



Spickard on... Faith

***A Paradoxical Virtue : It is both....
Passive and Active....***

"Now Faith is the Confidence of things hoped for..the Conviction of things not seen." - The Greek rendering of Hebrews 11:1.

"But without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that comes to God must believe that **He Is, and that He is a rewarder of them that carefully seek Him."** - Hebrews 11:6.

"Have the faith of God." - The Greek rendering of Mark 11:22.

"For by grace are you saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves: It is a gift of God." - Ephesians 2:8.

"It is not a Great faith we need, but faith in a Great God." - Hudson Taylor.

"No one can trust God who does not obey God." - Corrie Ten Boom.



< FAITH AT WORK... Jesus was at large in Capernaum, holding a meeting again at Peter's in-laws. Previously when this occurred, Jesus healed people to nightfall. Thus, the place was "standing room only," even past the house door. Four men tried to bring a paraplegic in for Jesus to minister unto, but it was far too crowded. Undaunted, these men climbed on the roof, undid the tiles, fashioned a stretcher, and lowered the paraplegic into Christ's midst. Jesus saw their bold faith, with the power of God present to heal...commanded the cripple to walk, ...which he did,... to everyone's amazement !

Faith : The Paradoxical Virtue

Faith can be many things to many people. Some movements such as what is called the "Faith Movement," or "Word of Faith" movement, also known as the "name and claim it" crowd have quite a complex system of understanding faith. Yet the real secret in faith...is not the volume of books or literature one obtains to study about faith...but rather, its simplicity. Even a child is a recipient of faith (Matthew 18:30). Thus, the quality of faith must be in and of itself known by its simplicity. Those that have real faith, always speak of it, in simple terms and in simple descriptions...those that don't, make quite a mystery out of it. Jesus said all that the faith necessary was no more than a "*grain of mustard seed.*" If you have seen a grain of mustard seed, then it is a marvel that such a small amount of seed could be equivalent to all the faith we need.



^JESUS & the CHILDREN proved to be a fitting example of how the simple trust that children exhibit, is the same trust the Heavenly Father expects to see in adults. Indeed, unless we become as a little child we cannot be a part of God's Kingdom .



^ THE MUSTARD SEED pendant made someone a lot of money...There are always those who market sacred things for profits. Yet man cannot even, of himself, appropriate even this quantity of faith ! The Bible says that faith is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8). Yet paradoxically, men are commanded to have faith, and to exercise faith in God ! How then can this be ? Is this is a contradiction ?

Faith : The Natural Mind Cannot Receive It

The Scriptures state that it is impossible to please God without faith (Hebrews 11: 6). The Scripture also teaches that the carnal, or natural mind of man cannot please God (Romans 8:7-8). Hence, man's natural mind is synonymous with a lack of faith. Therefore, faith cannot be explained or be understood by the Natural Mind. In order for man to have any semblance of faith, he must first be quickened out of his own natural mind into spiritual awareness. If this spiritual awareness, as in the Parable of the Sower, can take seed in good ground, then it becomes a Spiritual Mind. This adoption of or receiving of the Spiritual Mind is the basis of spiritual transformation in the individual believer. "*For to be carnally or naturally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace*" (Romans 8:6). This quickening of the Spirit of



< THE PARABLE of the SOWER illustrates that not all who hear the Word of God do much with it. But the good ground, "those with good hearts," not only receive the Word of God but the faith that comes by it. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Good Ground are Spiritual Minds.

God in those that have a "good heart," as taught by Christ in the Sower Parable, receive faith as a result...this faith generates the next step..which is obedience. Those who do not put forth the required works, or obedience, to gain more faith and yet more works...lose what faith they have by their lack of obedience. "*Faith without works (obedience) is dead*" (James 2:20). This is why the seed or Word of God on stony, thorny, or wayside ground cannot spring up and bear fruit with patience.

Abraham : The Father of Faith

Paul described Abraham as the "*the Father of all them that believe*" (Romans 4:11). He briefly told of the example of Abraham's faith as did the Lord's brother, James, in his epistle. Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him as righteousness, Paul states. Abraham's faith was made complete and alive by his works, or obedience, to God's Word, James states.



< **THE FAITH of ABRAHAM :**
What was the secret of Abraham's faith ? God told Isaac,
"Because that your father Abraham **obeyed my voice, kept my charge (instructions), my commandments, my statutes and my laws**" (Genesis 26:5).
This is why James cited that

Abraham's faith matched his obedience, and was made perfect. Paul says that Abraham was "fully persuaded ... what God had promised, He was able to perform" (Romans 4:21). **Abraham not only believed God's promises..but he KNEW that God would perform them...!**

In a different example, there is the case of Simon the Sorceror in Acts 8. He had heard Philip the Evangelist preach "*concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ...*" Simon submitted himself to the Birth of the Water, and he "*continued...wondering, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.*" Hence, when Peter and John went up to Samaria to minister the birth of the Spirit, Simon saw that through the laying of hands by Peter and John, believers received the Holy Spirit. Simon, immediately offered money to Peter and John for the ability to minister this Gift. Simon was rebuked for his presumption and was described by Peter as "*full of envy and coveting God's Gift for gain.*" Simon's faith was not genuine. He had ulterior motives. His

... "eye was not single" (Luke 11:34). He had lusts for other things like the power that Philip and Peter and John had. Simon the Sorceror did not have a full or true repentance...he still wanted his sorcery. Thus, his faith was not consistent with the proper works, or obedience. His error was soon manifest, and Peter reprimanded him accordingly. Real faith cannot work with underlying lusts and motives. Simon had what John Bunyan calls, "stalking horse religion." Stalking horse religion is following the Gospel for the sake of underlying motives.

Faith in its Passive Role : Trust

The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews, spoke of faith as being "*at rest with God*." The faith that God gives is not about effort and strife, but rest and assurance. Those who are influenced to strive for more faith...to receive more things, like Simon, are not at rest. This is a mark of presumptuous faith, and is not genuine. The Disciples asked Jesus to increase their faith. Jesus instead, replied with a Parable, not about gaining more faith...but being more faithful (Luke 17:5-10). Jesus did not tell them to "name it and claim it," or, to constantly affirm scriptures to work up more faith...this is a form of sorcery, not faith. No, Jesus told them that it was not about "more" or "less" faith... after all, if they had a faith the size of a mustard seed, they could uproot trees by commanding it ! No, such faith would be reflected in their faithfulness, trust in, and obedience to God. Faith is a complete transference of trust in ourselves to absolute dependence upon God. It is a ultimate form of self-surrender and sacrifice. This is what Jesus talked about in the Gospel of John. In five instances (John 5:19, 30; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10), Jesus spoke of, not some secret power of faith, but His absolute **dependence** upon God. *"I cannot do a solitary thing on my own. I listen, and then I decide. You can trust my decision because I am not out to get my own way, but only*

to carry out orders"(John 5:30, The Message). This is perfect faith,... or dependence on God,... can you do the same ? Our faith would also be of more value if we recognise God as who He is..that He is Almighty... and " *is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*"(Hebrews 11:6). This means we should not cajole or try to barter with God and belittle Him for not answering our many requests out of the same motives as Simon the Sorceror. Try this positive approach, and you will be surprised by the faith *that* will be imparted to you. Amen.

Faith in its Active Role : A Gift from God

Then finally, faith in its active role. This is frequently shown in the Scriptures as the faith that warrants signs, wonders, and miracles. This faith is solely from God and imparted as a gift. It is a faith that cannot be denied...it is other-worldly. This faith has the backing of all Creation...it is determined, forceful, and nothing can stand in its way or wake. It is rewarded through the preseverance of prayer and seeking God. It is having the faith of God as Jesus described in Mark 11:22.



<"WHO TOUCHED ME?" Jesus asked. It was the woman with the hemorrhage of blood. Her faith could not be denied, and she perservered, receiving her healing. She was told by Jesus, "Your faith has made you whole."

This divine faith is a result of a revelation of God's Will and Faithfulness in one's behalf. It is no longer believing that God can do something...it is knowing that He will. It is not a blind faith, but a confidence

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and an assurance with absolute certainty that God will do something. This kind of faith openly defies all manner of human reason. It is the ability to believe God against all odds.