



BUILDING FAITH THROUGH THE WORD
Unshakeable Faith – Part 2
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April 21, 2024

Building Faith through the Word (Matthew 8.5-13)

What would it be like to have the kind of faith that astonished Jesus? Believe it or not, there's a story about a man – an outsider, a Roman occupier, a Gentile – whose faith amazed even Jesus. His story demonstrates what it takes to build a great and unshakable faith. We're going to lean into his story this weekend and discover how to have that same sort of faith for ourselves.

Faith is only as good as the object in which it is placed

“God has a certain law of prosperity and when you get into contact with that law and those rules, it just works for you – whoever you are. When you come into contact with God's laws, they work.” – Kenneth Hagin

Instead of faith being a theocentric (or God-centered) concept, faith becomes an anthropocentric (or a human-centered) concept.

Faith is only powerful because of Who it relies on. It's not faith in faith. It's faith in God.

Faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ. Romans 10.17

...we walk by faith not sight. 2 Corinthians 5.7 (NKJV)

The food for your faith is the Word of God

"Faith feeds on the word of God, without a steady diet it gets weaker and weaker. If you are dissatisfied with your Christian courage and joy and purity of heart then check the way you're feeding your faith." – John Piper

1. FAITH THAT MADE JESUS MARVEL

When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly." Jesus said to him, "Shall I come and heal him?" The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith... Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! Let it be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that moment. Matthew 8.5-13

- Who was this man?
- What brought the man to Jesus?

...my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly... Matthew 8.6

Herod slew all the children from two years old and under... Matthew 2.16

...the child was cured... Matthew 17.18

... the children crying in the Temple and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David ... Matthew 21.15

...behold, my servant whom I have chosen... Matthew 12.18

Lord, my child lies in the house sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. or it could read, Lord, my young servant lies in the house sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

"A slave is a living tool, just as a tool is an inanimate slave."
– Aristotle, Ethics, 1161b

The Roman law expert Gaius wrote that it was universally accepted that the master possessed the power of life and death over his slave. - Gaius, Institutes, 1:52

Varro maintained that the only difference between a slave, a beast, and a cart was that the slave talked.
– Varro, On Landed Estates, 1:17.1

❑ The encounter with Christ

The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with

soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." Matthew 8.8-9

...just say the word, and my servant will be healed.
Matthew 8.8

❑ The kind of faith that impresses Jesus

When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith..." Matthew 8.10

He was amazed at their lack of faith. Mark 6.6

It's hard to shock Jesus, but when you do, it will either be because you have great faith or no faith.

Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. Matthew 8.10b

Jesus said unto the centurion, Go your way; and as you have believed, so be it done unto you. And his servant (or his child) was healed in the selfsame hour. Matthew 8.13

2. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GREAT FAITH AND LITTLE FAITH

Faith is confidence in something God has said

❑ Sign faith is always inferior to Word faith



And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven.

Matthew 16.1

An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.

Matthew 12.39

The test of faith is not our reaction to signs and wonders.
The real test of faith is our reaction to what Jesus says.

Faith is taking Jesus at His word

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. Romans 10.17(NASB)

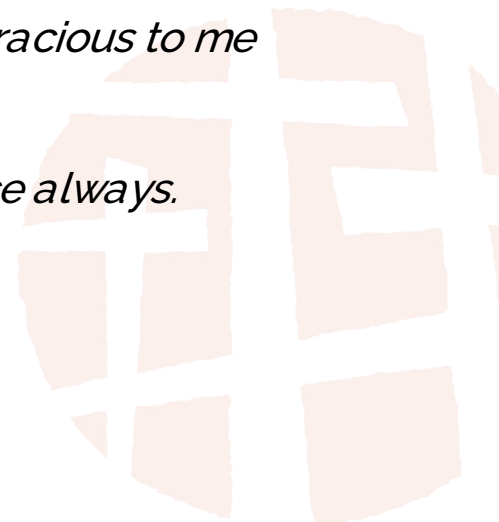
My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, Lord, I will seek. Psalm 27.8

They will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God their savior. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, God of Jacob. Psalm 24.5-6

Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always. Psalm 105.4

I have sought your face with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise. Psalm 119.58

Look to the Lord and His strength; seek His face always.
1 Chronicles 16.11



“If God's goodness is looked for primarily in turns of fortune... then the verdict on his heart towards us will always be pending a new set of facts.”

– Dan Allender, *Bold Love*

Childlike faith

Fidelity

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is your faith weak? Is it waning? Is it anemic? Are you unable to meet the challenges that you're facing in your Christian life? Then feed on the Word of God. Like John Piper reminded us, “Faith feeds on the word of God, without a steady diet it gets weaker and weaker. If you are dissatisfied with your Christian courage and joy and purity of heart then check the way you're feeding your faith.” Try to name as many ways as possible that the Word of God builds your faith. What has been your personal experience with God's Word as a faith-builder? What stories have impacted you most? What promises? What precepts? Or what do you see in the character of God that encourages your faith?

2. What were your main take-a-ways from the story of the Centurion and the healing of his servant or child? What does it say to you that the man was an outsider? Why does he believe when the Jews could not or would not? Why does Jesus lift him up as an example of great faith?

3. The Bible is very clear about God's verdict on sign-seekers, yet it doesn't deter entire modern church movements from this very thing. Yet we see over and over

again in Scripture that seeing miracles happen repeatedly won't necessarily increase one's faith. Instead, it just tends to addict us to more miracles. Why is believing what God said more important than chasing after what God can do?

4. Take some time to discuss the difference between seeking God's face versus seeking God's hand. How does this shift your thinking when it comes to your own pursuit of God?

5. If you think of childlike faith as a starting point and fidelity as a goal when it comes to your faith journey, where do you see yourself on that continuum? How have things changed over time with you? What would you say to encourage someone who needs to move beyond childish concepts of faith? Is your walk with God today something that brings gratification to your life? If so, in what way?

