

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 38 (September 11-17, 2016)

Now that we have looked at the **faith** chapter in Hebrews 11, let's turn our attention to the application of **faith** by those who met Jesus. Take note of the fact that the Lord complimented the **faith** of those who came to Him, but often criticized the **faith** of the disciples who walked with him and saw His miracles. (Reprinted and updated from week 24, 2014)

Sunday, September 11 (read Matthew 8:5-13)

*When Jesus heard this, He was astonished and said to those following Him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great **faith**." (Matthew 8:10, emphasis mine)*

Most of the Roman centurions of the Bible who encountered Jesus acknowledged Him, probably because they already understood authority. In today's reading text, this pagan leader knows he is not worthy to have the Lord come into his home, but he also knows that he is standing before Someone who has total authority over disease (v. 5-9). Jesus is amazed and declares that the Kingdom of God will include redeemed men and women of **faith** from all over the world (v. 10-11), while many of the subjects of the kingdom (the Jews) will not humble themselves and come to the Lord through **faith** (v. 12). The centurion's **faith** is rewarded and his servant is healed (v. 13). Don't miss the fact that the **faith** of the centurion, not the servant, brings about the healing.

Monday, September 12 (read Matthew 8:23-27)

*He replied, "You of little **faith**, why are you so afraid?" (Matthew 8:26a, emphasis mine)*

The disciples have already observed numerous miracles in Capernaum (v. 5-17), but they are not prepared for the storm about to come their way (v. 23-24). They obediently follow Jesus onto the boat (v. 23), so they probably feel safe in His presence. I'm sure they are surprised when Jesus goes to sleep, leaving them to battle the storm alone (v. 24). The Lord is humanly exhausted following a day of demands for His services, but His disciples, in their fear and panic, awaken Him (v. 25). Have you ever felt all alone when a storm of life suddenly comes on you? Have you ever wondered why your **faith** is so weak during the time of crisis? If the wind and the waves trust and obey Him, isn't it about time that you do the same?

Tuesday, September 13 (read Mark 2:1-12)

*When Jesus saw **their faith**, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." (Mark 2:5, emphasis mine)*

I love this miracle because, like the centurion's story in Sunday's devotion, the healing occurs because of the **faith of the friends** of the paralyzed man. They have enough **faith** to bring their friend to Jesus **and** to remove the obstacle that prevents them from reaching Him (v. 1-4). The Lord goes **beyond** their obvious request for a physical healing and forgives the man's sins (v. 5). Pause for a moment and consider your own personal **faith** in bringing your friends to Jesus in prayer. Do you ask only for physical healing or do you present their soul's condition to Him as well? If Jesus heals only the body, some other disease will take them later on, but if He heals the soul, your friend will be in His presence forever. I believe our churches also will overflow when we learn to pray for a **spiritual** revival and **preach the Word** to the worshippers (v. 2).

Wednesday, September 14 (read Matthew 9:27-31)

*Then He touched their eyes and said, "According to your **faith** will it be done to you"; and their sight was restored. (Matthew 9:29-30a, emphasis mine)*

In today's text, two blind men approach Jesus and plead for **mercy** (v. 27). The Lord asks them (and you) a great question: "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" How do you respond when He asks that question? You may not be physically blind, but you certainly have blind spots that keep you from clearly seeing Jesus in your everyday activities. Have you learned to plead with the Lord for **mercy** when you are facing insurmountable odds? Will you allow Him to open your eyes so that you can see him clearly? Do you have enough **faith** to receive the miracle He has for you today? God has something special in store for those who come to Him in humility and **faith**!

Thursday, September 15 (read Mark 6:1-6a)

*And He did not do many miracles there because of their **lack of faith**. (Matthew 13:58, emphasis mine)*

Today's text tells of Jesus' rejection in His own hometown of Nazareth. The hearers of the Lord's teachings are amazed and offended because they know Him only as the young boy who grew up in their town along with His brothers and sisters (v. 3). Likewise, in 2016, many people who attend church regularly know all about the **stories** of Jesus, but they have not placed their **faith** in Him. I want you to pay special attention to v. 5 (emphasis mine): "He could not do any miracles there, **except** lay His hands on a few sick people and heal them." Your lack of faith limits the power of Jesus; likewise a strong faith increases His power. Intercede with Him for the **spiritual** needs of those in your church and community!

Friday, September 16 (read Matthew 14:22-33)

*Immediately Jesus reached out His hand and caught him. "You of little **faith**," He said, "why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:31, emphasis mine)*

You are probably familiar with the story in today's reading. It is one of those times when Jesus **makes** His disciples go into a storm that He knows will prove to be too much for **their** skills on the water (v. 22-24). They are buffeted by the waves because of the strong wind, but Jesus finally comes to them walking on water. Likewise, in **your** times of stress, the Lord may approach at the last possible moment (the fourth watch of the night) to say those marvelous words, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid" (v. 27). Peter is the only one who has enough faith to get out of the boat, but the wind and the waves distract him and he takes his eyes off Jesus (v. 28-30). The Lord reaches out His hand (as He always does when we get in over our heads) and pulls Peter to safety with only a mild rebuke (v. 31). The event causes His disciples to worship Him and proclaim Him to be the Son of God (v. 31-32). Worship Him today for all the storms He has calmed for you!

Saturday, September 17 (read Matthew 15:21-28)

*Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great **faith**! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour. (Matthew 15:28, emphasis mine)*

This is one of Jesus' most unusual miracles because He delays in answering the Canaanite woman's request. The disciples have no love for the Canaanites, so they impatiently demand that Jesus send her away (v. 21-23). Because Jews of that day referred to Gentiles as "dogs," Jesus uses the same term in testing her personal faith (v. 24-26). The woman's reply is classic: "Yes, Lord," she said, "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table" (v. 27). The Lord rewards her great **faith** and heals her daughter based on her intercessory request (v. 28). I hope you have faith to intercede for those you know and love! Your prayers and actions can make an eternal difference in their lives!