

"According to Your Faith"

Scripture Lesson:- Matthew 9: 23-38.

Text:- Matthew 9: 29.

Introduction:- It is the fashion in many places today to condemn religious teaching, especially the belief in the power of faith. The critics claim that such teaching makes God the servant of man, and degrades faith into a selfish seeking for the solution of one's problems and ailments.

The Bible teaches us that man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. But God is also mindful of the needs for soul, mind and body of man.

It is wrong to make the power of faith a means of accomplishing our own selfish needs. But it is a mistake to overlook God's provisions, through faith, for our needs. Throughout the Bible we are offered the Lord's strength for our life and strength by God's Spirit for the inner man. No one has a right to exploit the benefits of faith in God for selfish purposes. Once we make Christ our Master we become servants of the will of God. This entitles us to certain benefits through God's love and grace. The power of faith is made available to us.

But the critics say that the day of miracles is past, but the Bible says that it is according to your faith. Shall we listen to man or to God.

In the versed chapter of St. John 3, he tells us that God wishes above everything that our souls may prosper, and likewise that we may prosper in material blessings and good health. This Scripture means what it says. There are many promises in God's word, but they are on conditions. They are not to the rich or the poor, the intellectual or the ignorant, the white, black, red, yellow, or brown, but to the faithful, to those who exercise their faith according to God's plan.

I.

The power of faith. The word power comes from the

Greek word "dunamis". From this we get our word "dynamite," which means stored up energy. One occasion Jesus asked the disciples the question, "Where is your faith?", implying "Where is your power?" In the Book of Acts, we see faith at work. The Bible says faith without works is dead, and anything that is dead is inactive and has little value.

The power of faith works on the physical level when miracles of healing take place. Men are given energy beyond human strength. It worked on the minds of the disciples, Peter, the onetime failure, received the Holy Spirit, preached a sermon, and three thousand people believed. The power of faith works on the moral natures of men. Cowards become heroes; cotton-string backbones become as steel. It is the power of faith in God at work.

Your faith in God is as a bond with the Almighty. Like money deposited in an insured bank, it is a reserve you can check upon when you need it. How much you can draw out depends on the amount you have deposited to your credit. It is according to your faith. Faith is like credit in the bank; you may draw on it when you need it. It is to be used and not abused. A steam engine may pop off from time to time, but it never moves unless the steam is applied to the driving wheels. Faith is similar to this. Faith becomes power when it is released. The power I am talking about is a deep, confident knowledge that if we do certain things with the right attitude the outcome will be all right. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. It is according to your faith.

II.

Christ said that we would receive this power when the Holy Spirit is come upon us. This power of faith is not something we manufacture, or something we purchase, but it is something we receive. I read about a recluse dying from hunger and lack of medical attention in a disease ridden, filthy room. Afterwards thousands of dollars were found in the mattress and in a bank deposit. We may have

all the faith in the world, but unless we draw upon it, we will die in our sins and our diseases. God will not save a person against that person's will. Neither can God bless us fully unless we believe and let the power flow through us. If in a ball game, we receive a ball and do not pass it on to the next player, the game stops.

A tree or a rosebush does not make the power by which it grows. It receives energy through sunlight and plant food. By releasing its energy it grows and gives beauty and fragrance out of its substance. Our physical body operates on the same principle. It is not self-contained and does not live by itself, but absorbs the life-giving power through sunshine, air, and food. The energy is released through the movement of the body.

It is reasonable to believe that this same principle which works in nature and on the physical level also works in the spiritual realm. All of nature has a source of strength and power. Is not God mindful of man's need for personal power? Is not there a source somewhere from which we may draw strength, wisdom, and other needs? Surely the God of creation who has been so kind to nature has likewise provided for man's health, happiness, and prosperity. We must be willing to be a channel through which strength and God's blessings may flow. We will bless others when we freely give, because we have freely received.

Are we blocking the flow of God's blessings through our inactive faith? A body of water which receives but does not give out becomes stagnant. I believe that God is asking Christians who have been blest with the gospel and with material things to be willing to be a channel and pass God's blessings on to others.

Conclusion:- How about those in America who have not been reached for Christ? How about the millions over seas who have never once heard about the deliverance which Christ came to provide for them. It is a serious question, isn't it? We can't help others unless we have known the saving grace in our own hearts. We must first accept Christ in our

heart and life and then become a channel through which his love can flow. His love gives us a compassion and a concern that we have never had. God is visiting the human race again. We may have power to witness effectively that men everywhere may know something of his power, for, according to your faith be it unto you.