

Great Faith

By Pastor Marvin R. Barham

I want to share with you tonight about Great Faith. There is a lot to be said of faith as believers. However, **your perception or understanding of faith is developed by your point of reference and motive for faith.** Most people serve God out of fear of punishment or hope of reward. Both are selfish. God desires a people who serve Him simply out of a love for who He is. So it is with faith. What is faith? Is faith just what I say or fail to say? Is faith simply seeing the results of what I proclaim? Is faith measured by ones accumulation of material wealth?

These questions beg hermeneutical clarification. It is important that with every interpretation of the precepts and principles of God we approach them with minds renewed by the Word of God and the illumination of the Holy Spirit. **There is a difference between knowing the Law of God and having the Life of God.** You cannot separate the person of Christ from the principles He taught or you know not Christ. Nor can you separate the rule of the Law of God from the intent of the Law or you know not God and deny His authority in the Law.

So, the questions then becomes, **How does God define faith, what is His intent in faith, and how do I apply it to my life?** When God says He will supply all of your needs He literally meant all. However, the disconnect is often our misinterpretation of what is a need. It is important that we understand the principles of Christ and the Laws of God pertaining to the **“Principle of Supply”**. **Father’s priority is the prosperity of your soul above all else.** The Word tells us *“I would that you prosper and be in health as your soul prospers.”* Prosperity is having the provisions God deems needed for you to fulfill His plans and purposes in the life He has granted you and I. Prosperity is making progress as well as obtaining a goal. Prosperity is not arriving, but going there and looking for the next destination. We move from glory to glory, victory to victory. You do not adjust your theology based on your need, circumstance, or perception of your situation. Your decisions can often change your circumstance. You may have to adjust your opinion in order to embrace a divine opportunity to grow and fulfill His purposes.

We must be willing to obey His voice and His Word. **His love is unconditional but His rewards and benefits are conditional.** You have to follow through with God’s principles. Your future, the blessings, and the fulfillment of your destiny do not depend on God’s love for you but they do depend on your obedience which defines the depth of your love for Him. Blessings of God exist but I have to cooperate with God to bring them into my life. **You cannot be lazy, irresponsible, and ignorant with the things of God, failing to implement His precepts and principles and expect God to bless you above all things.**

Hebrews 11:1 tells us, *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* The things of God are line upon line, precept upon precept, and principle upon principle. So I find in Scripture through the intent of God a pattern to “Great Faith”. I find here that there are two components to faith that line up with the patterns of faith throughout Scripture. **You cannot have one without the other or your faith is incomplete. They are “Belief” and “Obedience”.** You can give your tithes but if you have envy or hatred against your brother and have not reconciled according to God’s Word your tithes principle is ineffective. You can confess until you’re out of breath if you’re looking at porn in private.

Jesus said we must **be doers of the Word and not hearers only.** The Greek Word for *disobedience* in **Hebrews Chapter 2:2** is *Parakoe* meaning *“an unwillingness to hear.”* **Romans 10:17** tells us *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* **The more of the Word you apply to your life in obedience the stronger your belief, or faith, increases. The more your faith increases the more your soul prospers. The more your soul prospers in the Word of Faith the more the results become evident in the delegated divine authority that is prophetically manifested in your life.** **Acts 6:7** *7And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests*

were obedient to the faith. **Romans 1:5** *By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:*

The disciples asked Christ after having failed to implement what He had been trying to teach them and failing to exercise the authority of the Word in them, “*Master, increase our faith.*”

Romans 6:16 says, “*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*” **You cannot tell me that you believe something yet you do not live it. If you really believed it you would live it.** Some Christians pick and choose what precepts of God they will follow based on their current situation. You might say, “Well God will just have to understand that I cannot afford to pay my tithes right now.” First, how can you not afford to is my perspective. Why can one take that attitude? Because they really do not believe that the principle of sowing and reaping, the disobedience to God’s precept of the tithes is as God called it “Robbing God”. Therefore, **they do not practice what they do not believe about God and His Word.**

We see it in **Matthew 8:26** “*And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.*” Again in **Acts 6:8** “*And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.*” **Great faith produces great results. Great wonders follow great faith.** The Word tells us in **Mark 16:17** “*And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;*” As with Christ, signs and wonders follow those who believe. **Signs and wonders follow faith, faith is the fruit of believers and those who believe are those who obey.** God would not delegate such divine authority to those who can quote Scripture, confess for personal gain yet are rebellious to His Word. Jesus said, I only do as I see the Father do, what He tells me to do. **If it were not for Christ’s obedience we would not have a faith to believe in. (Romans 5:19** *19For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Hebrews 5:8-9* *8Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;)* Signs and wonders follow those with great obedience. **Great Obedience equals great faith.**

What is a believer? A believer is a doer of the Word; obedience to the Word; one who is submissive to the governing authority of the ways of God. **One who understands the hierarchy of Kingdom authority and submits all of their life to it. (Acts 5:32** *32And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.)* **Again, you cannot separate obedience to the governing authority of the Word from what you say you believe and expect supernatural results. (James 2:17-18** *17Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. 18Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.)*

One of the best examples we find in **Matthew 8:9-11** where the Centurion soldier comes to Christ requesting the healing of his servant. Christ says take me to them and the soldier replies, “*9For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.*” Looks at Christ’s reply concerning this man’s faith or understanding of obedience to the authority of God given him, “*10When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. 11And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.*”

Another characteristic of great faith is **faithfulness, consistency or persistence to follow through.** Look with me at **Matthew 15:27-29** “*27And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table. 28Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. 29And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there.*” **Great faith is consistent and persistent. It is not self serving and moves the heart of Father.**

The faith of Abraham moved the heart of Father. **Hebrews 11:8** *8By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

What is your faith without obedience? I Samuel 15:22 *22And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. Genesis 22:18* *18And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. Faith is more than a doctrine of man's indulgent nature.* **(Romans 6:17** *17But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.) Without obedience it is nothing more than one of a multitude of religious opinion. It is ideas, vain words, and rituals with no substance to them. It is not a belief. For what you believe produces results. Father can look at the fruit of your life and tell you what you really believe and what you do not.* And our faith should produce the fruit of father in our lives. **Hebrew 11:6** *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

Your faith is only as effective as your obedience. If God says give the hundred dollar bill and instead you give the ten thinking you have done God and His servants a favor. You simply practiced the principle of giving yet in disobedience. **The issue with God is not the amount you gave or did not give. The issue with God is your willful disobedience to place your Isaac on the alter of obedient faith. You did not practice faith (obedience) you practiced unfaithfulness, doubt or disobedience.**

Let us look at it this way, **Faith (Obedience)** is the **substance (ingredient)** of things **hoped for (Belief)** and the **evidence (manifestation)** of things not seen (*trust in relationship with God*). **John 20:29** *29Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."* **Thomas could only obey after his flesh had been satisfied. Blessed are those among us who seek to obey His Word after the spirit and not the flesh. This is Great Faith.**