

The Promise of Answered Prayer Part 3

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Isaiah 30:19

For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; You shall weep no more. He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry; When He hears it, He will answer you.

We have purposely dealt with only this one aspect of prayer, answered prayer, and not a comprehensive study on it. There are many more aspects to prayer than just petitioning and seeking answers, but the focus of this one verse we see prayer being answered, therefore, it is our focus. This message will be the last from verse 19, and I want to continue the subject of praying effectively to receive answers to prayer. Now that is not to be understood as trying to manipulate God to get what you want, rather as we have proven thus far, prayer is not given to us for that reason, but rather to bring us in alignment to God's will so that we may pray according to His will and when we pray according to His will in faith we do receive that which we ask. One of the reasons we do not seem to get many answers and our prayer lives feel so ineffectual is because we are asking God for what we want not what He wants.

We have learned in the last two sermons God wants to answer our prayers. I pray you believe God enjoys giving you good things. It is His joy to bring us in conformity to His will so that He can pour out blessings on you and fill your cup to overflowing.

Thursday, Shelby told Karen and me that our new grandbaby, Logan, was not going to be spoiled rotten. He quickly followed up by saying, "I am going to spoil him just not rotten." I think that's a good appraisal of our Father's heart toward us. He truly wants to spoil us so long as it doesn't ruin us. You can't give a child everything it wants because not everything it wants is good for the child. I'm sure God wants to love on us in ways that are incomprehensibly amazing but He can't do so at this moment because it might ruin us. Think about it, God begins to do wonderful things in your life and soon you begin to think you're the one who's wonderful. Instead of your love for God growing, self-love increases.

God must first develop us to be able to receive His abundant mercies without the risk of spoiling us rotten. One of the things I think we should have learned by now in this series on answered prayer is that learning to pray effectually is as much about spiritual maturity as it is praying.

We learned last week that we little desire what God wants to do in our lives because for the moment we are content to live without it. But if we would desire what God wants for us and feel like we could not live without this, we would pray and God would hear. Well, that is the sad fact

about the human lot, we normally don't pray with much desire until we get desperate.

Today, I want to explain faith and its role in answered prayer. And I want to begin in a most unusual way.

It might seem rude of me, if not downright ugly and unkind, if I accused most of you of unbelief. Surely, if I were to do so, you would think me unkind, for it seems unkind to contradict someone and call them a liar, for that is what I would be calling you if I accused you of unbelief, since you claim to believe in Christ and His word. So, if I called you unbelieving, then I'm also calling you a liar, because you confess to believe in Jesus Christ and His words. So if I call you unbelieving I'm saying more than that—I'm calling you a lying unbeliever. But that's just the beginning. If I call you a lying unbeliever, I'm also calling you a hypocrite, am I not? Your prayer life would be sham, a great farce since your prayers would not be the exercise of faith but unbelief. Your very prayers would be an act of unbelief.

Now be it far from me to ever be so rude, ugly, and unkind to accuse you of unbelief. So here is what I propose we do. Let us read Matthew 6:33 and let me propose a test and let you determine your own status of faith or unbelief. Your truthfulness or your dishonesty. Your genuineness or your hypocrisy. You determine it. Let's read Matthew 6:33 and then let me ask you a simple question. We all know this verse, do we not?

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (Matthew 6:33)

Here is my question—Don't you wish a generous, wealthy Christian made this promise to you? Think about it for a moment. What if you knew a man or a woman who had great wealth and they were very valuable to the kingdom of God. They were all about advancing the kingdom of God and they approached you one day and said basically this, "I want you to devote yourself on the kingdom of God. I don't want you to worry about things. I'll take care of those things. Whatever you need, houses, cars, clothes, food, don't worry about a thing, just keep yourself busy about the things of God." Wouldn't you like somebody to walk up to you today and tell you that?

Now let us suppose you put that person to the test. When a need arose, let's say you needed \$1000 to fix your roof, you simply call this person and said, "We need \$1000 to repair our roof," and within the hour a check for the full amount was given to you. The first time you asked for money you may be a little concerned and perhaps not altogether sure if this is what the person meant when they said they would take care of everything, but you ask for it anyway and they came through. Do you think the next time you picked up the phone and said you had a need, that you'd be worried or insecure about their response to a need? No, you could rest assured that this person, because they love God and they love you and they have the means to keep their promise, would do so. Here's the question—wouldn't you rather it was a wealthy Christian, benevolent and kind, who made you that promise and not Jesus? Wouldn't it be easier to believe it?

The stark reality is it would be easier to believe someone like this who had such wealth and integrity, than it is the Lord God.

What does this tell us? It tells us we have more faith in the word of a man than we have in the word of God. It tells us much of our praying is practicing unbelief and we are rank unbelievers when it comes to this particular promise of our Lord in Matthew 6:33, and perhaps a whole lot of others as well.

This is the exact opposite of what should happen. God gave us promises to support our faith rather than expose the lack of it. Yet for many of us that's exactly what these promises do. We read them and are exposed to the fact that we really don't believe them, even when we say we do. In order to see this change in your heart, I want to show you how God gives you promises and how your faith interacts with them that your prayers may be effectual. I want to direct your attention, first of all, to:

I. THE PROMISES OF GOD ARE MOTIVATIONS FOR FAITH-FILLED PRAYER

God has made promises to you in order to give your faith an object to hang itself upon, to depend upon, so that when you pray you can pray in faith.

*“He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry;
When He hears it, He will answer you.”*

This is a promise that God made to a people who were going to be exiled. He made this promise one hundred and seventy years before the event ever took place. He gave this promise that He would hear the prayers of His people and answer them. The promise was given because God is gracious, not just gracious in the sense of giving the exiled Jews in Babylon the promise of better days; He's much more gracious than that. He gave them this promise that He might work His grace in their hearts to aid them in faith-based prayer to help them to pray believing God for the answer. That's why He gave them this promise. In other words, God's promises are to aid our ability to pray with faith, confidently expecting an answer. Last week we looked at how desire was a help to pray in faith. This week we see promises help us to pray by motivating our faith.

To understand how God's promises motivate faith-based praying, we need to take a few moments and learn how faith works in us to cause us to trust God.

A. God is the Author and Finisher of Faith.

*“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”
(Hebrews 12:2)*

Jesus is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. What does that mean? What I'm about to tell you is one of the most powerful lessons I've learned about faith in all of my Christian life.

The first thing that verse tells me, the first way I can explain God as the Author and Finisher of your faith is to say:

1. God is the Originator of Our Faith.

An author creates. When a man or a woman writes an article, a blog or a book, they are creating something that did not exist. There may be articles and books like theirs but this is a creation of their own intelligence. This is something that was created from their imagination and creative ability, thus an author creates. So the writer of Hebrews is saying that it is not you that creates your faith in God, it is God who creates your faith in Him. This is both tremendous and amazing. God never asks me to create faith. He tells me to receive the faith as a gift. Listen to what Paul the Apostle says in Romans:

“For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.” (Romans 12:3)

Paul is telling the Roman Christians to get off their high horses and stop thinking they are so important because, in the final analysis, God has not treated them different than any other believer. He gave them faith just like He gave everyone else.

Your faith is not something of your own creation, you're not so spiritual and special that you have faith like no one else, no, God has given you faith just like He's given every other Christian. Faith is the great equalizer.

Some do, however, exercise their faith to greater degrees and we'll talk about that in a few moments, but the fact is that faith is given to you as a gift.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” (Ephesians 2:8)

Who here can boast that they believe in Christ for the forgiveness of sins? Your bragging is a blasphemy. Your boast ought to be in Christ. Not only did He die for you He turned around and gave you faith as a gracious gift. For you see, it is not possible for the sinner to believe in God. The sinner can exercise faith, that's true. We exercise natural faith a hundred and one times every day by trusting other people or things. But faith in God? That's impossible to us. “Faith comes from hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”

When God speaks, the Spirit of God regenerates, recreates life out of death and in that new heart God plants the seed of faith.

2. God is the Nurturer of Our Faith.

Not only does God start faith, He grants it, nurtures it, and develops it. How does He develop our faith? Another way to ask the question is how does God grow our faith?

a. By the word of God and the Holy Spirit.

For this reason it's so important to get alone with your Bible and meditate, think about what you're reading. Even though you may not experience any sensational feelings or encounter with God, the Holy Spirit is taking the Word of God and He's renewing your mind. When you read the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit illuminates, sheds light on it, you're granted understanding. That leads me to say that God develops your faith by allowing you to grow in the knowledge of God Himself.

The more you read the Word with understanding your faith increases because the more you understand God, the greater your faith. That's the only thing keeping you from great faith today—you don't know God well enough. Because if you knew Him you would know His character and if you knew His character, you would know He is faithful to the very end. There is no shadow of turning, no variableness with God. It is impossible for God to lie, therefore, you can bank on His word every time, all the time.

That's why His promises are so important. The promises in God's Word are there to develop your faith. For example, He gives you a promise and you struggle to believe but God helps you and nurtures your faith, then you're able to believe. It is then He gives the answer. What happens to your faith when this happens? It's been exercised and now it's strengthened and begins to rise in intensity and power.

b. By answers to prayer.

Answers to prayer develop your faith. God gives us a track record of answered prayer that faith can look back on to help believe God for the present and future. God is writing a history for you that will encourage you to believe Him in the days to come. Answered prayer is an amazing way in which God develops your faith.

There is another way God develops your faith and that is through trials.

c. By trials.

We are very familiar with this, but often we don't feel like our faith is increasing but rather depleting.

“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”
(1 Peter 1:6-7)

Not only does our Lord help your faith develop by answering prayers but sometimes He withdraws the answer and takes you through the refiner’s fire and burns away every doubt so that your faith may grow. Ah, yes. God loves His children and He chastens those whom He loves that He may grow their faith.

As I began to learn this it dawned on me that I had never ever read a verse in the entire Bible that told me to develop my faith, to increase my faith, to expand my faith. There is not one verse and the reason there is no such verse is because it is impossible for me, even now as a child of God, to add one cubit to my faith. It is impossible for me to increase the level of my faith. It is not in my ability to manufacture and develop my faith so it is absolutely full and complete. Only the Lord can do this.

One of the most remarkable things happens when you’re able to trust God with your faith, you will no longer be anxious about your faith. I can honestly say I don’t worry about my faith anymore. I know that sounds a little odd to hear a preacher say that but it’s absolutely true. What can I do to increase my faith? I can appropriate it, I can exercise it, yes, but I can’t make it grow. I can’t make it expand. I can’t increase its level and power, no. But God can. And take hope today—God has covenanted with you to do exactly that in each one of you.

3. God is the Completer of Our Faith.

The third thing “the author and finisher of our faith” means is God is the One who completes our faith. So often, so many—and I would say some in this room—have said, “I just don’t have much faith. I’ll never be able to believe God for great things.”

I was sharing with a young man one day what God was doing in my life and he stopped me and said, “I wish I had great faith like you. I don’t think I’ll ever be able to believe God like that.” And there is the problem. We relegate great faith to men in the Bible, heroes of the faith like Abraham, Paul or Moses. Or we look at somebody in church history like George Müller and we say, “Ah, there’s a great man of faith. But I couldn’t be like that. I couldn’t tell anyone but God my needs in prayer and millions of dollars come in to feed orphans.”

Listen to me, or better yet, listen to George Müller himself? Did you know that Müller did not believe he had the gift of faith listed in 1 Corinthians 12? He said, he didn’t have that gift. All the faith he claimed to have was the grace to believe God, which he said God had given to all Christians. Müller said one of the reasons he operated his ministry the way he did was to prove to his generation that God was still the same God of Scripture and He still answered prayer. He was concerned about his own times and that men had said God doesn’t do the kinds of things

He did in the Bible. He wanted to dedicate his life to be a living example to his own generation that God had not changed, that He is a prayer answering God and He will keep His promises. He just simply operated from that conviction. God does not confer special men for this. Read the text again and pay attention.

“Looking unto Jesus,”

Looking unto **Jesus**, not to yourself. If you’re looking to yourself for faith and its development, no wonder you can’t believe you can be great in faith—you can’t. Nor can I, nor can George Müller or the Apostle Paul. None of us can make ourselves great in faith. We look to Christ. Christ is the One to whom our faith looks to and we even trust Him with our faith. But that’s not all.

“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,”

Do you see the pronoun is plural, *us*? This is His responsibility to every last one of you. He has committed to develop your faith until its full, complete and mature.

What does that look like? I love the way the *Amplified Bible* expositors Hebrews 12:2. It is more of an exposition than a translation, and it has explained the meaning of the text most capably.

“Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus, Who is the Leader and the Source of our faith [giving the first incentive for our belief] and is also its Finisher [bringing it to maturity and perfection] . . .” (Hebrews 12:2 Amplified Bible)

It is God who will work with your faith until it is fully developed into a faith that is complete, a faith that is mature and strong.

B. What Does the Growth in Faith Look Like?

I want to spend the next few moments explaining what that looks like. I think there are three stages to the growth of your faith. This is how God is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. I advise you at the very outset that you don’t need to be looking through your Bibles and find a Scripture reference for what I’m about to say because there is no one particular passage for it. But it’s from cover to cover. I’ve watched over the years and studied how God has worked faith in the lives of the men of Scripture, plus I’ve watched what God’s been doing in my life and I find the same principles at work.

I think there are three stages to our faith.

I. Weak or Little Faith

This is where we all begin. We all begin at the same starting line. Nobody gets a special privilege or a head start. We all start at conversion. "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" and it is through this experience of hearing the Word that the Spirit of God brings regeneration and the ability to trust God. But in this stage it's only there in seed form. All the faith that's planted in the new Christian's heart is like a tender shoot in a garden where the master gardener has to protect it and guard it.

Weak or little faith is given to all of us. How would I define that?

Weak or little faith = faith with little to no assurance, often plagued with doubt.

Faith and assurance are two different things. Do not make the mistake of making them the same. You can have faith and no assurance.

Weak or little faith believes God can do anything, but not sure that He will.

This is not much above the sinner, is it? There are sinners who believe God exists and believes He can do anything. But this new Christian with a newfound faith can believe that God can do anything, he's just not sure He will.

The best illustration of this is in the life of the Apostle Peter found in Matthew 14. The disciples are in the boat all alone, Jesus is not with them, and in the wee hours of the morning before sunrise and they see Jesus. He's not in a boat; He's walking on the water. Panicked, they begin to scream. They think they're seeing a ghost, but Jesus calms their fears and tells them it's He. Peter stands up and says, "Lord, if it's You, bid me to come to You." And Jesus gives the word.

At that moment, Peter stretches out his leg over the edge and puts it down in the water and he puts the other one out and then he begins to walk. And now you're saying, "Oh, this is great faith! This is not weak faith." But finish the story.

As he gets out of the boat, Peter is looking unto who? Jesus, "the Author and Finisher of our faith." But something happens. Because his faith is weak and little he cannot look long on Jesus. He begins to look back at himself and says, *This is not possible. Man cannot walk on water.* He looks at the waves and the wind and the Bible says he immediately plummeted into the water and cries out for Christ to save him.

"And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, 'O you of little faith, why did you doubt?'" (Matthew 14:31)

I've always been amazed at that rebuke. I want to say, "Jesus, take it easy on Peter. The other eleven guys are in the boat—they didn't even attempt this! They're the ones with little faith. Peter had great faith." But I've learned that's not so. Jesus was right. Who are we to contradict the Lord? He knew what He was saying.

In this scenario, Peter is exactly like a new Christian. You've heard me say that one of the graces of a new Christian's life is that God, in the very first days and weeks, begins to answer their prayers. It seems like for every prayer they pray the answer comes almost immediately. Then there comes a time where God seems to withdraw. They pray and their answers are not coming. They don't understand what's going on. "I prayed when I was saved and there were answers, now there is not. Is there something wrong with me?" Ah, that's exactly what we see in the life of Peter here. Every Christian is granted this grace where God begins to develop their faith and cares for them as a newborn baby. He provides for them and answers swiftly so that they might know they would have a loving Father but He doesn't want their faith to stay little or weak. So He begins not answering prayers immediately but withdrawing the answers and appearing as if He's far from them, in order to develop their faith to trust in God and not in what they feel or see.

Here is Peter, just like a new Christian, stepping out of the boat thinking he can conquer the world. Do you not remember when you first got saved you thought you could lick the devil, the world and sin all single-handedly? You thought you were invincible spiritually. In every church service you had to testify, "I prayed and this is what God did!" There was always something exciting happening. You were just like Peter you believed you were invincible. You stepped out of the boat and began to walk but God does something—He exposes your little faith, showing that your eyes were not on Jesus altogether but really and truly on yourself and circumstances.

He's exposing this little faith in you and you begin to sink. "Oh, God, help!" Jesus lifts you up and says, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" You see little faith and a great deal of doubt here in this first stage.

But God will not leave you there. It's His promise to develop your faith.

2. Intermediate Faith

Intermediate faith = faith with more assurance than little faith but still not full assurance; struggles with doubt, but obeys God; learned to reject the doubts although the doubts remain.

This is why James says in the first chapter of his epistle,

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

Why does James say that? Because he is talking to Christians who are not necessarily weak in their faith but they're not full of faith either. He has to remind them not to give into doubts when they pray. *Yes, you have doubts. Yes, Satan is hurling those fiery darts of suggestions to question God's faithfulness, but don't give heed to those lies. Believe God's Word and stand upon it regardless if you feel it.*

This is the intermediate stage, the second stage of faith.

Intermediate faith not only believes God can but also believes God will do it someday. *I don't know when and I don't know how, but I know God will do it.* It is a little bit stronger faith than weak faith.

In this intermediate level of faith you can have full assurance and believe God for one thing but be full of doubt about another thing. Still not stable or full in maturity.

3. Complete or Great Faith

Complete or Great Faith = full of assurance and has no struggles with doubt; level of maturity in your faith and walk with God where you have complete rest with God and nothing disturbs that.

I know some of you would say that seems impossible but it's the word of the Lord.

“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Hebrews 10:22)

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)

Notice the words. They're present tense.

Great faith, full faith, mature faith, doesn't say, “I know God can, I'm just not sure that He will.” It goes further than just saying, “I know God will I just don't know when or how.” No, great faith says, “God not only can, but He has.”

Those who exercise great faith believe they already possess the answer in their heart even though they may not possess it in their hand.

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for...”

When you have faith full of assurance it's absolutely persuaded, with no room for doubt, that you have what you have sought and God has already granted it. You've learned the provision was made before the need was ever created.

Perhaps one of the greatest examples of this is the centurion in Matthew 8, who sent word to Jesus that his servant was sick. The centurion's request in essence was, “Would you speak the word [of healing]?” Jesus said, “I'll do better than that, I'll come to your home.” The centurion had warned his messenger that Jesus would do this and he told him, “If Jesus says that He will come to the home, here is what you say to Him, ‘No, I'm not worthy that You should come to my home. Just speak the word and it will be done because I know You are a man under authority just like I am. All I have to do is tell the soldier to go somewhere and he will do it because I have

the whole Roman Empire to support me. I know You're a Man of authority, all You have to do is speak the word."

"When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!'" (Matthew 8:10)

The centurion was absolutely sure Christ not only could do it but that He would do it. He was so sure, that he warned his servant not to let Jesus come to his home, but just speak the word. He was full of faith, full of assurance without any doubt. That's great faith.

It's not for you to worry and stew over how great or weak your faith is, it is for you to look to Jesus and rest. Rest. He will do what He said He would do. He will keep His promise to develop your faith.

I want to end this message by showing you one more thing from the text.

II. ANSWERS TO PRAYER WITHOUT DELAY

This will support what I am saying about great faith. Notice the text one more time.

*"He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry;
When He hears it, He will answer you."*

Notice the timing of the answer—"gracious to you at the sound of your cry," "when He hears . . . He will answer."

Once again, strong faith dwells in the present reality. Great faith knows God is working now and it's as good as done. "When He hears me, He will answer me." Is that not the promise?

E. M. Bounds' books on prayer are worth their weight in gold. I would advise you to do all you can to purchase them then read them slowly, devotionally and prayerfully. In one of his books he tells a story about a Dr. William Burr, who visited a Boys' School in Vienna, Austria. When he arrived he discovered that the funds to operate the school were completely depleted. He thought about writing back to the mission headquarters in New York City and making an appeal to friends in America, but something made him uneasy about that. Instead, he encouraged the teachers and older students to gather with him in earnest prayer, trusting that the Lord would meet their need. Ten days later a letter from a friend in New York arrived to Mr. Burr in Austria, which read, "As I went to my office on Broadway one morning a voice seemed to tell me that you were in need of funds for the Boys' School in Vienna. I very gladly enclose a check for the work." The check was for the exact amount needed. What's more profound is the date on the letter. It was the very same day on which Burr gathered the teachers and they had begun to pray. While they were praying, God was answering! "When He hears it, He will answer you."

Another story Bounds tells: A famine threatened a part of Japan where a girl's Christian school existed. Miss Dickerson, the head schoolmaster, saw the water supply growing less daily, and in one of the fall months appealed to the Mission Board in New York through whom she served for help. The problem was, in New York the funds were not there to help. Miss Dickerson explored and tabulated the cost of drilling a well themselves, but of course the cost was too great. On the evening of December 31st, when the water was nearly gone, she gathered some of the teachers and the older students to pray for water. A couple of days later a letter was received in the New York office, which read something like this: "January 1st. It is six o'clock in the morning of New Year's Day. All the other members of the family are asleep, but I was awakened with a strange impression that someone, somewhere, is in need of money which the Lord wants me to supply." Enclosed was a check for the exact amount to drill the well and pipe the water into the school buildings. "When He hears it, He will answer you."

I'll never forget a year and a half ago, Real Truth Matters needed \$2000. It was the largest one-time need we had up to that point. Federal taxes were due along with some other major expenses and, of course, payroll. Tuesday morning came and the bills were coming due by the end of the week. I had not told anyone about these needs, not even the staff. But that morning I shared with them the need and then I explained God's obligation to meet that need. He has promised and therefore we should be able to trust Him for it. Afterwards we began to pray one by one. It was Joseph's turn to pray and I shall never forget as long as I have memory, his prayer. I can almost repeat it word-for-word. I remember sensing the Spirit coming upon him to help him pray. He asked for the \$2000, but he did something unusual that the other two of us didn't. He said, "Lord, I want you to do it this morning for my faith. Today." I thought when he was praying, *Oh goodness, Joseph, your faith is going to be so shattered...* then God rebuked me. At that moment I sensed something unusual that I don't think the other two felt—I knew it was answered. I knew it was ours.

I had to be out of the office the rest of the morning. I got back about Noon and they could not wait until I got back because within an hour and a half of the meeting's conclusion, someone came to the office and said they had felt impressed to give to the ministry. Not knowing the need, they gave us a check for \$2000.

There's an addendum to this story. A couple weeks earlier there had been a great need and a check came in for about \$500 or so and I couldn't contain my joy but shouted. They knew that with \$2000 it was going to be a glorious camp meeting when I returned. They were utterly surprised when I said in a matter of a fact way I said, "Well, thank You, Lord," then went to work. They asked me why I so low key when I heard their report. I explained to them that I had already received the answer a couple hours earlier during our prayer meeting. I had experienced the joy then and had shouted on the inside. "When He hears it, He will answer you."

When God speaks to the believer, faith is quickened and the child of God has already received, in spite of the fact the physical answer has not yet arrived. When faith is active in the heart you know more than God can do it, or that He will do it, but you know He has already done it. It's already yours.

Remember the test I gave you at the beginning of the message about Matthew 6:33? The reason we find it much easier to trust a human being with great resources who has committed themselves to us is because we have left our faith in the realm of the physical and we are not looking into the realm in which God lives—the spiritual and supernatural.

Faith transcends this physical realm of sight and sound. It sees and hears only God—“Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.” It sees and hears what God says and when God says it, it is so. The will of heaven becomes the will of earth.

God has made us a promise here. If you don't have faith in this promise get before God and say, “God, speak to me. Make this promise mine, too.” I want you to be assured that if God has said it, it's already done. It's already done. We may not have it in our hand, but we have it in our heart.

Dear friend, if you're not a Christian, the principles of faith apply the same to you. Some of you here want to be saved but you're hung up on this thing called faith. You're wanting to feel something, see something, you're wanting God to evidence that He will forgive you or that He has forgiven you so you can say, “I'm saved.” No, what you're wanting to do is quite the opposite of what God is asking when He asks for your faith. You're saying, “God, do it then I'll believe it.” God says, “Believe it and you will receive it.” It's just that simple.

When you know you don't have to produce the faith but God will grant it to you as a gift, “For by grace are you saved through faith that not of yourselves it is a gift...” I would encourage you this morning to not leave this sanctuary but to get on your face before God and sue Him for His grace of faith. “Lord, You are the originator of faith, the Author and Finisher of it. I'm here that You might grant my heart the ability to trust in You and rest in You and trust You all the way throughout all eternity.” Are you telling me God would disregard that prayer? You're telling me that God would not honor such searching? “Ask and it shall be given to you, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. For he that keeps on asking, keeps on seeking, keeps on knocking, it shall be done for you.” You say, *Oh, you misquoted that verse.* No, the original language is in the present tense which means he who *keeps on seeking, keeps on asking, keeps on knocking.*

Friend, implore God, plead with God, pound on the gate of heaven with the assurance that He will not turn you away. Look unto Jesus and say, “Here is my confidence that You will not turn me away. The gate of heaven is opened to me because Christ died for the ungodly and that's what I am, therefore I believe You will save me on that basis and on that basis alone.”

May God do it, I pray. Amen.