

Matthew 17:14-21 The Doctrine of Faith Part 4

Today we are taking the last part of Matthew chapter 17:14-21. Remember the title of this series from this section is The Doctrine of Faith. And today is The Doctrine of Faith Part Four - How Faith Works. We are going to read through our verses again, verses 14 to 21. Then we are going to never going to take an excursion through the supplemental section that we have handed out to you and study about how faith works.

Remember Jesus was up on the mountain being transformed, being transfigured, He and three of His disciples. The other nine were waiting down below at the bottom of the mountain. And when Jesus and the three disciples got down to the bottom of the mountain there was a situation going on. Verse 14 tells us, **When they came toward the crowd, a man came near to Him, (that is, to Jesus) kneeling down to Him, and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, because he is being moonstruck,"** King James says *lunatic*, lunar, affected by the moon, **"and is suffering severely. For he often falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to Your disciples,"** that would be the nine that were still waiting behind at the bottom of the mountain. **"I brought him to Your disciples, and they were not able to heal him."**

So when Jesus answered He said, "O faithless and perverted generation!" *Faithless* means *no faith whatsoever*. That is not a challenge to come up with faith. He is making a statement of fact about the condition of the people. They have no faith. That is the problem. "And a perverted generation," they pervert everything that comes from God.

We have studied at length for the last three weeks about faith. The various principles of faith that are found in this section. *Faith* itself means *persuasion*, that is what the Greek word means, *persuasion*. There are two kinds of persuasion. There is human persuasion or human faith, where a human being can talk himself or herself into believing. Or there is Spiritual faith, there is a faith that belongs to God's Spirit, His persuasion. What we have today in churches mostly is the human faith, religious faith, not spiritual faith at all. It is psychology where you are told to take a piece of Scripture and practice thinking positive about that scripture for you, in order for God to bless you. That is psychology. It is not scriptural. It is not taught in the Bible. Faith is a fruit of God's Spirit.

We saw first of all, the source of faith is Jesus Christ. We saw that faith is given by God's Spirit. We saw thirdly or fourthly, God's chosen way to express His faith or His persuasion is by the hearing of the Word of God. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by God's Word. And faith is what we are to live by.

But Paul warns us in Romans 12:3 that we are to live by faith and by the measure of faith that God gives you, do not go beyond it. A little different than what is being taught today. Being taught today is people made to feel guilty that they do not have enough. And in reality, Paul says "The real problem is you are going beyond what God is doing. You are going beyond what God wants you to do." And that is why there is nothing happening. That is why it is empty. That is why you are not being blessed because that is not the road God has you on.

And then lastly, what about the personal pronouns that that God used when Jesus said, **"Let it be to you according to your faith"**? It makes it sound like the person's faith - that the person has to produce the faith. And this is where the technical comes in and why is it so important. The word *your* is a possessive personal pronoun not a reflexive pronoun. A personal pronoun means *the faith that you possess that has been given to you* versus the reflexive pronoun meaning *the faith that you have produced for yourself*. Jesus never used the reflexive pronoun. He always says, "Let it be to you according to the faith that you possess that has been given to you, not that you have produced." So people think that Jesus is challenging people to come up come up with their own faith.

Verse 18, **Jesus rebuked the demon, the demon came out from the boy; and the boy was healed from that hour. Then when the disciples came to Jesus privately, they said, "Why were we ourselves not able to cast the demon out?"** Why was it we tried so hard? We laid hands. We said the formula prayer. We said everything that needed to be done and nothing happened. Why? **Jesus said, "On account of your unbelief."** Again it is a different Greek word, but it means *because you are without faith*. You do not have any. **"For truly I say to you, if you should have faith, as a grain of mustard plant, you will say to this mountain, 'Be removed from here to there!' And it will be removed. And nothing will be impossible for you."** If you had just a little tiny bit of faith, the size of the smallest garden herb - a mustard plant, you can move a mountain, and it would obey you. So in essence, you have nothing. You do not even have a little bit. You are void of the Spirit of God. It takes God's Spirit to perform and to do these things.

Verse 21, **"But this kind does not go out except in prayer and fasting."** And we spent time on this last week. Prayer is not the means by which, or the formula by which demons are cast out. It is the means by which we bring people to Christ. We bring things and we bring people to Christ through prayer, through conversation, through talking with them, through giving the situation to Him. And I emphasize that to you. It is not about praying about something. I have used it; I have heard other people use the phrase. "Well, I prayed about it and nothing has happened." The Bible does not say to pray about it. The Bible says that through prayer bring it to Jesus. It does not say *pray about it*. It does not say *mention it to the Lord*. It says *bring it to Him* and we bring it to Him through prayer.

And the term *fasting* means *to go without food*, which is a religious formula. And as some of us were talking before session today - it was added to the manuscripts in order to make it very religious phrase. But literally, "This kind does not go out except in prayer," where you bring it to the Lord and bring it to His care.

Now for today in the supplemental verses, How Faith Works. The first section of verses we want to read is Matthew 8:5-13. There are three elements involved in understanding the working of faith:

- 1) there is Jesus
- 2) there is the person coming to Jesus or having the difficulty
- 3) and then the situation itself.

All three have an interaction, but it has to interact properly. The purpose of these Scriptures and of these incidents that we are going to study, is to show a contrast between the Gentiles (the non-Jewish people) and Israel and the Jewish people. Gentile people in these incidents are going to be given special faith, so that the nonbelieving Jewish people can see what faith looks like if they had received Jesus as their Messiah. So keep that in mind. There are certain Gentiles who do not deserve the Spirit of God, are not eligible for the Spirit of God religiously, who now are used by Jesus to show the nonbelieving Jewish nation what faith, how faith works.

In verse 5 it says, **Now when Jesus entered into Capernaum...** Capernaum is just north of Jerusalem. This is Gentile territory, non-Jewish territory.

...a centurion came to Him, beseeching (or pleading) Him... A centurion is a Roman soldier who is the head of one hundred men. So he is non-Jewish. He is a Roman soldier, which makes him even worse as far as religiously being acceptable to the Jews, and he came beseeching Jesus. So you have two of the three elements here: (1) you have Jesus and (2) you have the centurion coming to Him; not inquiring about Jesus but coming to Jesus. That is the key here.

...and saying, "Lord, my servant has been laying in the house paralyzed, being grievously tormented." There is your third element: the servant of this soldier has been laying in the house paralyzed, being grievously tormented.

And Jesus says to him, "After I come, I Myself will heal him." I will come to your house and will heal your servant.

But when he answered the centurion said, "Lord, I am not sufficient in order that You should enter under my roof, but only speak a word and my servant will be healed." I am not sufficient. I am not eligible to have You in my house. I am a Gentile and I am a Roman soldier and Jews cannot come into a Gentile's home without becoming religiously contaminated. So I am ineligible for You coming to my house. Boy! notice the humility of this man. He wants help for his servant.

But notice in the middle of verse 8, **But**, in the midst of being ineligible, in the midst of being disqualified, **"only speak a word in my servant will be healed."** In other words, all You have to do is speak a word and my servant is going to be healed, You do not need to come to my house.

Verse 9, **"You see, I am also a man under authority, having soldiers under myself. And I say to this one, 'Go;' and he goes; and to another one, 'Come;' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this;' and he does it."** He says, I have got people under me that every time I tell them to do something, they do it. I am a man of authority. You are the authority of everything and everybody. All You have to do is say a word and my servant will be healed, and he won't be tormented any longer.

And when Jesus heard this He marveled, and said to the ones following... See, the ones following Jesus, this is for their benefit.

"Truly I say to you, not even in Israel did I find such faith." Now that is faith. This soldier is persuaded by the Spirit of God because he has no religious reason for believing in Jesus, other than he is just convinced and persuaded that Jesus has authority over all things and all people. All I need to do is come to Him with the situation. **But not even in Israel.** See what He is making? He is making the comparison. See all of Israel? You are faithless. What this Roman soldier is exhibiting here is what faith really is all about. He has been given special faith by God to be an example to the people following Jesus about what it is like to function by faith.

"But I say unto you that many will come from east and the west, and will recline with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven, but the sons of the kingdom (He is talking about Jews here) will be cast out into the outer darkness. And there will be weeping and gnashing of the teeth." For those of you who think that outer darkness there is no feeling, there is weeping and gnashing of teeth in Hades, in hell.

And Jesus said to the centurion, "Go, and as you believed, let it happen to you." And his servant was healed in that hour. Go and just as you believed, just as you are persuaded, let it happen to you.

Now, two things before I leave this particular set of verses:

(1) As a side note, notice it is *what you believed*. The word *believed* in Greek is the verb form of the Greek word for *faith*. ΠΙΣΤΙΣ (pistis) is the word for *faith*, it is a noun. *Believe* is the verb form of *faith*. *Believe* is *faith in action*. And so a person who goes by the persuasion of God's Spirit is a *believer*. I am called a *believer*, not because of my religion but because the moment I received Christ I live under His influence and under His persuasion. That is what makes me a believer. I am under the persuasion.

But just like *faith*, the term *belief* can also be human and not be spiritual at all. A person can have religious beliefs and religious convictions and they be personal and they be human, but that is not what the Bible is talking about. To believe the truth is to believe the persuasion of God's Spirit through the truth of His word. My personal convictions and my personal beliefs don't mean anything other than to me. And my personal beliefs and convictions change all the time. But that has nothing to do with Christ. Many people go around looking in different churches, looking for a church that matches their personal beliefs and personal convictions. And of course they never find it, and they look for a church like that because they believe their beliefs and convictions are true and everybody else is wrong. That is strictly human, strictly psychology, strictly psychological.

This man believed. He functioned according to the persuasion of faith that came over his life. He has no human reason other than to take a chance and maybe this Jesus, this Messiah of Israel, would heal his servant, taking a chance. But he was not taking a chance, he knew Jesus had the authority and he was asking Jesus to use that authority to heal his servant who was tormented. So that is the first thing I want to mention to you before we leave this section.

(2) The second thing is very important - it might not be to you but maybe eventually it will. The servant had nothing to do with his healing. It was not the faith of the servant. It was not the belief of the servant. It was the faith working in the soldier. I want you to notice that because - listen to me now - false teaching today about faith will put all of the emphasis on the person who is sick to have their own faith. And if you do not have enough faith you will not be healed. Well the question is, *what about your faith?* You can pray for him and have faith under those conditions. See, it does not work, that is why they have to put all the guilt on somebody else, is because it does not work. If I was a faith healer coming into town and somebody approached me with context of how the Scripture presents faith, they would have to tell me that if you are of the Lord then *you* believe, *you* have the faith for all these people who are sick. They do not have the faith.

See you have three elements: (1) you have Jesus, (2) you have this Roman soldier coming to Jesus - not just praying about it, not just being religious, but (3) coming to Jesus and turning the situation over to Jesus. But it was about his servant who had no part in it whatsoever other than to get healed. For years I never noticed that. Because I always had that echo in the back of my mind of how people present faith and how you are supposed to work faith, and they say, "See this man had faith and his servant got healed. So if you have the faith you will be healed too." It is like wait a minute, it was not the Roman soldier coming to at request to get healed, it was his servant and his servant did nothing.

So my question to those who teach faith incorrectly and put all of the guilt and all of the pressure for performance on the people who are sick and who are in need, I say to you, do not put the burden on the people who are in need, YOU have the faith. If you honestly believe what you are saying, you believe, you believe for them. They cannot. There is no faith there. They are faithless and they put all the blame on the one who is sick. The Bible does not do that. Jesus never came up to somebody and said, "You are sick and if you had faith you could believe and get healed." No, He says, "Let it be to you according to your faith, the faith that has been given to you already."

Page 2, Matthew 15:21-28, Jesus still traveling into Gentile territory. **Jesus went out from there, He withdrew into the parts of Tyre and Sidon.** On the on the coastland in the land of Canaan. **And, behold, when a Canaanite woman** (a Gentile again, this is not Jewish, a Canaanite woman) **had come out from those borders and was crying out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David!"** Notice she calls Him the Messiah title. She is not Jewish, but she calls him the Jew's Messiah. **"Lord, Son of David, my daughter is severely being demonized."** I want you to notice again, we have the three elements: (1) we have Jesus, (2) we have this woman who is a Canaanite, she is a Gentile, not Jewish, she has no religious standing with God whatsoever. (3) She comes to Jesus, she calls Him the Messiah, and talks about whom? Not herself but her daughter who is being demonized.

Verse 23, **But He did not answer to her a word.** I love this section. The people who complain about not getting enough attention - I have heard it for years in the church - He did not answer her a word and when His disciples came to Him and they were asking Him, saying, "Send her away because she's crying after us. You won't answer her," so they are telling Jesus, "now she is nagging us. Send her away, will You."

Verse 24, **But when He answered He said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."** In other words, "She's a Gentile. I've been sent to Israel."

But when she came, she heard what He said, **she was worshipping Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"** Boy she just will not give up, will she? She comes to the Lord and says, "Lord, help me."

But when He answered He said, "It is not right to take the bread of the children and to throw it to the dogs." This would be the household dogs. You do not take the food that belongs to the family members and throw it to the dogs on the floor. So He is saying that she, as a Gentile, is a religious dog, and the children of the Jews.

But she said, "Yes, Lord; for even the dogs eat from the crumbs falling from the table of their lords." You are right. But even the dogs get the crumbs that fall onto the floor. Is not it interesting that as faith has driven this woman to come to Jesus and present herself to Jesus, "Lord, help me," she says, "all I need is a crumb." Just a crumb. That is it. That is all it takes from Jesus. Just the size of a mustard seed plant. That is all it takes. Do not need to work up all this performance.

Then when Jesus answered He said to her, "O woman, great is your faith." Again the word *your* is a personal pronoun - the faith that you possess because it was given to you, not the faith that you produced. **"Great is your faith; let it happen to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that hour.**

Again notice the person who is the recipient of the healing is barely mentioned. Faith is working through this woman for her daughter. Her daughter did not say anything. Her daughter did not believe anything. The daughter did not have any faith, it was the woman. And Jesus said to her, interesting because this whole episode played out to show how faith brought her all the way to the end to say, "I just need a crumb. I just need little bit." And Jesus said, "As faith has brought you to this point, for that little crumb, let it be to you as you desire." Coming to Jesus.

Next thirdly, Matthew 10:1-8, Jesus Having the Authority. **And after He called His twelve disciples to Himself, He gave to them authority over unclean spirits, so as to cast them out, and heal every disease and every sickness.** So He took the twelve and He says, "I have authority over all disease and all demons, and I am going to give you that authority for this trip." And then verses 2-4 names the 12 apostles. But then in verse 5 it says, **These twelve Jesus sent out, after having given commandment to them, saying: "You should not depart into the way of the Gentiles, and you should not enter into a city of Samaritans. But rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And while going,"** here is what you are to do, **"be preaching, saying that the kingdom of Heaven has drawn near. Be healing the ones who are weak, be cleansing the lepers, be raising the dead, be casting out demons. Freely you received, freely give."**

When a person has the authority of Jesus Christ, people are healed and demons are cast out 100%. There is no failure, ever. So when people come representing Christ and people bring people to these people who represent Christ, rather than to Christ Himself. And my

encouragement to them is, "Do not go to those people they are going to disappoint you. When you went and asked them to pray for you, did anything happen?"

"No and they said it was my fault."

"That is not your fault."

You did not take it to Jesus. You took it to people and asked them to work a formula over you and it did not work. And it is not the fact that they do not have the authority of Jesus, it is the fact that they made it to be your fault. And the real problem is when a person goes in the authority of Christ it happens 100%, without failure.

Lastly, Matthew 14:15-18, **And when it became evening, His disciples came to Him saying, "The place is a desert, and the hour is already passed,"** that is the hour of dinnertime, **"dismiss the crowds, in order that when they go into the villages they might buy for themselves food."** So (1) you have Jesus, (2) you have the disciples coming to Jesus, and (3) you have the problem being with the crowds. And they make a request, "Send them away now so they can buy food for themselves."

And Jesus said to them, "They have no need to go away, you yourselves give to them food to eat." You give them food. **But they say to Him, "We do not have here except five loaves and two fish."** And we are told later on that there is five thousand people. So there is only five loaves and two fish. "We do not have enough food to feed them, Lord."

And Jesus said - and this brings us full circle. **And Jesus said, "Bring them here to Me."** Not the people here but bring the loaves of bread and bring the fish. Bring whatever material means you have, come and bring it to me. That is the essence. You do not pray over it. You do not pray about it. You bring it to Jesus. You put it in His hands. So not just pray about it, but literally bring it to Jesus. The Lord does not want us to us to pray and throw something up in the air and ask the Lord to help. He wants us to bring it to Him personally. Not to other people. Other people might help; but bringing it to other people does not work. So we must give it to Him, not just mention it to Him.

Secondly, if it is the Lord's will for something to be done, He will give the faith for it to be done. Period. Whatever is the Lord's will, He will give the faith for it to be done and it will be completed, and it will be done.

Thirdly, the working of God's Spirit is not dependent upon human performance. All of the people we read about in brief - we just mentioned some of them - we understand that none of these people had the right performance, the right qualifications, the right standing with God. But they were moved by faith to come to Jesus - not the religious leaders, but they came to Jesus.

So because we are in a world of formulas, religious formulas, we have missed the point, which is why so many people continue to hurt and are hurting because we are constantly trying to work up a performance. Try to come up with our own faith and try to believe the right things. It is all psychology. And yet the same people who tell us that these things are true, and they

work, it does not work for them. It does not work for them except when you send them your money. Then it works for them. If it does not work for you, it will be your fault. That is not of faith works.

As we have told you before our own definition of faith in action, is *faith is the presence and activity of God's Spirit in a person's life*. A person who has Christ living within is active, faith is active all the time. And we are to seek the measure faith that God gives to us for God's will to be done. Do not go beyond that but go with it.

Let's close with prayer.