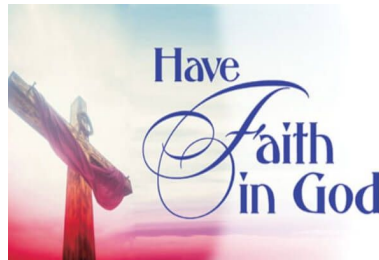


Maranatha Mirror Message

FAITH IN YOUR FAITH OR FAITH IN GOD



We're all aware that Jesus didn't have a halo around His head. His face did not shine like Moses' when Moses came down from Sinai. There was nothing about Jesus' appearance or the sound of His voice that gave any indication that this was God the Son. And yet, certain people recognized God in Him right away.

"Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God." (John 3:2)

"Lord, if you want to, you can make me clean." (Matthew 8:2)

*"Lord, I am not worthy to have you come into my home.
Just say the word from where you are,
and my servant will be healed.." (Matthew 8:8)*

While others absolutely couldn't stand Jesus. They hated Him.
The very mention of His name made them angry.

"Who does he think he is!"?

"Why he's a blasphemer!"

"He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons!"

"He's a madman!"



The people who hated Jesus were not crooked politicians and men who gambled,
but the religious people

- Church members in good standing,
- Christian businessmen,
- People who prayed, gave alms, went to the synagogue, performed all the requirements of their religion.
- People who had a testimony about how good God had been to them.

Why was it that these religious people found Jesus so offensive?

Why is it that a man who insists that he has faith and who does all kinds of decent things which would seem to indicate that he has faith ...*can't recognize* God, when God comes walking toward him in human flesh?

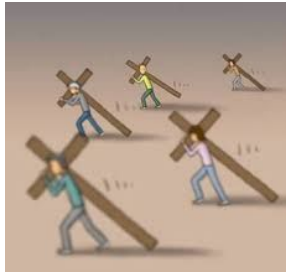
Why is it that people

Who say they love Jesus Christ

Who read their bibles

Who practically live at prayer meetings

Who can give the most beautiful testimonies *can't recognize the voice of Jesus* when Jesus calls them to... deny themselves, pick up their cross, and follow?

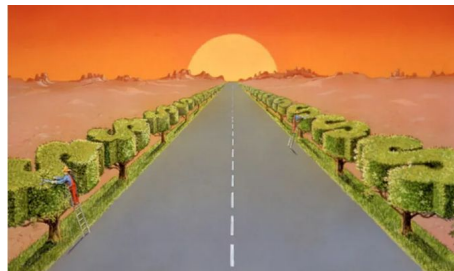


The Eternal Word *is* speaking to these people, telling them exactly which road to travel.

And what do they do?

They turn their backs on Jesus, get down on their knees, and pray for guidance...*more to their liking.*

They turn their backs on the Lamb of God, who died for their sins, and go head down a road that *leads away from the Cross* shouting, "*Hallelujah. Praise the Lord!*" all the while.



How can these children of the Kingdom, these enlightened ones be so blind?

Don't they have any faith?

You bet they have faith!

They have so much faith it has turned in upon itself.

So that now, instead of having faith in God, they have **faith in their faith.**

Their real confidence is no longer in **God's grace**, *but in their faith.*

"Of course I'll make it, I have faith."

"Of course God is with me, I'm a man of faith."

"Naturally I'm qualified to tell you what your problem is, I have faith."

"And if I should boss you around a little, consider yourself fortunate, I'm a spiritual man."

When we start thinking this way, beneath our humble masks, whatever faith in God we may once have had is gone.

What's left is faith in faith.

It's like a man who had once been befriended by the King. The King had come walking through jail one day, talked to this man, and set him free. At first, the man kept telling all his friends how good the King was. *"o, we have a wonderful King!"* But as the years passed, the man changed his testimony. It was no longer, *"We have a wonderful King"*, but rather, *"I have a connection with the King. Me and the King, man, we're tight! Why if I wanted to, I could ask the King for ten grand and he'd give it to me."*

One day the King sends his son, the Prince, to the man's house with a message.

"The King wants you to join his army and report for duty right away."

"What are you talking about fool? Get off my porch before I kill you! Me and the King are tight."

When the Son of God came to Israel, He ran up against this again and again.

"Who do you think you are, you fool?"

"We're insiders"

"We're God's chosen ones!"

And now as the church on earth enters into its hour of judgment, and the glorious Lamb of God walks amid the seven golden lampstands calling the saints to wake up and repent and get on with the work they've been given, His message is meeting with offense and rejection at every turn.

"What do you mean?"

"Wake up and repent?"

"Why we're people of faith!"

"We're children of the Kingdom!"

I tell you many shall come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven, while the sons of the Kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. (Matthew 8:11-12)

Whether you sit at table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom, or get thrown into the outer darkness depends not on whether you think you have faith, but on what your faith is really attached to.

Is it attached to *itself* or to *God*?

Is your faith in your faith, or in God?

A few things about faith in God:

1. Faith in God recognizes Jesus immediately.

- It doesn't have to analyze Him.
- It doesn't put Him through a battery of tests.
- It doesn't run to the theologians to find out what they think.

It discerns as directly as a sheep knows its shepherd's voice that this lowly one speaking to me is my Lord.

"Lord, if you want to, you can make me clean."

How did this leper know? Not because he read it in the Free Press, or heard it on WMUZ. The leper had been sitting on a rock listening to the sermon on the mount and he knew that this voice was the voice of his shepherd.

It doesn't take heavy meditation.

"Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice"

"He that is of God, hears God's word."

The hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear shall live.

Jesus Christ is speaking to the professing church in this world as never before.

- There are those who listen.

- And there are those who go right on playing their spiritual games.

Those who listen and who change their lives accordingly have faith in God.

2. Faith in God sees Jesus as holy.

There is a popular faith which believes that you can put Jesus in your pocket and then everything you touch will turn to success. Wrap Jesus around your stocks and bonds and see them grow. The people who peddle this nonsense, and the people who swallow it are going to be in for a surprise when they stand before the King.

For faith in God always holds Jesus Christ in awe.

*"Lord; I am not worthy to have you come under my roof;
speak the word only and my servant will be healed."*

*"Put your finger here and see my hands; and put out your hand
and place it in my side; do not be faithless but believing."*

And how did Thomas answer? *"Just like I thought all along. Praise God! Hallelujah!"*

No.

"My Lord and my God!", said Thomas, and fell to his knees trembling, shaking.



May God bring us to that kind of faith.

3. Faith in God is continuously overwhelmed by God's mercy in Jesus Christ.

Faith in God can't get over how good Jesus is.

*"Lord, if you want to, you can make me clean."
"Of course I want you to be clean!"*

*"Speak the word only and my servant will be healed" ...
"Go, be it done for you as you have believed."*

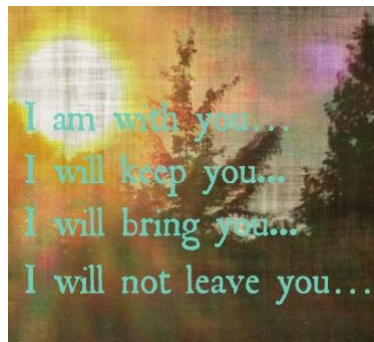
Even when we go on with Jesus and find out what it means to have a thorn in the flesh like Paul, or a wounded thigh like Jacob -

Even when God's Spirit leads us into the wilderness and baffling things start happening to us - we still see Jesus turning our darkness into light.

Lo, I am with you always.

I will never leave you or forsake you.

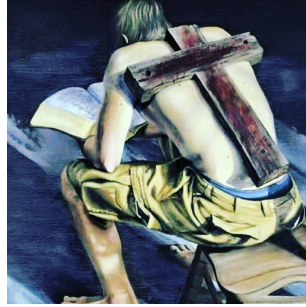
I will not leave you desolate.



4. Faith in God dies to itself and goes all the way with Jesus -

Any faith in Jesus which right now is unwilling to go all the way with Him will sooner or later turn from Him. For this reason, Jesus never wastes time trying to disciple people who are holding something back. If you prefer not to go all the way with Jesus, that's your privilege, but don't get upset by the fact that Jesus doesn't coddle you and answer all your questions.

*He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me;
and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;
and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.
He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it.
Matthew 10:37-38*



5. Faith in God is a gift God has already given us.

All that's needed to complete it is an act of will on our part moment-by-moment.

Some of us are forever moping around feeling cheated.

"O, if only I had faith! Some people find it so easy to believe while I find it so hard!"

No man ever walked this earth with more understanding than Jesus.

- He cares about us.
- He knows what we're going through.
- He helps us.

But Jesus never sympathizes with our unbelief. He never says, *"That's all right. I understand. You do have a little weakness here. Just bungle along in your unbelief as best you can"* -

Never.

On the contrary, Jesus says,

"Where is your faith?"

"Why did you doubt?"

"Why are you so hard of heart?"



Because God, by His Spirit right now, is giving every person reading this the power to believe in His Son afresh,

- to discern who Jesus is,
- to see Jesus as holy and wonderfully good,
- to follow Jesus all the way.

Will you come down off your pedestal and move in that power?

Faith is not an issue we settle "once and done".

It's an issue we settle every hour of every day.

We commit ourselves again and again.

If you've followed Jesus for fifty years praise God for that.

But are you following Him right now? Are you utterly sold out to Him.

Is Jesus....

your first love,

your supreme joy,

your life?

The Spirit of God is calling many of us to wake up and see what's been happening to us.

We've been getting religious - which means we've got more confidence in our faith, or in the doctrine of eternal security, or in our Bible knowledge than we have in our Lord.

May God, this day, blast our religious sophistication to a million pieces....

until we get our eyes and our hearts on Jesus

and on nothing else.

Prayer

Jesus our love, our joy and our life, increase our faith in you. Release us from the trap of putting our faith in our faith. And, yes, blast our religious sophistication to a million pieces. Lord only you can make us clean. May your mercy, love and holiness prostrate us in awe and trembling. May our hearts cry out to you, "my Lord and my God". Lord Jesus, may we never stop recognizing your voice, your call to us. We cry to you for the strength and the faith to follow you all the way. Dispel our fears, our lack of faith... help us to trust in your perfect goodness, to trust in your promise to never leave us nor forsake us. May we commit ourselves to you each moment, each hour of every day knowing you are always with us, knowing you will always turn our darkness into light. Precious Lord, You are our faith. Alleluia.

Amen