

ESSENTIALS OF EVANGELISM

The Bob Jones University Lectures on Evangelism for 1958

by

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CHAPTER SIX

HAVE FAITH IN GOD

TEXT: “**And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God**” (Mark 11:22).

Read Mark 11:12-26

There are a number of verses in the eleventh chapter of Mark that are closely related to prayer. Jesus said in verse 17, “**My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.**” He also said in verse 23, “**Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, this which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.**”

You know, dear friend, that God is saying here in His Word, that you can have “**whatsoever he saith.**” “**You can have whatsoever he saith.**” “**What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them**” (verse 24). Jesus said you shall have what you desire if you pray in faith believing.

But these are not the texts which seem to be foremost in my mind and on my heart this morning. My text only has four words in it. They have been a great challenge to my heart for many years. I trust that they will be to yours today.

In verse 22 we read, “**And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.**” Have faith in God! It seems the Lord led us to this verse at a most appropriate time. There never has been a time in the history of the world when the individual people needed faith in God as they need it now. I doubt if there has been a time in the history of the work of the Lord when all of us needed to have faith in God, not in our ability, not in the schemes of men, but faith in God.

I am amazed when I look through the Word of God and find out the importance of faith and all that the Bible has to say about it.

In the book of Matthew, for instance, Jesus gives what we might call scale of faith. He speaks to people and says, “**What, have you no faith?**” Certainly that is the description of a large multitude of people across the face of the earth today. They have no faith, no faith whatever. They have no faith in God, no faith in Christ His Son, and no faith in His Word.

Then Jesus spoke to His disciples and several different times said to them, “**Oh, ye of little faith.**” There are people with no faith at all. Then Jesus plainly taught that there are saved people whose faith is weak and who have very little faith. Jesus said on one occasion about one person, “**I have not found so great faith, no not in all of Israel.**”

So here we have three things Jesus said on the subject of faith in book of Matthew — “**no faith,**” “**little faith,**” “**great faith.**” It ought to be the heart’s cry of every single one of God’s children that we should have “**great faith.**”

Paul in writing to the believers at Rome in Romans 14:23 said, “**Whatever is not of faith is sin.**” It is a sin, my friend, not to have faith, strong, active, living, vital faith that draws upon the resources of God, brings the flood-tide of peace into your own soul and causes things to happen in your Christian experience.

Faith in the Bible, of course, is set forth as one of the nine fruits of the Spirit. To have faith, to be one of great faith, means to have the fulness of the Spirit, for the Bible teaches us that love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance are the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit. You cannot possibly have a strong faith and ignore the Holy Spirit in your life. Faith is one of fruits of the Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is allowed to possess completely and fill with His blessed fullness, our faith is going to be the kind which pleases God and gets things from His Hand.

Faith is a part of our Christian armour. Paul in writing to Ephesian church gave the description of the armour of the people of God in Chapter 6. He told that we are to be dressed up in the helmet of salvation. We are to have the breastplate of righteousness. Our loins are to be girt about with truth. We are to be men and women of prayer. We are to have our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Our all conquering weapon is to be the living and powerful Sword of the Spirit.

Paul closes his description of the Christian’s armour in Ephesians 6:16 by saying, “**Above all . . .**” Friends, Paul said, inspired of God, “**Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.**”

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is a great chapter of faith. It is the greatest thesis ever written on the subject of faith and it is written in a most beautiful language. This chapter honors the saints of all ages who have been strong in the faith. In Hebrews 11:6 God says, “**Without faith it is impossible to please God.**”

The word “**faith**” is found only twice in all the Old Testament; once in Deuteronomy 32:20 where we read of a “**froward generation, children in whom is no faith,**” and again in Habakkuk 2:4 where we read, “**the just shall live by his faith.**” The fact that the word “**faith**” is found only twice in the Old Testament by no means infers that there were not men and women of great faith in Old Testament times. They that pleased God and walked in holy fellowship with Him and made an impression on their generation were men of great faith in God’s Person and power and promises.

I John 5:4 sets forth the importance of faith, for there we read, **“This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”** It is absolutely impossible to please Almighty God and it is absolutely impossible to overcome the world without having what Jesus spoke of as **“great faith.”**

I think the importance of faith is seen in a conversation Jesus had with Simon Peter, one of the twelve. One day Jesus in predicting the denial of Simon Peter said, **“Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted (or turned back again), strengthen thy brethren”** (Luke 22:31-32).

Notice these wonderful words of Jesus which have to do with our faith, **“I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.”** The Christians of strong faith are the ones who stand true to the Word of God and win souls to Jesus Christ, and they are a comfort to the brethren.

I am so glad that Jesus said to Peter, **“I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.”** Do you know, dear friend, that the faith of the people is so important in God’s sight that yonder at God’s right hand this very moment, right now Jesus is seated in the heavenlies in the presence of God, faithful to God’s throne that our faith might not fail. I say unto you this moment, **“Have faith in God.”** God give the church, God give you as Christian men and women and young people an unusual and extraordinary faith.

I have never been able to define faith. I could not give you a clear definition of it this morning if my life depended upon it. There is only one attempt made in all the sixty-six books of the Bible to define faith. That is the opening statement of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews where we read, **“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”** This is the only attempt in all God’s Word define faith.

But I know a little something about what faith means.

- Faith means believing God.
- Faith means believing God against all odds.
- Faith means seeing the unseen.

Thank God, a Christian can see by faith what no one else has ever seen except a Christian. I think of so many instances in the Bible where men saw the unseen, saw the evidence and saw the substance of things not seen. In fact, Paul said, **“We look not on things which are seen but on the things which are unseen. For the things which are seen are temporal but the things which are unseen are eternal.”**

You know friends, everything you can see, including this body in which I live and the body in which your soul and spirit abide, everything you can see, every object either animate or inanimate, everything you can see with physical eye, the Word of God calls temporal. That is, it is related to time. But God tells us that with the eye of faith we can see the unseen which is related to eternal things and will live as long as God lives.

I think of the prophet Elisha and his servant when he had fled to Dothan pursued by the wicked armies of Ben-hadad, the Syrian King. There, as he looked out across the country side, he saw the great host soldiers and their mighty chariots of war. His servant trembled with fear; but as Elisha looked out, thank God, he saw something which the servant did not immediately see. He said to him, **“Don’t you see what have seen?”** Though yonder are hundreds of thousands of the armies of Satan, thank God, “I see the chariots of the Lord and an army angels in chariots of fire.” Faith pulls aside the curtain of obscurity and faith sees the unseen. Faith distinguishes between the spiritual and the carnal. Oh Father, give the people of God today a vision to see that which the naked eye and the unconverted eye could never look upon.

Notice what Jesus said in these four words, **“Have faith in God,”** not in man. The greatest thing that ever happens to a Christian is to lose faith and confidence in the flesh. Have faith in God, not in preachers, not in deacons, not in churches, not in church members, not in Christians, not in things you can see, not in circumstances, not in the brilliance and talents of man, not in numbers, not in ecclesiastical programs! Have faith in God.

Never shall I forget hearing a preacher tell of a boat’s crossing the English Channel one dark and stormy night. As the boat crossed the choppy waters and stormy channel, it is said that the winds blew and the waves rolled high like mountains. It seemed such a stormy night that it looked as if God were angry with the world. While the boat plowed its way through the storm, it is said that the people screamed with fear. Some dropped on their knees and prayed. It is said that a little girl on that boat sat as calmly, quietly, and serenely as if she were in the rocking chair of the living room of her home. Someone said to her, “Little girl, as we sail across these choppy waves and it looks as if any moment this boat will go down beneath the waves, why do you have such calmness and peace of heart?” The little girl looked at the one who inquired and replied, “I’ll tell you why. The captain of this boat is my own daddy. My father has crossed this channel so many times. He has crossed it through every kind of wind and storm that blows, and I know he will reach the other side tonight.” Have faith in God. I have faith today to believe that the work I am in is God’s work! It can never be overthrown. God’s program for this age will succeed.

You know, friends, it’s as it was when Jesus said to His disciples, **“Let us go over to the other side.”** I think I can see Him now, standing along the beautiful blue quiet waters of the Sea of Galilee where Mrs. Malone and I were some time ago. He lifted up that omnipotent finger that created worlds and said, **“Let us go over to the other side.”** They got in the boat and started for the other side. In the midst of the sea, a storm arose. His disciples began to cry, **“Master, save us or else we perish.”** Jesus arose from His sleep, lifted His head from His pillow, for He was tired with weary toil, He arose to the little deck of the boat and waved His hand across the sea and the waves lay down like little lambs at their mother’s breast.

You know, Jesus has said to us as Christians, **“Let us go over to the other side.”** From the place where He found us bound in chains, steeped in iniquity, lost and undone and without God, He pointed yonder to the shores of heaven and said, **“Let us go over to the other side.” “Have faith in God.”**

There are not enough demons in hell or stormy winds to blow that can sink the boat of the child of God. So I say to you in this solemn hour of the world's history, have faith in God. Have faith in God for at least four wonderful things.

I. HAVE FAITH IN ORDER TO WIN THE LOST

This is the biggest job the world has even known. You remember Jesus said, **“Because I go to My Father, greater works shall you do than these works that I have done.”**

God in His Word and through His Son has challenged the church of the twentieth century to greater works than Jesus did when He walked this world two thousand years ago.

- I remember that Jesus spoke to the dead, and they lived again.
- I remember that Jesus spoke to the blind, and they came seeing.
- I remember that Jesus touched the lame and crippled, and they were made whole again.

And yet, Jesus Christ has said to me that I am to do greater works than He did. I have a job to do as a Christian. We have a job to do greater than raising the dead, greater than opening the eyes of the blind and straightening out the limbs of the crippled. **“Greater works than these shall you do.”** What work is that? It is the work of preaching the blessed gospel of God's infinite, wonderful grace and mercy, and winning men and women, boys and girls from the fires of hell and judgment to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. I'll tell you that when with God working in your life, you are used to win a soul to Jesus Christ, you have done a work that is greater than creating a world or hanging a star in the sky. Have faith for the salvation of souls.

You remember the four who brought the paralytic to Jesus—four men who wouldn't quit, four men who could not be defeated, four men in whose vocabulary the words “quit” and “defeat” could not be found. They climbed up to the roof of that little old house, tore up the roof and looked down through the opening and saw One standing down there Who could make the man whole whom they brought. They start letting him down through that hole.

I have often said of all the things described in the gospels, I think I would like to have seen that miracle more than any other. I wish I could have looked up and could have seen what Jesus saw. Jesus looked up and the thing that impressed Him was not so much the crippled man borne of four letting him down through the broken ceiling. Jesus looked up and the Bible records what impressed Jesus most. He looked up, and the Bible says, **“When he saw ‘their faith’ he looked down and said to the man sick with the palsy, Son thy sins be forgiven thee. Rise up and walk.”**

Yes, it takes faith to win the lost. These four men were absolutely void of religious selfishness. They were saturated and absorbed with a conviction that Jesus could meet the needs of their lost and crippled neighbor. The crowd in the house at Capernaum made it difficult to get to Jesus. Their task seemed impossible, but they soon graduated from the realm of the impossible to the realm of the probable, and then, thank God, moved on into the realm of reality and got the job done.

They were no doubt laughed at, criticized, and opposed, but they could not be stopped. They represented faith, prayer, perseverance and love in cooperative soul winning. No doubt some cried, "Wait a minute, you are upsetting things. Has the board met on this project? Has it been approved by the denomination? Are you sure it will set well with the religious leaders?" They were completely unconcerned with these non-essential technicalities. They did not worry about the expense of repairing the roof or the publicity that would result from their unprecedented method.

I have seen many a Christian follow God and believe God for the salvation of souls and pray right up to the time when it seemed God would save their loved ones, and then their faith wavered and they failed to win them.

- I am preaching to people this day who carry a burdened and broken heart in your bosom year after year.
- I am preaching to women whose husbands are on their way to hell.
- I am preaching to husbands this day whose wives are lost.
- I am preaching today to some of you folks whose children are out yonder on the bleak mountainside of this world in sin, away from God and like sheep who have strayed from their shepherd.

I beg of you in God's Name, have faith in God today and don't ever let go and don't ever give up and don't ever quit praying until God has given you your family for Jesus. Have faith for the salvation of souls!

II. HAVE FAITH FOR THE UNUSUAL

The Bible tells us that faith accomplishes the unusual. Sometimes people say to me, "Mr. Malone, do you believe in miracles?"

I reply, "Yes, I do." I do not believe in miracles to the extent that I think I can do anything that Jesus, Peter, James, John or Paul did. I don't believe I can raise the dead. I don't believe there is any power in these hands of mine to heal the sick. If I could heal the sick and open the eyes of the blind, I would go all the way with God. I would take all of what Jesus said, for the same Jesus that said, "Heal the sick and cast out the demons," said, "Raise up the dead." I want you to show me a man who can raise the dead. There is not one. People who say, "I can heal the sick," but they do not raise the dead take only part of what God said. Have faith in God for the unusual and remember that the paralytic whom the four brought to Jesus had his sins forgiven before he had his body healed. God is specializing today in the miracle of regeneration.

I believe in miracles. I believe that my God can do things today that all the governors and senators and congressmen and the President cannot do. The Bible teaches us that many times faith has wrought the unusual, and the lack of faith has kept the unusual from happening.

You remember that when Jesus took three of the twelve and went yonder on the mountain top where He was transfigured, Moses and Elijah appeared. There were six people on that mountain top, Jesus and five men.

When Jesus and the three came back from the mountain, Moses and Elijah did not come. But thank God, when we are once in heaven, we never leave His presence and never cease to be with Him.

Down there in the valley something was going on. Jesus and the three went down into the valley, and there were multitudes watching someone lying there writhing in the dust, a picture of the sin-cursed and lost of this world. There was a boy with twitching lips and glassy eyes. There was a boy foaming at the mouth, his limbs jerking. There he was lying unconscious with dust and sweat and blood all over him as he lay on the ground. His father was wringing his hands for that dear son. Nine disciples were standing around; nine men to whom Jesus had said, “***Go into all the world and preach and I will give ye power over demons***” (and that was what was wrong with the boy).

Here this father stood with a broken heart and wringing hands. He turned to Jesus and said, “***I brought my boy to your men. I brought my afflicted son to your mighty preachers, but they could not heal him.***”

The disciples couldn't cast out the demons, and they turned to Jesus and asked, “**Why could we not cast them out?**”

Jesus looked at them and said, “**This kind,**” that's the hard kind. “**This kind,**” that's the unusual kind. “**This kind,**” that's the unexpected kind. “**This kind cometh not out except by prayers and by fasting.**”

Listen, friends, with faith in God and belief in prayer, I believe you can accomplish the unusual, the extraordinary, and the unexpected! Did not Jeremiah say, “**Call upon me and I will answer thee and shew thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not of?**” No Christian shall ever come to the place when his faith is not valuable. Christians should seek to face new worlds, conquer new continents, do new miracles, work new enterprises with faith in God. We need to have our faith challenged until we lean upon God to do the unusual. We need to believe that we can build great soul-winning churches and Christ-centered schools without the help or approval of men who do not believe the Bible. Have faith in God. Have faith in God to win the lost. Have faith in God for the unusual.

III. HAVE FAITH IN GOD'S PROMISES

The book of Titus says the God that promises cannot lie. I read of Abraham at the age of a hundred and his wife at the age of ninety to whom the angel of the Lord appeared and said, “***You will have a son and through him I will bless the world and through Him a Messiah will come.***” We read in the fourth chapter of Romans that Abraham “**staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief but was strong in faith giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that, while he had promised, he was able also to perform**” (Romans 4:20-21). God give us a faith that can reach within this Divine Book and lay hold upon His promises, pull them into our hearts and souls, believe them, and stagger not. Have faith in God. God has promised us a number of things about this matter of soul-winning.

1. *He has promised to be with us.* “**Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world**” (Matthew 28:19-20).

2. *He has promised us that our work is an eternal one and that our fruit will abide forever.* “**Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you**” (John 15:16).

3. *He has promised to bless us here and hereafter.* “**Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life**” (Mark 10:28-30).

4. *He has promised to reward us at the Judgment Seat of Christ.* “**And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever**” (Daniel 12:3).

IV. HAVE FAITH IN GOD’S MERCY TO SAVE THE LOST

I say unto you in closing, God is a merciful God.

Faith and God’s mercy are linked hand in hand in the Bible and never can be separated. I think of two Bible characters, one a man and the other a woman who came to Jesus and asked Him for mercy. In the eighth chapter of Matthew we have the record of a man who came to Jesus and said, “*My servant is dead. I want you to heal him.*” Jesus said, “*All right, let us go to him.*”

This man replied, “*Now wait a minute, Jesus. I am a man of authority myself. I have people all around me. I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goeth; and I say to another, ‘Come,’ and he cometh. You don’t have to go where he is. I know you, Jesus. You are a miracle-working Man. You love people. You want to meet their needs. Why don’t you just say the word, and then by Thy word he shall be healed.*”

Jesus said, “*All right. Go to thy home, thy servant liveth.*”

When the man went home he found it as Jesus said. Jesus saw that man walk away and said, “**I have not found so great faith in all of Israel.**” He had faith in the mercy of Jesus.

A woman came to Him one day. She said, “*My daughter is vexed of a devil. She throws herself in the fire. She needs help.*” This woman was not a Jew, she was Greek, a Syrophenician, a Gentile.

Jesus pointed to her the Word of God and said, ***“I cannot do anything for you, woman. It is not meet, the Bible says, to take the children’s bread (the Jew) and give it unto the dogs (the Gentiles).”*** The gospel was not yet turned fully from the Jews, God’s chosen people, to the Gentiles, the heathen nations of the world. He said, **“I cannot take the children’s bread and give it unto the dogs.”**

That woman looked in His face (I can see her now perhaps with tears streaming down her cheeks) with great faith in His mercy, and she cried, **“Yes, but Master, it would be all right to let the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the children’s table.”** She said, ***“Don’t you know even when royalty eats, the dogs are entitled to the little crumbs that drop from the corner of the table.”***

Jesus said to that woman, **“Oh woman! Great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt, and her daughter was made whole from that very hour”** (Matt. 15:28).

God is a merciful God. He delights to save the lost. He loves and weeps over this lost world today, and His heart’s desire is to have sinners come unto him from all the ends of the earth. We are co-laborers together with God in this all important matter of soul-winning. God’s purpose in this age is not to convert everyone but to choose out a bride for His Son, the Lord Jesus. God will not fail in this purpose. We are on the winning team, thank God. **“Have faith in God.”**

~ end of chapter 6 ~

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