abiding in Christ before taking on the devil, before going head-long into the battle. Let us pray for those who we know are either backslidden, or struggling in their relationship with God, let us show them charity, sitting with them, weeping with them, for when a man is struggling in his faith he is not equipped to war in this warfare.

Summary of our three points.

1. At the time of Christ, faith in the visible Messiah healed a person.
2. Faith in Christ sanctifies a man.
3. Once sanctified a man who struggles in his faith is **not** equipped for the battle.