

A Shadow of a Doubt

Acts 5:15-16- “Insomuch that the people were bringing out the sick into the streets and putting them on beds and stretchers, so that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. And a multitude from the cities round about also came together to Jerusalem, bringing sick ones and those beset by unclean spirits; and they were all healed.”

I was always astonished by that scripture. I still marvel at how Peter’s very shadow passed by someone and they were healed. How is this even remotely possible?

What healed these people? Why don’t we see these things today? I often thought it was an overflow of God’s Holy Spirit that simply flooded over these people seeking God for a miracle. True, it is the power of God’s Holy Spirit that heals flesh, cures disease and raises the dead. But there is another element that must be present for these miracles to occur, *faith*. Faith is the apparent conduit that links the believer into the power outlet of God’s healing touch. Just as a side note, “to cast a shadow” is an idiom that means to fill a place with sadness or grief. This was hardly the case in Peter’s shadow or in some of the uses in God’s word (**Psa. 91:1-2**)

Matt. 9:28-29- “And after coming into the house, the blind *men* came to Him; and Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I have the power to do this?” They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.” Then He touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith be it to you.”

Matt. 8:2-3- “And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, if You will, You have the power to cleanse me.” Then Jesus stretched out *His* hand *and* touched him, saying, “I will. Be cleansed.” And immediately *he was* cleansed *from* his leprosy.”

Matt. 9:20-22- “And behold, a woman who had been *afflicted* with a flow of blood *for* twelve years, after coming behind *Him*, touched the hem of His garment. For she said within herself, “If only I shall touch His garment, I shall be healed.” But Jesus turned; and seeing the woman, He said to her, “Be of good courage, daughter; your faith has made you whole.” And from that hour the woman was healed.” (Also, the faith of the centurion in **Matthew 8:5-13**).

These people were intently seeking God. Seeking His power. They had the faith to push through their circumstances, pushing through a crowd or chopping a hole in a roof lowering someone down on a stretcher (**Matt. 9:2-8, Mark 2:1-12, Luke**

5:17-26). They *knew* beyond a shadow of a doubt, if they could just get through their prayers would be answered. That is unwavering faith. This unquestionable, undoubting faith is the connection.

Doubt = Weak Faith

I'm sure the whispers of doubt from the enemy are a constant annoyance to all of us in our prayer life. "Hear my voice, O God, in my complaint; preserve my life from fear of the enemy."- **Psalm 64:1**.

"Oh, He won't hear that..." or "What will everyone think if you pray like that? They'll think you're crazy." "We are fools for the sake of Christ, but you *are* wise in Christ; we *are* weak, but you *are* strong; you *are* glorious, but we *are* without honor."- **1 Cor. 4:10**. "So that your faith might not be in *the* wisdom of men, but in *the* power of God."-**1 Cor. 2:5**.

Planting the seed of doubt and a little fear of ridicule will lead to halfhearted prayers, which we've discussed several times in the past. We must approach the throne room of God with *confidence* and *faith* in Him, His Word and who we are in Him (**Eph. 3:11-12, Phil.1:20, Heb. 4:16**). Notice I said confidence and not cockiness. We have the Word of God and Jesus Christ as our intercessor. We know that God hears those that are in the faith. God measures our faith based on what we do, our obedience. So, just as God knew the depth of Abraham's faith by his

obedience, we can know the deepness level of our faith by our obedience. Are we being obedient? In every aspect of life according to God's Word?

“Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not Yourself from my supplication.

Attend to me, and answer me; I am distraught in my trouble and moan in

my complaint”-**Psalm 55:1** We all want our prayers to be heard and how do we

know for sure if we are praying the right thing or in the right way? An interesting

part of the Psalm above is supplication. The on-line dictionary defines

“supplication” is “the *action* of asking or begging for something earnestly or

humbly.” When we talk to God, do we give a laundry list of wants or treat Him

like a genie in a bottle?

We often add a caveat to our prayers, “if it is Your will.” Is this a set up in case the

prayer isn't answered? Well guess what? Everything is God's will and we walk in

His will if remember a few simple characteristics of our walk.

1. Righteousness (**Gen. 15:6, Psa. 119:172**)
2. Faith (**Prov. 3:5, Heb. 11:6, 10:38**)
3. Integrity (**Prov. 11:3, 20:7**)
4. Humility (**Prov. 15:33, Micah 6:8, Matt. 11:29, Gal. 6:3**)
5. Commitment (**Psa. 37:5, Rom. 12:1**)

We may not always receive what we pray for but it will always be God's will and for our best interest and well-being.

Sometimes it's almost as if we accept defeat before the battle begins even though the war has already been won (**John 16:33**). By doubting His hearing our prayers, we tend to limit an outcome of a situation by minimizing God or His intervention.

Psalm 78:41- "And still again they tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel." Is this due to a lack of faith or a lack of trust in God?

We are a vessel for God's Holy Spirit. We have His Spirit in us at baptism (**Acts 1:5, 8**). We have access to the same power as was given to the Disciples. To use it as effective as they did, we must walk as they did, all to the glory of God in the name of Jesus.

Matt. 17:20. And Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief. For truly I say to you, if you have faith as a *tiny* mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, 'Remove from here,' and it shall remove; and *nothing* shall be impossible to you. (**Luke 8:25, 1 Cor. 2:5, Eph. 2:8**)

Matt. 21:19-22- "And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came *up* to it, but found nothing on it except leaves only. And He said to it, "Let there never again be fruit from you forever." And immediately the fig tree dried up. And after seeing *it*, the disciples were amazed, saying, "How quickly the fig tree has dried up!" Then Jesus

answered *and* said to them, “Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only shall you do the *miracle* of the fig tree, but even if you shall say to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ it shall come to pass. And everything that you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.”

(Luke 9:41)

Trials and Faith

We should all know by now, that God uses trials to test and increase our faith.

2 Thess. 1:4-5- “So that we ourselves are boasting about you in the churches of God because of your endurance and faith in all your persecutions, and in the tribulations that you are bearing. *Your faith and endurance are* a visible testimony of the righteous judgment of God, so that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering.” These tests and trials that may seem endless from time to time are developing the character God wants to see in us.

They definitely have a tendency to squeeze the flesh right out of us. “Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But let endurance have *its* perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, not lacking in anything.”- **James**

1:3-4.

Not just Faith Alone

While we endure tests and trials, hopefully at the same time, we are developing additional traits and characteristics that align us with God's will. There is a totality of "elements" if you will, that will increase our faith and the effectiveness of our prayers. "However, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, Who gives to everyone freely and does not reproach *the one who asks*; and it shall be given to him. But let him ask *in faith, not doubting* at all because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*. Do not let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord. *He is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."- **James 1:5-8**. To doubt our God and lack faith in our prayers is like trying to skateboard wearing roller-skates. "And for this very reason also, having applied all diligence besides, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; And to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, endurance; and to endurance, godliness; And to godliness, brotherly love; and to brotherly love, the love *of God*. For *if* these things exist and abound in you, they *will* cause *you to be* neither lacking effort nor lacking fruit in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."- **2 Peter 1:5-8**. We strive to develop the fruits of the Spirit and walk in the Spirit (**Gal. 5:22-25**). Love being the most important (**1 Cor. 13:1-3**). "Without fail, we remember your work of faith, and *your* labor of love, and

your endurance in *the* hope of our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;”-

1 Thess. 1:3.

The Faith and Power of Jesus

Something else that puzzles me is how can so many Christians miss the message Jesus actually preached? Jesus never preached “Jesus.” “Therefore, Jesus answered and said to them, “Truly, truly I say to you, the Son has no power to do anything of Himself, but only what He sees the Father do. For whatever He does, these things the Son also does in the same manner.”- **John 5:19**. He never boasted on Himself during His ministry, until **Matt. 28:18** and He wasn’t boasting even then. “I have no power to do anything of Myself; but as I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father, Who sent Me.”- **John 5:30**. They’re focused more on the messenger than His message.

So why don’t we see such miracles nowadays? Was Jesus leading us on when he said, “Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me shall also do the works that I do; and greater works than these shall he do because I am going to the Father. And whatever you shall ask in My name, this will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”- **John 14:12-14?**

I believe these times lie just ahead. They will occur just as Jesus said they would. If we truly desire to witness the Hand of God move in mighty ways, we can do no less than the servants who have gone before us. Remember who we are! “Because you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”- **Gal. 3:26**

BL-10/23/21