

Faith and Works VII

The Contemporary and Biblical Contexts

Col. 2:8

Signs and Wonders

It is the question that everyone is asking: "What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" (John 6:29). Jesus answered and said "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." This is the key. In John 6:35 Jesus said "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." It is not about believing we will never thirst, it is in believing in Him that quenches the thirst. If one is not seeking the bread of Life but rather the bread that perishes, one will never be filled.

In Mark 9:28 we see the disciples asking the question, "Why could we not cast it out?", in context it would be safe to say, because it is not about you. Again the disciples came to Jesus and said "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us." Well, it was not about them, it was about the name of Jesus. Again, in Mark 9:21 we see a father pleading for Jesus to heal his son, "But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."

What are we to believe, in miracles themselves? No, In Jesus, and the signs will follow those who believe. It is belief in Christ, confessing with the mouth and believing in the heart that He is the Christ, the Lamb of God, the resurrection and the life (Luke 11:20), that is the faith that moves mountains.

Faith without works is dead. Faith taught as a work is also dead. Teaching faith will not increase Biblical faith. Too often, rather than a Biblical move of God, Christ is not presented, but instead men lift themselves up, draw attention to themselves and boast of their success in doing something that they claim achieved spiritual or miraculous results, and they market themselves, turning the opportunity to present Jesus into an opportunity to offer a way for people to do a work to perfect themselves. The something they boast in doing is the "something" that then is the focus, rather than Christ.

Instead of a move of God, we have people trying to move men for God. Jesus is to be the author, perfecter and finisher of our faith. There isn't anything in between those points that offers the flesh anything to rely on itself doing.

The devil will concentrate on circumstances rather than the witness we should have from the Holy Spirit. He comes to Jesus in the wilderness and says "If thou art the Christ, turn these stones into bread, for surely your being here hungry is evidence that you are not who you think you are!"

The Pharisees will seek a sign that they can accept who Jesus is, but God confirms His Word, not the word of miracles, but the word of the Gospel, God in Christ. It is then, on believing, we are sealed (Eph 1:13). And it is then we can do the works (Mark 16:17; Luke 10:20). When we come before the throne of God the confidence we have that He hears us and that we have the requests we have made is that we have come clothed not in our own filthy rags of righteousness, but in the shining garments of His Son, even as members and joint heirs of His Son through faith in Christ.



Most religious leaders today are seeking to move men for God, the flesh moving flesh, rather than creating the conditions for a move of God, by lifting up Christ, even as Moses raised the bronze serpent, that all may be drawn to Him.

When will we seek His kingdom first, so that the signs we wish to see on His behalf will be manifest? We are eager to learn how to have the faith to get things from the Lord, but we seem less inclined to exercise the faith to trust Him for who we are.

Signs will follow those who believe, not those who believe in signs, but those who believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Mark 16:17-18; Acts 4:29-30

We want to believe in miracles, but we often don't believe in Christ enough to abide in Him as our foundation when the storms come. The single most pressing need for the Christian church today would be to get the body of Christ back into the Body of Christ. And they will not be drawn to Christ if those teaching in the church are simply repackaging the world's ideas of spirituality in Christian terminology, with man looking to do the works of God rather than believing on Him who the Father sent.

John 15:4-5 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."



Did Peter walk on water because he had concentrated, and focused, and believed that there were no waves? Or was his attention, at least temporarily, on someone else? Would the spies had a different testimony if they didn't see the giants, or was the problem instead that they did not fix their eyes on a faithful and all powerful God whose character and word they could trust? We need to fix our eyes on Jesus, the author, perfecter, and finisher of our faith, if indeed He is the treasure we gladly give all to possess. Our minds do not determine reality. Evil exists even if we choose to deny its pernicious work. It is our faith, trust and testimony of the one who loved us, King of Kings, Lord of Lords that saves us that expects and allows God to work.



The Holy Spirit gives gifts as He sees fit for the purposes of God. When we align ourselves with God's purpose, that of building the body of Christ on Christ, in Christ, with Christ as the foundation and head, we can expect to be empowered with the gifts to do His work. The gifts are not a sign of our maturity, they are a

means God uses to bring about mature believers in His Son, and that maturity comes from steadfastness in faith in His Son, an anchor that goes beyond even our circumstances, a faith that has a vision and confidence on the grace to be revealed at His coming, and is able then to operate in the gifts to testify of that truth, that all might come to believe and trust in the Word of God, the gospel of God's Son, Jesus Christ.