



Another Side of Faith

When it seems that God is a million miles away and there are no answers to your prayers - then you just may be walking on the other side of faith

By
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The Other Side of Faith

Many times a conversation about faith begins with quoting Hebrews 11:1, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Then we try to define substance and what faith is made of, etc., etc. Eventually we work around to talking about faith to move mountains and do great exploits.

Often we speak of faith in terms of achieving or accomplishing. We speak of faith to move mountains, heal and deliver. We speak of faith that releases the blessing of God. We sometimes even equate faith with spirituality; if it achieves results that are measured by a list of objectives we have accomplished, then we are spiritual.

But there is another side of faith. That is the side that a missionary family faces when they have given all, including their lives, and seen very little in the way of measurable results. It is the side of faith that is faced by

parents who continually take their child to God in prayer only to get the eventual news that they were cut down in the prime of life by a violent act. It is the side of faith a victim of a terminal illness faces when there is no physical healing.

In Hebrews 11:36-39 the writer addresses this issue with the report, “Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.” *Then he says, “***These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised.***”*

What is this faith...

What is this faith that does not seem to deliver? What is this faith that promises and does not produce? What is this faith that calls men and women to a commitment that may lead to death, then stands back and releases them to the most hideous of torture?

It is the Faith that...

It is the faith that leads to eternal life. It is the faith that holds on to a promise that may only have eternal significance, until holding on goes beyond human reason. It is the faith that stands in the face of spiritual powers in the highest places and cries out as Job, “ Even if God slays me I will trust Him.”

It is the kind of faith that stands in front of the fiery furnace and says, “O King, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us; and even if he doesn’t we will not bow to you.”

It is the faith of men and women whose commitment goes beyond the scope of rational human endurance. It is the faith of people who have caught a glimpse of something greater than human potential and have tied their eternal destiny to it.

It is the faith of Joni Erickson Tada. Joni was just a teenager when an accident left her a paraplegic. After years of doctors and prayer she is still paralyzed. Now she has a wonderful ministry spreading faith and hope; She lives in faith and is a paraplegic.

It is the Faith of Polycarp, a Bishop in the early Church, who was tied to a stake to be burned and ordered to recant his faith in Christ. He responded, “I have served God for

80 years and he has never failed me, I will not fail him now.” Then they burned him.

Read these accounts of this kind of faith:

- Acts 1—This faith drove them to the upper room:

"On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John Baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."... Then they returned to Jerusalem... When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying.... They all joined together constantly in prayer" (Acts 1:14)

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- Acts 2—This faith opened the door to Pentecostal outpouring:

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. " (Acts 2:1-2)

- Acts 3 and 4—This faith healed the lame man and began the first persecution of the church:
 - They were threatened and commanded not to preach or do miracles in Jesus name.
 - They returned to their people, reported what they had been told, and then went to prayer for boldness to keep preaching.

- Acts 5—This faith drew crowds, and many were healed; it caused the Jewish elders to become jealous and the second persecution of the church began.
 - The apostles were jailed and the Angel of God set them free
 - They apostles were jailed again and beaten

- Acts 7—This faith caused Stephen, a deacon in the church, to proclaim the Gospel in such a radical way that the leaders took him and stoned him. This act of faith resulted in another, greater persecution; jailing, beating, and other mistreatment broke out against the believers and scattered them

Notice this: Wherever this faith is proclaimed with conviction and commitment there is Revival, Riot and Rejection—but the lives of people are changed by it.

The move of God in Acts 6 and seven came as the result of Stephen, a **common worker in the church**—not an Apostle. The move of God in Samaria in Chapter 8 came as a result of Philip, a **common worker in the church**—not an Apostle. The Christian Church in Ethiopia began when Philip, led by God, ministered the message of Jesus Christ to the treasurer of Candace, the queen of Ethiopia. Did he receive some great reward for this faith? Did he receive acclaim? No! He was simply caught up by the spirit and taken to his next revival.

The message here is that God doesn't need, or even particularly want, men of renown to do the work of ministry, he just needs people who will commit themselves and their faith to serving him. He needs people who will not determine the direction of the wind before they commit their resources. He is looking for people who will walk their talk without regard for themselves; people who are committed with a passion and will not allow any obstacle to prevent them from their commitment to the task.

Notice the pattern that the Early Disciples faced:

1. They saw the move of God. It was said that, “These men have turned the city upside down.” This move of God was followed by persecution.
2. As persecution scattered them, moving them outside of Jerusalem, it was said, “These men have turned the country upside down.” This move of God was followed by persecution.
3. As the Holy Spirit guided them out into the entire world it was said, “These men have turned the world upside down.” This move of God was also followed by persecution.
4. **This pattern has not changed;** Where there is revival it is often not understood and accepted by the established church—but revival will always bring changed lives.

The Faith of the Apostles often placed them in peril, left them robbed, thrown to the lions, hungry, destitute of this worlds goods... Then Paul wrote from a Roman prison, “It is not I that lives but Christ in me... I can endure all things through Christ who strengthens me!” Faith does not always produce the answer we desire but it will always produce an effect in the world.

Today I want to challenge you: Do not let your faith be measured by results others can see. Let your faith be demonstrated by your faithfulness.

- Job’s wife said, “Curse God and die.” Job responded; “Though God slay me yet will I trust.”
- The Three Hebrew Children: “Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the fiery furnace, *but even if he doesn’t*, we will not bow.”
- Moses in Hebrews 11:25— “He *chose* to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time.”

What am I saying today? Faith does not always deliver the way we think it should, but God will always be faithful to His divine plan.

I have seen God do some marvelous things. Once God healed an entire family of HIV infection. I have seen God heal cancer, Hepatitis C and many other diseases. I have seen the lives of people who were miraculously healed become mighty for God. Faith is a marvelous vehicle for conveying the will of God, but sometimes faith delivers more than healing or deliverance; sometimes it gives us patience and perseverance.

Joyce had moved to California from the mid-west. She fell into a life of drugs and everything that went along with it. After a time her children were taken by Child Protective Services because of her lifestyle. It was about that time we met her. I remember going to court with her and seeing her disappointment as she was told that it would be at least another six months, and maybe the children would be put up for adoption and she would never get them back.

On the way home Joyce began to talk discouraged. She said things like, "What's the

use. I had just as well go back to using drugs for all that being clean and sober has done." As we talked Joyce began to realize that the greater part of faith is not faith to get her children back, but faith to live right even if she never got her children back. From that day Joyce began to grow in her faith. Oh yes, in time she did get her children and by that time she had her own house and could provide for them.

Kim's story is a little different. When her children were small one of them had a physical condition that prevented his body from developing properly. She was accused of mistreating the child and Child Protective Services concluded that she was abusing him by not feeding him and took him from her. Then they took her other children for their protection. That was over seven years ago, and she is still fighting that battle. She has gotten one child back and two have been adopted. In the middle of this battle Kim found the Lord. She has labored in faith for what many have seen as a losing battle, yet, in faith she fights on.

We have seen healings, miracles of deliverance and families restored and you probably have too—but my question is this; If

God doesn't do more for you than he already has, will your faith and commitment to him carry you on through the hard times you will face ahead? Do you have the faith to stay with God even when you don't see the victories you desire?

We don't know what the future holds. I don't have a crystal ball and you don't have a crystal ball. All we have is the Word of God and the experience we have with him based on his word. The future may not be rosy in the natural sense, but we have hope through the spirit that whatever comes it is not even worthy to comparing to what lies ahead for us.

Many years ago I was preaching a revival several hundred miles from home when I got a phone call from my pastor's wife. She said my dad had been taken to the hospital and was not expected to live. I went immediately to the room where I was staying and began to pray. After about two hours I felt impressed that he was not going to be healed. When I had finished praying, feeling alone and a little desperate, I reached for a small promise box on the nightstand beside the bed. I drew a card out that had these words on it, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present are not worthy to be compared with the glory that

shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). That night I began to learn about another side of faith.

Faith is not always measured by what we accomplish, but sometimes the greatest measure of faith is what we are able to endure and still remain faithful.

As you grow in faith and your walk with God I can tell you that it will be hard, but not as hard as walking without faith. I can tell you that you will loose some things, but you will gain much more.

I look at some sick people and tell them, "God can heal" and God does heal—but will they be healed? Sometimes I know that as sure as stand before them that they will be healed, other times I just don't know. Sometimes they are healed and sometimes they are not.

I look at some people who have family that are not living right and I tell them, "God can restore your family." Sometimes I know that he will, and sometimes I just don't know what is going to happen.

I look at some families whose lifestyle has caused Child Protective Services to take their children and I say, "God can get your children back." Sometimes I know that he will, and sometimes I just don't know. Sometimes when I thought for sure he would, it doesn't happen.

So what am I saying by all this? I'm saying God knows his purposes; he sees the end from the beginning; he sees the big picture. In the long run he knows what is best, even when we can't see anything but bad coming out of a situation God is working it out for our ultimate benefit.

Another promise I found in Romans 8 goes like this, "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (verse 28). When you are in the middle of a trying situation remember that God is looking at the whole picture, not just the micro-view that we have. Also remember he is working out the circumstances of our lives so that not only will his purposes be accomplished, but also that we will ultimately benefit.

So what is the answer? Hold on to God—don't turn loose, *ever!* Keep the faith. Dying in faith is immeasurably better than dying

without faith. You might ask, "What if I don't receive my healing?" The answer: Hold on to God- Don't turn loose, *ever!* Some are thinking, "But my family is so divided and far from God. What if I die and they are not brought back to him?" The answer: Hold on to God- Don't turn loose, *ever!*

The same person who wrote, "These (those who had died while believing) were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised," (Hebrews 11:39) also wrote, "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure" (Hebrews 6:19). It is the hope that God has placed in us that takes us through the most devastating of circumstances.

I remember watching "The Apostle," a movie portraying the life of an evangelist/pastor whose wife was having an affair. There was a scene where he was in his mother's house and he was angry with God. He was shaking his fist at heaven and crying out, "Why?" At this scene I began to weep because I remembered being in the same circumstance, in my mother's house, shaking my fist at God and crying, "Why?" At that time God didn't seem real. I felt that everything I had trusted in had failed. I felt rejected by God and alone.

Yet, in the middle of this trying time there was something anchored in my soul that kept pulling me along until finally I came stumbling out of the night of trial into the light of a new day.

The kingdom needs firebrands who will come in, shake things up and make things happen. It needs people with gifts and talents that can seemingly take a few loaves and fishes and multiply them into food for thousands. But for every one of those in the kingdom there are hundreds, and maybe even thousands, just like you and me; People who go through many trials and sometimes an early death, yet who remain faithful through the challenges and never give up. The kingdom of God needs men, women and children who will connect with the hope of eternal life and commit their earthly life to him without reservation.

Today I'm not talking about just another thing to try; I'm not talking about a short-term fix for the present crisis; I'm not talking about a fire-escape religion— I'm talking about a faith that will carry you through tragedy and disappointment. I'm talking about a faith that will carry you through this life into eternity.

This is the question that we have been leading up to: What is your faith about? Is it

about getting what you want and forget the rest? Is it about serving God until his will gets in conflict with your will and then turn away? Is it about going back into the life of inadequate supply that sin offered if your faith doesn't produce what you want in the in the time frame you set up?

Remember this: Whatever you face as you walk with Christ; the worst it gets as a believer can never be compared to as bad as it is without him. We are not to compare ourselves to the world and what it has achieved. We are not even to compare ourselves to others in the faith who seem to have achieved greatness and accumulated much. At the close of the day all that is going to be asked of us is that we have been faithful.