

The Working Of Our Faith

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And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18)

Most of us spend our entire lives trying to understand how faith works, but few of us ever do. Too frequently we fail to develop the necessary stamina within our characters to make the kind of stand on God's Word to win over the problem.

In my own life, I have found that praying in the Holy Ghost is one of the most beneficial things I can do to develop the "staying power" in my character that God needs to move on my problem. God needs a certain amount of cooperation from my soul realm; He needs the kind of faith from me that He can use to sustain me while He works out a permanent solution to my problem. Hebrews 11:1 says, Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

The difficulty with hope is that it is a product of the soul, and is usually developed by the forces at work there, such as our mind, our will, our intellect, and our emotions. For instance, when the economy is doing well, we have a hope of prospering, and we may even go out and buy a new car. Or, as another example, we may receive hope from a doctor pointing to an X-ray that indicates everything is going to be alright.

So, for the most part, our hope is based on our natural circumstances, on what we see, hear, smell, or taste. Unfortunately, though, "natural" hope, which is built on the circumstantial evidence that surrounds us, is not the kind of hope that faith can bring substance to. In order to have the kind of hope that produces God-pleasing faith, we must enter into a new arena, establishing our hope in God's Word, and in His Word ALONE.

One of the main attributes of hope is that it submits itself to whatever it is subjected to the most. This may be hours of violence on TV or the continual badgering of financial reports. It may even be the ominous silence of an X-ray that states with certainty we are going to die.

However, the hope that is in the soul realm will also conform itself to the Word of God if we give the same diligence to the Word as a "couch potato" gives to the television. Let's say we spent six hours a day reading the Word of God or praying in the Holy Ghost, we would eventually transform our hope to God's way of thinking. If faith is ever going to be able to put substance to our hope, our hope must be programmed by the Word of God and not by daily circumstances.

To help you understand the fight of faith a little better, I am going to create a hypothetical situation, one that seems absolutely hopeless because it has no natural solution outside of God's grace. Let us use this situation to better understand the kind of faith the elders of the Bible obtained. According to the 11th chapter of Hebrews, they received a good report, by faith, and had a testimony that pleased God. No matter how bad the problem, the elders remembered that THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE, and so must we!

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

For by it the elders obtained a good report.

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 11:1-3

But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. Hebrews 11:6,7

Looking in verses 1 and 2, Paul says the elders obtained a good report by faith. Then in verse 3, he tells us just how they had obtained it: **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.**

Now, traditionally, I know most of us have believed this verse is speaking about God as He sat on the edge of the void, filled His Words with faith, and spoke the worlds into existence. That sounds very nice, however, the subject here is really the faith of the early saints.

The word for worlds as used in this verse is not "cosmos," meaning the celestial bodies or planets that fill our universe, but it is the word for "generations." It refers to the generations that men like Noah and Moses lived in. These men put such incredible faith on display that they changed the worlds they lived in. Moses' faith so shook his world that God said in Romans 9:17: **For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.**

Now we can begin to understand the second half of the third verse in Hebrews 11 when Paul said that things that are seen were not made of things that just appear. The things that appear are a by-product of faith, the same kind the elders' possessed.

Noah's ark existed in his heart long before it was ever finished or seen by man. It was a product of Noah's faith in the truth of God's Word as was spoken to him. First, God conceived of the ark, then spoke His desires to Noah's heart. Through Noah's faith, it appeared.

Let's pause here for a moment and turn to my analogy of a hopeless situation. And remember, my intention is to give hope, not to take it away. But let's just say, for the sake of teaching, that I have a son that is diagnosed with an incurable, genetic defect. The doctors have given me no hope at all. Other parents in various support groups are without hope as well. Medical science states that there has never been a documented case of recovery from this birth defect, and the genetic specialists say, "Maybe one day we can alter the DNA structure that causes this defect, but for now, we're afraid there is nothing you can do."

I am faced with a hopeless situation. In essence, I am the parent of a disabled son born into a world where there is no hope. Then one day I hear the message of divine healing. For the next few years, in desperation, I take my child to every "healing meeting" in the country. I take him from one healing evangelist to another until I finally lose hope again. Nothing has

changed. The expression on my boy's face remains the same. I can see no difference.

For the years that follow, I console myself with a false doctrine that says this is God's will. In His sovereignty, in His divine providence, He has allowed this infirmity in my son. I begin to think, *If it had not been for my son's disability, maybe I would never have been saved. Perhaps God is trying to teach my son and me the deeper meanings of love that can only come from pain and suffering. After all, isn't it better to go to Heaven, no matter what the cost, than to not go at all?*

I continue to console myself with these thoughts, and then one day I come into contact with a deeper message of faith. By this time, my son is 16 years old and my new teachers of faith insist that I have a covenant with God. They look me square in the eyes and say not only will God heal my son, but his healing was accomplished 2,000 years ago and his provision has already been made through Christ.

I question them thoroughly and point to my boy to make sure they understand how serious the situation is. With an aching heart I ask, "Are you sure that God's healing is for everyone, even my son?"

The teachers all respond, "If you have enough faith, all things are possible."

So for the next few years, I do what I have been taught to do, and that is to confess that my son is healed. When anyone asks, I try to keep my eyes off the problem and fixed on the Word of God. But I begin to notice that all the major "faith" churches I visit also have children with twisted, little limbs. They also have children (some of them born to parents while attending these churches) suffering from the same genetic disorder as my son. Their children, as well as my son, are now teenagers living in the same, heartbreaking condition.

I have begun to lose hope again. But I decide, before I give up forever, that I should take a look at the Word for myself and find out what it says. To my amazement, I find that what I have been told by the faith teachers is true! I discover that the finished work of Jesus Christ not only provided forgiveness of sin, but also healing for my son!

But here is where the problem comes in. Most people will only go along with something as long as it is beneficial to them in their sense realm. Whenever there is a real cost involved, they will flow along the tide of least resistance.

In order for me to believe and contend for my son's healing, I have to understand that not many people are going to hold my hand through the ordeal. Realizing this, I make a decision to get on with the fight and the first verse that really comes alive in me is Hebrews 11:6, which says, **But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.**

Whenever we approach God with a need, the first thing we must establish is that God Is! Only an all-powerful God can bring about the necessary miracle. Secondly, we must believe that He Is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him. If we believe that He Is and that He Is indeed a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him, we will have the stamina and confidence to give ourselves completely over to diligently seeking Him for our miracle.

To come to God believing that He Is is to believe He is the God of our inheritance, that He has sovereignly provided healing for everyone who will attain to it by faith. God is not a man that He should lie, and He has exalted His Word above His name. If we do not get this truth established on the inside, we will never have what it takes to get a miracle over to our souls. God is unreservedly not a respecter of persons, and the healing of my child—and everyone else's child—was provided for over 2,000 years ago.

So, I have to believe God's Word to be true or I will not have the stamina needed to diligently seek Him for the reward of my son's miracle. If I establish Hebrews 11:6 as fact, then I will be ready for whatever kind of battle may follow.

Let's say my son is now approaching 20 years of age, and my senses are absolutely worn out again. I have seen his condition for 24 hours a day, which has saturated my soul more than the truth of God's Word. I have not been encouraged by other believers and have lived with the reality of this situation 24 hours a day for the past 20 years. My emotions have been beaten down and all I know is that I cannot see any solution.

Here is the part of the fight of faith that most of us do not understand. The reason so few of these "major" kind of miracles exist is because the natural, physical evidence is so overwhelming. In cases having long, unchanging histories, we generally submit to the belief that the problem is too insurmountable, and does not have an answer. Very few believers have the dedication to birth this type of miracle by faith. We do not understand that sometimes it takes a few years to establish faith in a situation where hope has been absolutely destroyed.

Let me explain how the truth in Ephesians 5:17-20 connects to this problem: **Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

As born-again believers who have received an inheritance from our Father, we have no trouble understanding God's will for my hypothetical situation. We know that it is His will to heal every person, yet we battle our emotions and are challenged by unbelief. That is why verse 18 tells us, **and be not drunk on wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the spirit.**

Paul was saying that when we encounter an insurmountable situation, we are not to do as the world does, or believe what the world believes. Some people resort to the intoxication found in alcohol or medicinal drugs to deaden or dull their senses in order to cope with life. They become so numb to their situations that the circumstances can no longer overwhelm them.

God's alternative to this numbing or running from the pain of a problem is to be filled with the Spirit. And Paul would not tell us to be filled with the Spirit without going on to tell us how. The 19th verse is the answer. It says, **Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.**

Paul used the example of being drunk to excess on wine as an exact opposite to how we

should be filled with the Spirit. He was showing us that, instead of subjecting our emotions and senses to alcohol in order to cope, we need to subject our senses and emotions to God—**BY BECOMING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT AND COMING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF WHAT GOD HAS SAID ABOUT THE PROBLEM!** This is what will counteract 20 years of sense-ruled programming that says there is no hope.

You may say, "Brother Roberson, what would you really do if your son was born with an incurable, genetic defect?"

This is what I would like to think I would do if faced with a problem that could cost part of my life. I do believe in God's love, and I believe that God's love coupled with my love for a brother, sister, father, mother, son, daughter, husband, or wife would be enough to cause me to do whatever is necessary to receive the needed miracle.

I would begin by reaching the place where I am willing to subject my senses continually to the Word that pertains to my problem. I would do this until my hope is turned to God and is able to receive faith for my miracle. I do not know how long this would take, but in a case like this, time is irrelevant. My old self would have to die to everything except receiving the needed miracle. My spirit man would have to know that I am in this for the duration. I would have to know my battle is with the conforming of the hope in my soul to God's Word and not with God.

I would not care about the obstacles that lie ahead; instead, I would report to my prayer closet every day for as long and as much as I could. There I would learn how to minister to my heart—my own soul—with psalms that talk about my boy's healing, with hymns that sing the praises of God Who has already healed my son, and with spiritual songs that embody my confession. I would do this hour after hour after hour after hour. I would call Jesus my boy's healer thousands upon thousands of times until my soul begins to believe it. Against all odds, against all past experiences, I would continue until God, through my faith, is able to give my boy back to me totally healed.

If I had a big, expensive house and needed more time to pray, the house would become nothing to me. I would want my boy's healing so much that I would sell the house, rent a small apartment for my wife and son, and use the extra money to buy groceries as needed while I continued in the battle. That is what I would do.

What price can be put on freeing a human being from an imposed bondage? Are children to blame for diseases that turn their bodies into prisons? No! The enemy of mankind is responsible. He is the problem-causer. He is the one who comes to kill, steal, and destroy.

As human beings, we are the objects of God's love, and we are Satan's targets for pain and destruction. God has provided the means for the resolution of all the problems we encounter. If we—or our family or friends—have a problem that seems insurmountable, we can change it by following God's instructions as outlined in this letter. Is anything too much to give if we are motivated by love? **GOD DOES EXIST, HE IS THE GREAT I AM, AND HE WILL REWARD US IF WE DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM.**