

BELIEVE!



And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd about them, and scribes arguing with them. And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. And he asked them, "What are you discussing with them?" And one of the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit;. and wherever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able."

And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us.!"

And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes."

Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"

And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

Mark 9:14-27

"They Were Not Able!"

We know how those disciples felt when the man brought his demon- possessed son to them, and they were powerless to help. There is a discrepancy between the life Jesus offers to those who follow him and the life we're living.

"If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it shall be done for you."

John 15:7

"If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples,

and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

John 8:31-32

Jesus promises that we will have authority over all the power of the enemy, that rivers of living water will flow out of our hearts, that the works that he does we shall do in this life ... in these bodies of flesh and blood.

That we, like our Lord himself, will go forth into this troubled world and set the captives free.

But is it happening? Too often the poor and the maimed and the halt and the blind come to us with hope, and after a while this hope fades and they limp away, still hurting in their souls.

Yet we know our Lord means it to be otherwise. It can be otherwise!

BELIEVE!

We know what it is that will bring an end to our inadequacy. If there is one word Jesus Christ speaks to our hearts it's the word "Believe!"

"O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you?"

"Believe in me! Trust me!"

When they told the ruler of the synagogue that his daughter was dead, Jesus fixed his eyes on the man and said, "Don't be afraid, just believe." As Jesus approached the grave of Lazarus, he said to the dead man's sister Martha, "*Your brother will rise again.*" Martha said to him, "*I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.*" Jesus said to her, "*I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he were dead yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. **Do you believe this?***" She said to him, "*Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world.*"

Believe! Believe! Believe!



Jesus never tires of uttering that word because it's the only way anyone will ever come out of the darkness into the light.

"What must we do, to be doing the works of God?"

"This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

John 6:28-29

"While you have the light, believe in the light... that you may become sons of light."

John 12:36

What a contrast between the disciples who stood there that day with empty hands --- they tried to cast out a demon and it wouldn't go --- and this heartbroken father who kept pressing on to get

some help for his son. The disciples, in this situation, were powerless. But this father was making progress. He was going to get what he was after --- his faith was getting stronger by the minute in the promise of Jesus.

And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me."

Mark 9:19

O faithless generation! Never belittle those disciples of twenty centuries ago ... they far outperformed us. Can we deny that we lack faith? "Believe!" Jesus says to us. What stands in the way of the faith he calls us to have?

Removing The Hindrances

Burning faith in Jesus Christ is always thwarted by our insistence that we do believe when we don't.

How often we go on pretending to ourselves, and others, to have a faith in Jesus that simply isn't there! "Don't worry about me, Lord, I have plenty of faith!" But if every cupboard is bare, if we're totally empty inside, there will be no change until we admit our need, until we begin to cry; "I believe! Help my unbelief!" When we admit our unbelief, he helps us, and faith wells up and things start to happen.

Burning faith is always thwarted when we try to put our faith in principles and doctrine's, or even in faith itself, instead of the person of Jesus Christ.



Religious Fervor

We're busy reading books and going to meetings trying to "build faith," always careful never to say or think anything negative for fear it will tear down our faith.

But what kind of faith is thus produced?

Self-conscious faith ... faith in our faith.

We're like a man walking in a crowd who feels for his wallet every three minutes to make sure it's still there --- ever feeling for our faith. "Do I still have it? Ah, yes, praise the Lord, it's still there!" ...What's still there? Forget your principles and your doctrines and your faith-building exercises, and your "positive confessions" and get your heart on Jesus himself.

And when he says, "Believe!" answer him, even if you have to say, "I believe, help my unbelief"

Burning faith in Jesus Christ is thwarted by our seeking our own glory.

"How can you believe who receive honor one from another and seek not the honor which comes from God only."

John 5:44

We cannot have faith in God when we have our eyes on men. We will never put our lives into the hands of Jesus so long as we are still lusting after human approval. The boy's father didn't care what any-body thought didn't care if the whole world saw him weeping for his troubled son.

"If you can do anything, have pity on us and help us!"

"What do you mean, if I can? ...all things are possible to him who believes."

"I believe!" cried the father in tears, "Help my unbelief!"

O God, help us to cry out to your Son like that!

Burning faith in Jesus Christ is thwarted by an unforgiving heart.



Notice how often the promise of answered prayer is connected with the command to forgive.

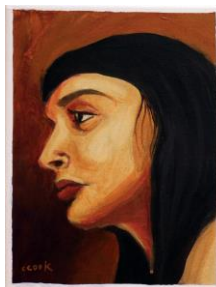
"Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any one...."

Mark 11:24-25

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. An unforgiving heart is an unbelieving heart and it will never be a believing heart until it is a forgiving heart.

Lord, I believe! Help my unbelief! Help me to forgive!"

Burning faith in Jesus Christ is thwarted by a prayerless life.



**And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately,
"Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them,
"This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."**

Mark 9:28-29

Some manuscripts add "fasting" "by prayer and fasting." When we are living a life of prayer we will know when and how to fast. But it is important to remember that fasting is a part of prayer, not a thing in itself.

The same Holy Spirit who enables us to say, "Jesus is Lord," enables us to pray. If I yield to the Spirit as he moves me to say, "Jesus is Lord," but hold back when he directs me to pray; how long will I continue to say and believe that Jesus is Lord?

Surely if we are going to do the works that our Lord did, as he promised believers would, we are going to have to be the men and women of disciplined, faithful prayer, Jesus calls us to be, even if we have to start every day with the prayer, "I believe! Help my unbelief!"

We can eliminate the discrepancy between the life Jesus offers us and the life we're actually living. We simply need to listen to one word from the lips of our Master which he speaks as urgently to us today as he ever spoke to anybody,

"Believe! All things are possible to him who believes!"



Prayer- Lord in the midst of suffering and sorrow, the burdens that are brought to me, the prayers I speak for healing... I feel helpless. My faith is not enough. I want to help, but I fear any smidgen of unbelief and any sense of self pride on my part, hinders your power. Lord have mercy, I do believe, help my unbelief. Forgive me. Help me to do what you ask... to admit my emptiness and my longing for man's approval when it comes to prayer. Help me to have faith in you and not in my faith or theology. Help me to forgive from the heart as I turn to you. Help me to seek you, only you in the midst of the overwhelming needs that surround me and in the midst of my own powerlessness. You are more powerful, more merciful than my unbelief. Light a fire of burning faith within me, give me power over the enemy, cause living water to flow out of my heart, help me to set the captive free. All in your name Jesus. I know you can do all things. You are Lord of Heaven and earth. Nothing is beyond you. MM

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THE LAMB
WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN



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