

The God Kind of Faith – Kenneth E. Hagin

Central Truth: The kind of faith that spoke the universe into existence is dealt to our hearts.

There are two things to notice about the God kind of faith. First, a man believes with his heart. Second, he believes with his words. It isn't enough just to believe in your heart. In order to get God to work for you, you must believe with your words also. Jesus said, "Whosoever shall say ... and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith" (Mark 11:23). This is the unalterable law of faith.

Mark 11:12-14, 20-24

12 And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry:

13 And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.

14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.

20 And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

21 And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

Let us focus our attention on the statement, "Have faith in God," or as the margin reads, "Have the faith of God." Greek scholars tell us this should be translated, "Have the God kind of faith." Jesus demonstrated that He had the God kind of faith. While He was afar off, He saw that the fig tree had leaves. But as He approached it, looking for fruit, He saw that it was barren. Some have questioned why Jesus looked for figs on this tree when it was not time for them to be ripe; it was not their season. However, in that country trees that retained their leaves usually had figs also.

Finding no fruit on the tree, Jesus said, "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever."

The next day when Jesus and His disciples passed by again they found the tree dried up from the roots. Amazed, Peter said, "Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away."

It was then that Jesus made the statement, "Have faith in God (have the faith of God, or the God kind of faith). For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith."

After telling His disciples in verse 22 to have the God kind of faith, Jesus went on to explain in verse 23 what this meant: The God kind of faith is the kind of faith in which a man believes with his heart and says with his mouth that which he believes in his heart, and it comes to pass.

Jesus showed that He had that kind of faith, for He believed that what He said would come to pass. He said to the tree, "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever."

This is the kind of faith that spoke the world into existence. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:3). How did He do it? God believed that what He said would come to pass. He spoke the word and there was an earth. He spoke into existence the vegetable kingdom. He spoke into existence the animal kingdom. He spoke into existence the heavens as well as the earth, the moon, the sun, the stars and the universe. He said it and it was so. That is the God kind of faith. He believed what He said would come to pass and it did.

The Measure of Faith

Jesus demonstrated the God kind of faith to His disciples, and then He told them that they too had that kind of faith – the faith that a man believes with his heart, says with his mouth what he believes, and it comes to pass.

Someone might say, “I want that kind of faith. I am going to pray that God will give it to me.” However, you don’t need to pray for it – you already have it. “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Romans 12:3). Notice that Paul wrote this to believers, for he says, “to every man that is among you.” The epistle of Romans was not written to the sinners in the world; it was a letter to Christians. He addresses this letter “to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints ...” (Romans 1:7). And in it he tells them that God has given to “every man the measure of faith.”

Paul also said, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8). Paul is saying here that this faith is not of yourself. He was not referring to grace, for everyone knows that grace is of God. He is saying that the faith by which we are saved is not of ourselves. It is not a natural, human faith. It was given to sinners by God. And how did God give the sinner faith to be saved? Romans 10:17 says, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” In these verses Paul has said that faith (1) is given, (2) is dealt, and (3) cometh.

Romans 10:8 says, “But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.” The Bible, this message of God, is called the word of faith. Why is it called the word of faith? Because it causes faith to come even into the heart of the unsaved. It causes the kind of faith that spoke the universe into existence to be dealt to our hearts. Faith is given to us through the Word.

Believing and Saying – the Key to Faith

Notice again the words of Romans 10:8, “But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.” How does this compare with the words of Jesus in Mark 11:23? Paul’s writings to the Romans agree exactly with what Jesus told His disciples when He said, “Whosoever shall say ... and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe ... shall have whatsoever he saith.” We see here the basic principle inherent in the God kind of faith: believing with the heart and saying it with the mouth. Jesus believed it and He said it. God believed it and He said it, speaking the earth into existence.

Verses 9 and 10 of this same tenth chapter of Romans say, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." A measure of faith is dealt to the sinner through hearing the Word. Then he uses it to create the reality of salvation in his own life.

When Christians are asked, "When were you saved?" They often answer by saying something like, "About nine on the night of July tenth." They are mistaken, however, for God saved them nearly two thousand years ago. It only became a reality to them when they believed it and confessed it. Salvation belongs to everyone. Every man and woman in this world has a legal right to salvation. Jesus died for the whole world, not just for you and me.

When the truth is preached to the sinner it causes faith to come. When he believes and confesses, he creates the reality of it in his own life by his faith.

Romans 10:13, 14, 17

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Just as faith comes from hearing the Word of God, so does anything that we receive from God. The God kind of faith comes by hearing God's Word. In other words, God causes the God kind of faith to come into the hearts of those who hear. No wonder Jesus said, "take heed therefore how you hear" (Luke 8:18). You cannot let it go in one ear and out the other because that won't do any good. Faith won't come. If you act as if the Word of God were some fairy tale, faith will not come. But when you accept it reverently and sincerely, when you act upon it, faith comes.

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak" (II Corinthians 4:13).

Paul said that we have the same spirit of faith. And what belonged to the church at Corinth belongs to the church today. On no occasion did Paul or any of the apostles ever write to encourage the people to believe; never did they tell them to have faith. Our having to encourage believers to believe or have faith is a result of the Word of God's having lost its reality to us. We are believers! When our children are away, we don't have to write to them and say, "Be sure to keep breathing." They will continue to breathe as long as they are alive. Neither do we have to encourage believers to believe because that is what they are – believers.

How many of us realize that our words dominate us? "Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth ..." (Proverbs 6:2). Another version says, "Thou art taken captive with the words of thy mouth." A young man once told me that he was never whipped until he confessed that he was whipped. One writer put it this way, "You said you could not, and the moment you said it you were whipped." You said you did not have faith and doubt rose up like a giant and bound you. You are imprisoned with your own words. You talk failure and failure holds you in bondage.

Defeat and failure do not belong to the child of God. God never made a failure. God made us new creatures. We are not born of the will of the flesh or the will of man, but of the will of God. We are created in Christ Jesus. Failures are man-made. They are made by wrong believing and wrong thinking. I John 4:4 says, "... Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." Learn to trust the Greater One that is in you. He is mightier than anything in the world.

God created the universe with words. Words filled with faith are the most powerful things in all the world.

The key to the God kind of faith is believing with the heart and confessing with the mouth. Our lips can make us millionaires or keep us paupers. Our lips can make us victors or keep us captives. We can fill our words with faith or we can fill our words with doubt. We can fill our words with love that will melt the coldest heart, or we can fill our words with hate and poison. We can fill our words with love that will help the discouraged and broken-hearted, with faith that will stir heaven. We can make our words breathe the very atmosphere of heaven.

Our faith will never rise above the words of our lips. Jesus told the woman with the issue of blood that her faith had made her whole. Thoughts may come and they may persist in staying. But if we refuse to put those thoughts into words, they die unborn. Cultivate the habit of thinking big things. Learn to use words that will react upon your own spirit. Faith's confessions create realities. Realization follows the confession. Confession precedes possession.

Actions That Correspond With Faith – Kenneth E. Hagin

Central Truth: The actions of a doer of the Word coincide with his confession.

One of the greatest mistakes many believers make is to confess their faith in the Word of God and at the same time contradict their confession by wrong actions. We say that we are trusting God to provide for our financial needs, but at the same time we are worrying about how we're going to pay our bills. There is no corresponding action there. One minute we confess that the Word of God is true, and the very next moment we repudiate everything we say by wrong actions. Our actions have to correspond with our believing if we are to receive from God.

Faith Made Perfect

James 2:14-22

14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

18 Yea, 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.

19 Thou believest that there is but one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect.

Weymouth's translation of verses 14 and 22 reads, "What good is it my brethren, if a man professes to have faith and yet his actions do not correspond? ... You notice that his faith was cooperating with his actions, and by his actions his faith was perfected."

Some have thought that the Book of James is written about salvation. However, James was not writing to the unsaved, but to believers. He said, "What doth it profit, my brethren ..." He was writing to his brothers and sisters in Christ, pointing out that faith without corresponding actions won't work for them, even though they are believers.

James also said, (James 1:22). Another translation reads, "... deluding your own selves." There are many self-deluded people who blame their problems on the devil or on some individual when really they have deluded themselves. This is because they are not doers of the Word. The actions of a doer of the Word coincide with his confession.

The Storms of Life

Matthew 7:24-27

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

When the storms of life come, we see some people going down. Their problem is that they are not doers of the Word. They are not practicing the teaching of the Word. The same wind and storm came upon both of these houses. The reason one was destroyed and the other wasn't was that the wise man was a doer of the Word and the foolish one wasn't. It isn't the storms of life that defeat us. If the storm defeated us, it would defeat all of us. Some people face a storm and are not defeated. Yet others who face the same storm are destroyed. Those who are not defeated act upon God's Word. The defeated ones may be truly saved, yet their actions do not correspond with their faith.

When the test of sickness comes, some are laid low while others stand their ground and refuse to accept it. The storms of life come upon all of us. They may be sickness, financial difficulty, family problems, or some other test. The winds blow and the floods come, but he who is a doer of the Word will hold fast to his confession of faith, for he knows that God cannot fail.

Many who profess Christ and who declare that they believe the Bible from Genesis to Revelation are not doers of the Word. They are talkers about the Word. There is a difference between talkers about the Word and doers of the Word. They have mentally assented that the Word of God is true, but it doesn't do them any good because they are not making it their own. They are not claiming its promises.

To Trust in the Lord is To Trust in His Word

The way to make God's Word your own is to act upon it. Do what it says. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5). The only way to trust in the Lord is to trust His Word. You cannot trust in the Lord without trusting His Word. God and His Word are one just as you and your word are one. If your word is not good, then you are not good. If God's Word isn't any good, then He isn't any good. But His Word is good and He watches over His Word.

"Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it" (Jeremiah 1:12). Another version reads, "I watch over my word to perform it." If you don't take the Word to be yours, He doesn't have anything to make good in your life. He wants to make it good in your life. He wants you to have what His Word promises. But if you don't act upon His Word, then He doesn't have anything to make good in your life.

When I trust in the Word with all of my heart and stop leaning upon human reasoning and stop looking to people for deliverance, then I have actions that correspond with my faith. My actions are in perfect fellowship with my confession of faith. It has taken some of us a long time to learn this; and it will take others longer because they have been walking in the wrong pathway. Their minds are so cluttered with human reasoning that it will take awhile to renew their minds with the Word of God so they will have actions that correspond with their confession of faith.

Until there are corresponding actions, there will be continual failure in life. I can confess and say that God is the strength of my life. But if at the same time I continue to talk about my weaknesses and lack of faith, I will be defeated because there is no corresponding action. I am resorting to human methods instead of trusting the Lord, and this brings confusion to my spirit. It brings weakness and failure to my life. There is just one thing for us to do and that is to turn to God's Word and act upon His Word.

Our worst enemy is the flesh. The flesh and natural human reasoning would limit us to our own ability. We look to the circumstances, the problems, the tests, and storms and say that we can't. The language of doubt, the flesh, and the senses is "I can't. I haven't the ability, the opportunity, or the strength. I've been limited." But the language of faith says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

Paul didn't say that he could do all things because he was an apostle and had special power or grace. He said, "I can do all things through Christ ..." and we have this same access to Christ. Paul said, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). You are a new creature in Christ too. Christ doesn't belong to Paul any more than He belongs to you.

The language of faith says, "I can do all things through Christ. Our Father strengthens us. I cannot be conquered and I cannot be defeated."

If natural forces come against you, they cannot whip you because there aren't enough natural forces in all the world to conquer Him who dwells within you. "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4). You are fortified from within.

I have learned how to put the Greater One to work for me. Not only am I born of God, a partaker of His love, but I have dwelling in me the spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead. I have God's wisdom, strength, and ability in me. I am learning how to let that wisdom govern my intellect. I am letting him govern my mind and speak through my lips. I am daring to think God's thoughts after

Him. I am daring to say in the presence of all my old enemies, "God is my ability." "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies" (Psalm 23:5). "The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1). God has made me greater than mine enemies. God has made me put my heel on the neck of weakness, fear, and inability.

The strength of God is mine. I am not trusting in my own strength because the Bible doesn't say a word about my being strong. It says that God is my strength. So many people are struggling and trying to do something themselves. They get up to testify and tell everyone to pray for them that they will hold out to the end. But God doesn't want you to hold out like that. He wants you to let Him do it. Wrap yourself in the promises of God.

In 1937 a dirigible that the government had made was being moored in Akron, Ohio. Two hundred men were holding it, to moor it to a steel mast. Suddenly it shot into the air. Some men hung on and went up with it. Some of them fell and broke legs and arms, others were killed. But one man kept hanging on. People watching him on the ground were screaming, knowing that at any minute he would fall to earth and every bone in his body would be broken.

After nearly two hours had passed the dirigible was brought down, was moored to the mast, and the man was rescued. An ambulance was waiting to take him to the hospital, but he said he was all right. When asked how he had held on, he said that he had found about four feet of rope, and while he held to the dirigible with one hand, he tied the rope securely around his waist and it held him. He had been swinging free, enjoying the scenery, while people on the ground had been worrying about him. Isn't this the way many of us are? Trying to hold on and hold out until we give out. We fall, when all we need to do is wrap ourselves in the promises of God and swing free, enjoying the scenery.

I once heard the story of a man walking down the railroad track with a pack on his back. When he came to a section gang repairing the railroad, he thought the foreman was going to tell him to get off the track, so he showed him a ticket which he had. The foreman told him that this didn't give him the right to walk down the track. Many people are like this in that they are on the right track, but they ought to be riding instead of walking. Also, they should check their baggage because they don't have to carry it. The Bible says, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7). The strength of God is ours. The ability of God is ours. Claim it. Act it. Act upon God's Word. If you do, He will go to work for you.

How to Write Your Own Ticket With God – Kenneth E. Hagin

Central Truth: If we find ourselves at the bottom of life's ladder, it is because that is all for which we have believed. When we talk right and believe right, we will climb to the top.

The four steps to faith outlined in this lesson are so simple that they almost seem foolish. But in Jesus' ministry on earth, He talked in terms that even the uneducated could understand. He talked about vineyards and orchards, sheepfolds and shepherds. He illustrated spiritual verities in such a simple way that the common people could understand. His message was never complicated but rather clear and concise.

Mark 5:25-34

25 And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years,

26 And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

27 When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment.

28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

29 And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.

30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

31 And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

32 And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.

33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

34 And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

Step No. 1 – Say It

What is the first thing that this woman did? Verse 28 of the above text says, “For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be made whole.” Someone had told this woman about Jesus. She knew that He was healing people. Having this information, what was her first step in receiving healing for herself? The first thing she did was to say it.

There is a Godward side and a manward side to every battle, every victory, to everything that we receive from God. We have our part to play. There is something that we must do. God is not going to fail. If there is any failure, it has to be on our part. If we see to it that we do our part, then we can be sure that there will be an answer and a victory.

This woman could have made a negative statement or confession instead of a positive one. And that would have been what she would have received. She could have said that there wasn’t any use, that she had suffered so long and been to many doctors. She could have said that perhaps it was best for her to die. But she did not speak negatively. She spoke positively. She said, “If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.” And it came to pass, for we can have what we say.

Therefore, the first step in writing our own ticket with God is to say it. If we are defeated, we are defeated with our own lips. “Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth” (Proverbs 6:2).

Step No. 2 – Do It

It wouldn’t have done this woman any good whatsoever if when she said, “If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole,” she hadn’t acted upon it also. Our actions either defeat us or they put us over. According to our actions, we either receive or are kept from receiving. The woman with the issue of blood said it and she acted upon it. She touched His clothes.

Step No. 3 – Receive It

She felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. Jesus said, "Who touched me?" Jesus knew that virtue, or power, had gone out of Him. The woman first of all said it, she confessed her faith. Then she acted upon that faith and reached out and touched the Master. Then, step number three, she received her healing. She felt in her body that she was healed of the plague.

Notice that the feeling and the healing followed the saying and the acting. Most people want the feeling and the healing first, and then they think they will have the saying and the doing. But it doesn't work that way. You have to have the saying and the doing first. Then you will have the feeling and healing.

Jesus perceived that power had gone out of Him. The whole world has become concerned about the nuclear bombs that have been exploded in the atmosphere because they release radioactive material into the atmosphere-power that cannot be seen or felt, but power that is deadly and dangerous. Yet there is an unseen power at work in the earth that is neither deadly nor dangerous. It is a power that is good, and that power is always present everywhere. This power can deliver from anything that binds or hurts us.

Step No. 4 – Tell It

Verse 33 tells us that the woman with the issue of blood acknowledged what she had done. She "told him all the truth." Jesus wants us to tell it so that others might receive.

The first step in writing our own ticket is to say it; the fourth step is to tell it. There is a difference. At first the woman said what she believed. Then she told what had happened. We have to say some things in faith before we ever receive them from God. People say the wrong thing because they believe the wrong thing. When they start believing the right thing and saying the right thing, then that is what they will have.

I Samuel 17:45-47, 49, 50, 54

45 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

46 This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

47 And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with the sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands.

49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him ...

54 And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem ...

When David slew the giant with his shepherd's sling, he knew he could write his own ticket with God. He knew that God would do anything he said. And in the above verses we see how David used these four steps to write his own ticket with God.

First, he said it. "This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand ..." (verse 46). David had faith, not in his own strength, but in the strength of his God. David knew that in his own might he was powerless against this Philistine. But he was not trusting in his own might. He was trusting in the Lord.

Then David acted upon his faith. "And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth" (verse 49). If David had been led by his natural senses, if he had listened to human reasoning, he would have known that it would be impossible to kill a giant with a shepherd's sling. But he was tuned to the inner voice of faith, not the outer voice of human reasoning. And the victory was his. He received victory for the Israelites over their enemies the Philistines.

Then David took step number four, and news of the day's great victory was published throughout the land. "And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem ..." (verse 54).

Too few people today know that they can write their own ticket with God. The reason God hasn't done any more for them is that they haven't said more. They haven't acted more. All they have today is the result of what they said yesterday. If you are at the bottom of the ladder, it is because that is all you have believed for. If you will talk right and believe right, you will climb to the top.

Can the sinner use these four steps to write his own ticket with God? Can the sinner take these four steps to salvation?

Luke 15:18-20, 24

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

In the story which Jesus told of the prodigal son, we see that the first thing which the son did was to say it. "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him ..." (verse 18). He confessed his faith and his need. Then he acted. "And he arose, and came to his father" (verse 20). He didn't sit around wondering what kind of reception he might get at home. He picked himself up from the squalor of his sinful life and returned home.

When he did so, he received full pardon and was restored to his father. "... His father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (verse 20). The rejoicing father was

quick to tell the good news that his wandering son had come home. "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found" (verse 24).

If those who are out of fellowship with God the father will humble themselves as did the prodigal son and take these four simple steps to salvation, God will run to meet them too and bring them into full fellowship with Him.

Doubt, Thief of God's Greater Blessings – Kenneth E. Hagin

Central Truth: Doubt will rob the believer of God's best for his life.

We have studied the memory verse in Mark 11:23 from a positive point of view in previous lessons, looking at the various ingredients to a perfect faith in God. In today's lesson we will concentrate on the phrase, "and shall not doubt in his heart," looking at some examples of doubt which we find in familiar Bible stories.

Faith To Walk on Water

Matthew 14:22-31

22 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come ..into thee on the water.

29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

In this story Jesus sent His disciples across the sea while He went alone to a mountain to pray. In the fourth watch of the night (between four and six o'clock the next morning) the disciples saw Jesus walking toward them on the water. Thinking they were seeing a ghost, they cried out with fear. Then Jesus spoke reassuringly, "It is I, be not afraid."

Impetuous Peter shouted, "Lord, if it is really you, then bid me come to you on the water."

Jesus answered with one word, "Come."

Peter started out in faith and as long as he kept his eyes on Jesus he did just fine. But when he took his eyes off Jesus and looked at the circumstances surrounding him, when he saw the wind whipping the sea about him, he became afraid and began to sink. "Lord, save me!" he called to Jesus.

Jesus took Peter's hand in His and led him safely back into the ship, after rebuking him with the words, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Faith is acting upon the Word of God. Jesus had said, "Come." and as long as Peter acted upon that word, he was all right. But when he began to doubt, when he quit acting on the words of Jesus, he began to sink. Doubt robbed him of the best that God had for him. Jesus didn't intend that Peter should sink. He meant for Peter to walk back to the ship with Him. But doubt robbed Peter of this blessing.

Peter became afraid and doubted. Doubt and fear go hand in hand, but faith and love go hand in hand. "Perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18).

Faith To Cast Out Devils

Matthew 17:14-20

14 And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying,

15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

17 Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?

20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

In the above passage of scripture, what was Jesus' explanation for the disciples' failure to heal the demon-possessed boy? (It was because of their doubt, or unbelief – verse 20.)

But did the disciples actually have the power to cast the demon out? The answer to this question is found in Matthew 10:1, "And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease."

How often do we hear Christians say that they need more power in order to do more for God. However, that is not the trouble at all. If they have the Holy Spirit, they have the power. They think that if they had more power, it would work automatically; but it works by faith. The problem is a lack of faith, not a lack of power. It is doubt that is robbing them of God's best. Jesus didn't tell these disciples that they couldn't cast out the devil because they didn't have the power. He said, "Because of your unbelief."

How much faith does it take to cast out demons? Jesus said in the above passage that faith no bigger than a grain of mustard seed could move an entire mountain. Every Spirit-filled believer has within him enough power to claim God's very best for his life. If he is living beneath his privileges, it is not because of a lack of power but because of a failure to release that power through faith.

Faith To Still a Storm

Mark 4:35-40

35 And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.

36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.

37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

In the evening after a full day of preaching to the multitudes that thronged Him Jesus told His disciples gathered about Him in a boat, "Let us pass over unto the other side." As He was very weary, He went to the back of the ship where He promptly fell asleep. In a sound sleep, He was oblivious to the storm that arose. As the waves pounded the little ship, Jesus continued to sleep peacefully. But His disciples were anything but peaceful. As the howling winds grew more vicious and their boat filled with water, threatening to capsize, the disciples ran to Jesus, awakened Him and said, "Don't you even care that our boat's about to sink and we'll all die?" They had forgotten Christ's words as they started out on their journey, "Let us pass over unto the other side."

Jesus stood, rebuked the wind, and stilled the storm until the sea was once again calm and peaceful. Then He turned to His disciples and rebuked them. "Why did you doubt me? Why are you so full of fear? Where is your faith? Didn't I tell you at the outset of this journey that we would cross to the other side? Why didn't you believe me?" The disciples had allowed doubt and fear to come into their hearts, driving out faith in Christ's promise that they would make it safely to the other side. Once again the thief called Doubt had triumphed.

Let us look at these three Biblical illustrations and notice the similarities in each. Point out the scriptures in each one in which Christ rebuked the disciples for their unbelief (Matthew 14:31; 17:20; Mark 4:40).

In each instance Jesus solved the problem which the disciples, through their lack of faith, had failed to solve. Point out the scripture in each story in which Jesus brought the deliverance that was necessary (Matthew 14:31; 17:18; Mark 4:39).

In every instance the disciples possessed the power to handle each circumstance. Peter had the power to walk on water, as evidenced in the fact that he started out walking on the water and began to sink only when he became fearful and began to doubt. The disciples had the power to deliver the demon-possessed boy, but failed only because of their lack of faith. The disciples had the power to

still the storm which threatened their lives, for Jesus had promised that they would “pass over unto the other side.”

In every instance that thief of doubt kept the disciples from receiving God’s best for them. His highest and best for their lives was for them to receive by their faith. If we will but utilize the power that is within us and act on God’s Word, we will achieve God’s greatest blessings that He has planned for our lives.

Memory Text: “For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he wisheth” (Mark 11:23)

Faith in Action: “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22)