

Touching Heaven – Touching Earth

Tuesday morning bible study on prayer with Cindy Smith

April 1, 2008

We are talking about praying the prayer of faith so that our prayers will accomplish all that God has in His heart and will bring heaven's will to earth. Review key verse in James 5:14-18. Beginning with Abraham in Hebrews 11:8-19. Abraham was a true father of our faith and from him came a family of faith as numerous as the stars in the sky. Reading from Gen 12:1-10, then onto Gen 15 highlighting verse 5-6 through verse 16.

Vs 5-6 "He took him outside and said, 'look up at the stars-if indeed you can count them' Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." He received a covenant of land and an inheritance of his offspring when he had neither. That is why we call him a father of faith. Gen 17:1-27. God initiated the covenant which was a covenant of faith with man between God and God and God. Then Abraham and every male born to them or their household was to be circumcised as a sign of that covenant. Circumcision is often called by rabbis "the seal of circumcision." They were marked.

Eph 1:13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession-to the praise of His glory." In 2 Tim 2:19 "the firm foundation stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows them that are His." So Abraham gave up his homeland, his identity and was then by covenant given a new land, the land of Canaan, and a new identity-marked by God with an inheritance and it was all done by faith. He received a new name as a part of the identity exchange.-from Abram to Abraham, and Sarai to Sarah. It was also Abraham who encountered Jehovah-Jireh, our provider as he in faith offered his son, Isaac, up to the Lord on Mt. Moriah, the present site of the Temple Mount in Israel. Abraham was referred to as a friend of God in Isa 41:8 and James 2:23.

In Hebrews, it says Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau by faith. Jacob blessed each of Joseph's sons, by faith. Then there was Moses-READ Hebrews 11:22—29. Vs 26: "He, Moses, regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking forward to his reward." How could Moses know of Christ? What does it say about Moses-he was the friend of God! In Exodus 33:11 it says "the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend." The Father may have introduced His Son, pre-incarnate, to Moses. Moses learned to be a man of faith, was transformed through many testings, that his faith in God might be proven. God was pleased with his faith.

Let's finish Hebrews 11 and read to the end vs. 30-40. We call this the roster of heroes of faith and the list is not yet complete-because our names, too, are to be added, we who are of a better covenant will enjoy the fruit of faithfulness, will be tested as it says in James 1:2-4.

So we have looked at some of the qualities of faith, some examples of faith. What about quantifying our faith. Look at Rom 12:3 "For by the grace given me, I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but think of yourself with sober judgement in accordance with the measure of faith that God has given you." So there are apparent levels of faith. We know that faith is increased by the hearing of the Word of God. We know that we are encouraged to increase our faith. In 2 Pet 1:5-8 "For this reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, Godliness; and to Godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Please meditate on 2 Peter 1:5-8 for next week. There are needful qualities which complete our faith.

I would like to describe some increasing levels of faith recorded for us in the gospels. Look in Mark 9:17-29 for what may be classified as weak faith or “if you can faith”. Some points to consider:

I)

A) The nature of the father’s **“if you can”** faith

Reasons that may have contributed to his weak faith:

- a) The seriousness of the condition
- b) It was a long-standing illness.
- c) The disciples had failed to heal his son

The man was honest, and did not pretend what was not true:

- A) He wasn’t even sure Jesus could heal his son, let alone would.
- B) But, he believed enough to bring his son to Jesus.
- C) This belief was probably due to the stories he had heard.

What supported his “if you can faith”?

- a) Persistence, he didn’t give up when the disciples failed, but...
- b) ...he saw the opportunity to be near Jesus and drew near with his request.
- c) It appeared that he sensed the compassion of Jesus, for he said, “...take pity on us and help us.”

Why did he approach Jesus? He had heard the testimony of what Jesus was doing.

B) Jesus’ response to “if you can” faith: “Everything is possible...”

Mark 9:23 “If you can?” said Jesus, “everything is possible for him who believes.”

- 1) Jesus immediately answered the father’s primary faith issue. Jesus was unequivocal. NOTHING was beyond His Father’s ability-Nothing was impossible to those who come in faith.
- 2) Jesus did not rebuke his weak faith, but encouraged it.
- 3) This still Jesus’ answer to those who are not sure whether God CAN heal them, for the condition stated was “for him who believes.”

II)

“If you are willing...” the man with Leprosy (Some faith)

Mark 1:40-42 The big question is, Is it His will to heal me? Do you ever think “If He is willing He can make me whole?”

A) The nature of the leper’s “if you are willing faith”

- 1) He expressed no doubt about Jesus’ ability to heal. He says to Jesus, “you can make me clean.”
- 2) But, he questioned Jesus willingness to heal
- 3) What supported his “if you are willing” faith?
 - a) Persistence for the man was begging Jesus! It was not a casual request!
 - b) ...he saw the opportunity to be near to Jesus and drew near with his request.
 - c) As the leper approached, he must have felt Jesus’ compassion, for vs. 41 says, “Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man.
 - d) He approached Jesus because he heard the testimony of what Jesus was doing.

B) “Filled with compassion. Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man “I am willing, he said, he said, “Be clean!”

III)

“If I can just touch...”: The woman with the issue of blood (Great faith)

Mark 5:24-34

A) Let's consider her condition:

- 1) It made her an outcast socially, by religious tradition
- 2) It was a long-standing condition-12 years.
- 3) She had suffered a great deal
- 4) She had been to many doctors.
- 5) She had spent all she had
- 6) Her condition was getting worse.

B) The nature of the woman's "if I can ..." faith

- 1) She approached Jesus with the knowledge of who He was and what He did.
- 2) She approached Jesus with disregard for her religious tradition that required her
- 3) To stay away, and out of the public, esp from holy people. She risked all to approach Jesus, including the threat of stoning
- 4) She approached Jesus with persistent, determined faith-perhaps a gift of faith.
- 5) She approached Jesus because of what she heard He was doing.

C) What happened because of her "if I can..." faith?

- 1) She was immediately healed
- 2) She felt in her body that she healed
- 3) Jesus was aware of power going from His body
- 4) Not need, but faith, drew on the anointing
- 5) Jesus' interpretation, "your faith has healed you."

IV)

“I can't, but He can...” Blind Bartimaeus (Reckless faith) Mark 10:46-52

A) What was his condition?

- 1) He was blind, we are not told how long or the reason
- 2) He was reduced to being a beggar
- 3) His only possession was his cloak

B) The nature of Bartimaeus' "I can't, but He can" faith

- 1) He began to shout
- 2) His shout revealed respect and faith in Jesus as Messiah, Son of David
- 3) His shout was specific, "have mercy on me"
- 4) Persistence, he didn't give up when rebuked or hushed
- 5) He threw aside his cloak!
- 6) He approached Jesus when he heard the testimony of what Jesus was doing!!

C) How did the people respond to the man?

- 1) Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet"
- 2) The many who rebuked him were most probably believers or followers of Jesus! This is still true today.

D) Jesus' response to "I can't, but He can..." faith

- 1) "Call him!" Who is calling the people in need of healing to Jesus today?
- 2) Jesus asks him, "What do you want me to do for you?" This is an important question.

- 3) Jesus told him to go and that his faith had healed him. “And immediately the man received his sight and followed Jesus...”

The point I am making with these stories of faith is that the amount of faith did not matter. The message is about PRESENCE rather than faith. Faith was important, but bringing the need to Jesus, being in His Presence with your need and requesting healing was the issue. Whether they had little, some, great or reckless faith, they all received their healing! Matt 17:19-20 Then the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?” He replied, “Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there and it will move.’ Nothing is impossible for you.”

PRAY FOR THE SICK!!! Review James 5:15-And the Lord will raise Him up!!!

Next week we begin a further study on the next verse: “If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.

Some of this material was taken from Global Awakening School of Healing and Impartation.