

## THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

### Part 5

### *Believing and Speaking*

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January 15, 2011

Right brethren, today will be our fifth and, I think for now at least, our final look at the topic of "The Just shall live by Faith." For some of you out there this is a topic that we have looked at quite a number of times before. I think we have spoken about fifty or more occasions on the topic of faith, added to that probably twenty or more times looking at the topic of healing, plus other comments here and there. So for many of you it has been just a refresher of things previously looked at. For some of you it has probably been a wee bit different, and perhaps you have heard things that you are not entirely too sure about? That is fine, there is plenty of time and you can listen, chew over it and see what you think. I guess, as with all things, some will happily accept, some might want to wait a while and see, others may reject. But I do the best I can to put these things out there and then you listen and think and make your decision.

Last week we looked at the topic of *counterfeit faith*; and we also said it could be *look-alike faith*. When you think about it, one of the parables that Jesus gave about the wheat and the tares is that they *look alike* for a while. The seeds are small, the shoots come up and early on you cannot detect a difference. But at some point you realize some of this is going to produce productive fruit, some is just weeds. It is a bit like that with faith and counterfeit or look-alike faith. For a while they may look sort of similar, but real faith produces real results and counterfeit or look-alike faith does not. People may be sincere, may be genuine and may well think that they have faith, but the results will not be there, it is not Biblical faith, it is a look-alike. What we were trying to do last week was to say that it may help us to understand what Bible faith really is if we look at the look-alikes and see what faith actually *is not*.

One such instance that we looked at is that faith is *not feeling*; you do not go by what *you feel*.

**II Corinthians 5:7** For we walk by faith, not by sight.

As we said before, you and I are physical beings, we are used to living by our five physical senses. If we see something or hear something we will react to it, which is absolutely fine most of the time. There will be occasions when our physical senses are not the whole truth, not the ultimate reality. In those situations we have to learn to *walk by faith*; not by what we see, or in this case by what we feel. Some of us have perhaps been influenced by how we feel. You could say, 'Well I feel that God wants me to do this', or 'I feel that God is answering my prayers', or 'I feel that God is not going to answer this prayer'. It is great if our feelings line up with God's word, but in terms of reality our feelings are just feelings. You have a bad night's sleep, you had too much mouldy cheese the night before, and you wake up feeling grim. Does that change God's truth or God's word? On the other hand, a couple of bottles of beer, or a couple of glasses of wine; now you feel good. Does that make God's word any different? No! So, faith is *not feeling*. You don't determine whether God is or is not answering you by how you feel. You may feel He is when He is not, or feel He is not when He is! So do not go by feelings. Bible faith is not feeling.

We also saw last week that another counterfeit is that faith is not just *mental assent*. Mental assent is possibly one of the more dangerous because it is very deceptive. A person who assents mentally actually *agrees with scripture*. They may quote scripture, they may teach scripture with which they agree, but essentially mental assent is just head knowledge. You agree with the truth, but typically there are no corresponding actions; and lives are unchanged. It is in essence a dead faith, it is just mentally agreeing with scripture, but the heart is not changed.

**James 2:14-16** What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?

Your words are empty and meaningless.

**James 2:17-18** Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

Some translations bring out that as "*by my corresponding actions....*"

**James 2:19** You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!

Just believing in God is hardly something special. Satan believes that there is a God alright.

**James 2:20** But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

It is a useless faith; or you could call it mental assent. You *agree* that there is a God and you agree that God could heal and deliver, but it does not go beyond that. The Weymouth translation, as we said last week, '*someone will say you have faith, I have actions. Prove to me your faith apart from corresponding action and I will prove mine to you by my actions*'. So the person with mental assent believes the words in the Bible are correct — but where is the action? And to that extent they often deceive themselves, because it seems to them that they have faith because they can quote the scripture. But it does not go far beyond that; they have the knowledge in their heads, but looking at their lives they look just like the world around them. Their beliefs are different, but their lives are often pretty much identical. That is a dangerous place to be.

**Matthew 7:24** "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

So there is hearing, believing and then *works* or *actions*.

**Matthew 7:25** "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

Jesus is not talking about architecture here; He is talking about lives of people. The person who comes to Jesus, hears His sayings and *acts on them*, then that person is like a house built on a strong foundation. The storms of life come, as they will, as things hit us from time to time. But this person is founded on the rock; they are a doer of the word.

**Matthew 7:26** "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

Here are people that heard the truth and probably agreed with the truth. But look at the early 70's and 80's when brethren "agreed" that the Sabbath was right and they said that they "saw the logic" of the Holy Days. But then some pressures came upon the Church of God and with some of these people it was just head knowledge, and they lost it very quickly. Some even wandered back into keeping Sunday, keeping Christmas, keeping Easter and giving up on "religion" altogether. It was never genuine conversion of the heart, it was just *head knowledge*; easy come, maybe easy go. Looking at mental assent, this is the danger; you may feel, and believe that you agree with the scriptures in your head, and that that means you have faith. Nope!

We also saw last week that faith is not the same as *hope*. Hope is an expectation of something good *in the future*. For example we all hope for the resurrection. One day, far off perhaps, who knows, but certainly in the future. But if we are talking to each other and we say, "I sure hope that God hears my prayer". Well that is a hope, but that is definitely not faith. If you say to somebody, 'Do you believe that God will heal you?', and they say that they hope so, they probably will be disappointed. Because if that is what they believe, and they say, "I sure hope so," then that is hope and that is not faith. God has never promised to answer a prayer of hope.

Faith is *the substance* of things hoped for and *the evidence* of things not seen. Faith is proof, it is evidence and it exists in the here and now. We have to believe here and now, not wait until we

one day receive and then believe. Faith is now, hope is future. We cannot say, 'One day God will do such and such; and when He does then I will believe it, but until then I will just wait patiently in hope'.

**Matthew 21:20** And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?"

Because Jesus had spoken to it the day before.

**Matthew 21:21** So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

It does not say five to ten percent of the things that you pray for, believing, you will receive. It does not say you will receive them *now and then*, or if God is particularly happy with you at that moment in time. There are no caveats in the Bible. We may at times like to add a few caveats to explain away our disappointments, but Jesus' word taken as it stands says, "All things that you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive". Even if you say, 'I asked in prayer believing and did not receive'. Well you are disagreeing with the Lord Jesus. I think that I will go with His version; let God be true and every man a liar.

**Mark 11:24** "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.

This brings out something that you do not often hear or see among God's people. This sounds fairly conclusive and fairly positive. It says, "...*whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them*". So we know that we have to believe that we have received. The Weymouth translates this as: "*That is why I tell you as to whatever you pray and make request for, if you believe that you have received it, it shall be yours*". You and I have

to believe that we have received *when we pray*, and then some time later, an hour, a day, a week, a month, we will have it. But we have to believe that we have received it *when we prayed*.

Believing is now; hope is always off in the future. You have to say, 'I believe that I have received it, and I will be patient now and wait for the full manifestation'. In that time that you are waiting you will have to defend yourself as to doubts and various attacks from near and far. But believe you have received.

The New American Standard Bible translates this verse as: "Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you *have received them* and they will be granted to you". Again, you do not pray, hope and wait for weeks and months, finally receive and then believe. It is not receiving and then believing, it is believing that you have received and then they will be granted. Do most of us do this? No, most pray and ask and sort of hope that God will hear and wait patiently, well sort of, and if it happens then they believe, and if it does not happen then they believe that it was not God's will. Most of us do not do what Jesus said, and we do not follow His instructions. Believe that you have received *when you pray*. If we do not follow the instructions of course, we do not get the results. So waiting patiently, in hope, is not faith. It might seem very Christian, and very humble, but it is not faith, it is a counterfeit, it is a look-alike.

People might say that they have asked God, and 'I know that He is compassionate so I will wait now and see what happens. I sure hope that He gives me what I have asked for. But, I know that He knows best, what is really good for me, and so I will accept it if He says no and until then I will wait patiently and humbly'. That is probably what many of us have heard around us, grown up with, sounds quite religious. Well that might be a prayer of humility, but it is not a prayer of faith, because the prayer of faith believes that *you have received* when you have prayed. Jesus said faith is believing that you have received. You are not wondering whether God will say no, you believe that you have received.

Many people do not seem to grasp this; but Mr. Armstrong said that 99 out of 100 earnest, surrendered Christians do not know what faith is, or how to exercise it. Jesus said, "When you pray, believe that you have received". In practice most church members ask, wait in hope, wait

patiently, and if it works out, 'Amen brother'. But if it does not work out, "Well, God has a different idea of what is good for me". So if you are thinking, 'How do I know whether God wants me to have what I am praying for?' Well go to the Word and find out *first*. You have to find out first before you can pray the prayer of faith. Faith begins only when the will of God is known; if you *do not know* the will of God then you cannot pray the prayer of faith. If you are uncertain of whether God will, or God will not, you cannot be in faith; that is doubt. You are wavering between two beliefs. 'Well I believe that God will answer, but then again maybe He will not'. That wavering between two or more opinions is doubt. We know what James says about the man who doubts; "*Let not that man think that he will receive anything from the Lord*". Faith definitely is not the same as hope. A prayer of hope is not a prayer of faith.

We also saw last week that one other look-alike, and quite a dangerous one in the sense that it can really trip you up, is faith is not being *presumptuous*. A presumptuous person might be very, very sincere, and they might have great confidence in what they believe. They may actually speak out corresponding words of presumptuousness; but in their case it is not based on the solid Word of God. It might be based on wishful thinking; it might be based on traditional views and teachings. It might be based on pride, and they think that they are special to God, one of His very elect; "therefore God will do all of these things for me because I am special." Or it might be based on a mis-application of scripture; there is plenty of that around.

So this person might well trust, or as they see it, "have faith in God" to help and deliver them, but in an area or situation where God has just *not spoken*. Since faith begins where the will of God is known, you have to go to the Word *first*, and then rightly divide it. Mr. George Mueller, whom Mr. Armstrong strongly endorsed, said, "Faith is the assurance of things which God said in His Word are true, and that God will act according to what He has said in His Word. This assurance, this reliance on God's word, and this confidence *is faith*."

So you have to have the Word first; not just spray prayers around like a shotgun, hoping one of them somewhere might touch a button with God. One of the examples we saw last week was when Israel went to battle and was being soundly defeated, so they called for the Ark of the Covenant to be brought among them. In their eyes they could not be defeated; they were now

invincible. 'We have the Ark of the Covenant of God among us' and they trusted and had confidence. They rejoiced and praised, and did all of the right things apart from — no Word of God. Because they trusted and had confidence in their invincibility, they raced back off into the battle and thirty thousand died. That was *presumptuousness*, that was not faith.

We saw in Jeremiah 7 (remember the people there in Jerusalem), they trusted that they would be protected and delivered because the temple was there. "The Temple, the Temple, the Temple! This is Jerusalem the City of God, and the Temple where God dwells, built by Solomon." They thought that nothing bad could happen to them. Well, the trust was there, the confidence was there, the assurance was there — but it was *not based on God's Word* because Jeremiah is saying, 'Repent, get straight with God, otherwise this place will look like Shiloh, in ruins fairly soon. Do not put your trust in this place or some strange sentiment that you have got'. So faith is based on the Word of God, not upon our ideas, or our reasons. Jeremiah told them that God's Word said one thing: "You will be destroyed". They said, 'No, we trust in the presence of the temple'. Another example of some folk who are rather presumptuous is:

**Acts 19:13-4** Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so.

I think that the King James Version says vagabonds, those that were wandering about from place to place earning a bob or two for the work that they did. These guys probably thought that they were Jews, they were circumcised, and so they are in covenant with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. 'The Chief Priest is our father; so we are really quite a select group of people'. So they adjured this evil spirit:

**Acts 19:15-16** And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

“Wounded” in the Greek is “*traumatized*.” Well you would be if you had bruises and black eyes, your nose was bleeding and you were naked in the street!

**Acts 19:17** This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

But these guys *were confident*. They were a select group, but it was a big failure. Their actions were based upon their pride, their human reasoning. Maybe they had good intentions thinking that they would help this man by using another rabbit’s foot and throw the name of Jesus and Paul at this demon. But they had the stuffing knocked out of them, because they were presumptuous. You and I need to be careful not to be presumptuous. We cannot just trust and believe that because you are such a nice person that God is bound to back you up when you step out in complete foolishness. We have to get the Word first and then act.

Also, faith is *not resignation*. This can be another look-alike, but it is not actually biblical faith. Resignation I would define as a sort of *passive submission* to whatever happens. Trusting that what ever happens is God’s will, and resigning yourself to accept it humbly. ‘So whatever happens must be God’s will for me, who am I to argue? God know best, and I must just accept or resign myself to whatever happens’. That sounds quite religious. ‘I have asked God for healing or peace of mind, or whatever; now I am going to relax and submit to whatever happens’. That is where it *sounds like* it is faith, because one is believing or trusting. "It might not be what I want, it might not be what I asked for; and it might hurt and ruin my life, but I am resigned to God knowing better than me and I humbly accept whatever He chooses to do or not to do. Because I am trusting God for whatever happens, that is faith." Well, no that is resignation; that is submission; that is passive acceptance; but it is not biblical faith.

Faith is believing that God *will do* what *He has said* that He will do. Faith is the proof of things not seen. Jesus said we are to believe that we have received and we will have. He did not say to ask in hope, and accept whatever happens with good grace. That is a sort of religious version of being resigned and passive, and saying that "whatever God does is fine by me." That might seem like a good attitude to have and it can be if we are accepting God’s will in our lives. For

example, tribulation and persecution are going to come our way; that is revealed in the scripture as something that you and I must expect. There is no point getting frustrated and praying to God to remove all persecution, because it comes with the territory. But, many things that happen in our lives come from our own choices, because we are not always smart. Sometimes, perhaps more than we think, troubles and problems come from Satan looking to devour us. Often we can be affected because we live in a corrupt world, surrounded by some very corrupt people. Many things happen to us that are not God's will. We are supposed to resist and fight, not just passively resign ourselves to everything that happens; that is not faith but it is resignation, and at times verging on just foolishness.

**I Peter 5:8-9** Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

An adversary is an opponent; an enemy and he is your enemy, he is my enemy. He is an experienced adversary as he has been around for at least 6,000 odd years, interacting with human beings. He is looking; he is seeking whom he may devour. We are told to resist him steadfast in the faith. Are you immune to this roaring lion? Is there nothing that he can do to you? Could Satan bring troubles your way? Would you recognize and resist or would you accept the troubles as being God's will in your life? Can you discern? Of course the key would be to check out God's Word. But if there is a devil, and there is, if he is going around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, which he is. If he has you in his sights, which he may well have, will you *just accept* whatever happens as being the will of God for you? 'I asked for something but very bad developments are taking place so that must be God answering me'. Or have you got the devil, your adversary after you? Can you tell the difference? You better not just accept anything in your life because the devil is real; he is a real adversary. Some things in your life and my life come from that part of the spirit realm. You and I are supposed to be doing something; it says that we need to resist him. It is not God that is resisting Satan; Peter says *you* resist Satan. James says, elsewhere, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you". Now if you do not resist, if you roll over and just lie there saying, "Whatever happens is God's will, who am I to fight the will of God?" Well Satan can stomp all over you if you do that.

**Ephesians 6:11** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles [the margin says *the scheming*, the plots] of the devil.

Why do we need armor? Is there a battle? Is there a fight? Is there danger? Is there an opponent, an enemy? Yes! The devil will try to find your weak point and build up an attack. It will not be a blunt attack with a two-by-four. Satan tries to set up a scenario to trip you up.

**Ephesians 6:12-13** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

What would happen if the armor was not there? Do you think that God supplies armor and we can do without it and Satan will just wander past and leave us alone? It is the whole story here; get your armor *on* because there is a whole host of different types of spiritual realms mentioned here.

**Ephesians 6:14** Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness...

Well we are wrestling, there is a fight, and Satan is fighting to take us out, or to limit us or to restrain us. I think part of Satan's attack may well be to get us to accuse God, to blame God of doing bad things in our lives. So Satan does them and tries to point the finger. We say, 'God did this to me'. Satan will lead us into bad experiences and then with some clever footwork get us to accept it as the will of God, and even blame God. Then we will passively accept it and say, 'If this is God's will for me who am I to argue?'

Well the antidote, the first part of the armor is to gird your waist *with truth*. What is truth? The Word is truth. Again, again, again and again, faith gets back to us knowing what *God's Word* says. If *we think* that we know what it says, then we are in danger. If *we think* that it says

something that it does not, then we are in danger. Girding our waist with truth means we have to get to know the Word. How do you discern? Well, *to the law and to the testimony*, to the Word. We have said before that it is not so much that we have a faith problem but more a Word problem. I will be blunt — most church members do not know the Word well enough, and that is not helped by some of the traditions that we have mixed in or woven through our beliefs.

**John 10:10** "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

One translation says, "super abundantly". You may spot, if you are sharp, that there are two different positions mentioned there. One is *super abundant life*, which Jesus has come to bring, and on the other hand, at the opposite end, you have one who comes to steal, to kill and to destroy. If you are looking at any situation in your life and you see stealing, killing, or destruction in your situation — that would not be from Jesus Christ. This would be from Satan, who is the ultimate thief. If what you see in your life represents blessing, abundance and goodness, well that would be from the Lord Jesus. So it is a good starter in understanding how God operates as opposed to Satan if we just think simplistically. Satan comes to steal, kill and destroy; and sickness and disease obviously fall into stealing health, killing and destroying lives and families.

**Luke 13:10-** Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up.

Rather a sad case, for nearly twenty years she has been bent over double and could not straighten up. She probably had great difficulty getting dressed, getting bathed, walking and so on. Notice that she "...had a *spirit* of infirmity..." A demon was involved in this woman's sickness and crippling condition. So the thief comes to steal, kill and destroy. Here we can see Satan and his demons involved in a health problem and stealing this lady's joy, and destroying much of her quality of life.

**Luke 13:11-16** But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day." The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?"

So Satan had bound this lady through the particular spirit that had affected her. Now think about it, in order to transplant that into today's church world. How many well-meaning synagogue members (church members) would have told that woman that her sickness was God's will? One may have said to her, 'God knows it is developing patience and character in you; God works in mysterious ways'. For eighteen years she probably heard that, and if she had been in the Church of God today I venture to suggest that many would have said, 'It is not God's will to heal you Martha; you must just accept that this is what He wants for you, and one day you will find out why'. Jesus said, 'No, this *is Satan*, this is NOT God's doing. Satan has bound this woman for eighteen years'. The thief comes to steal, kill and destroy. Jesus came to bring life abundantly and He demonstrated the will of God.

**Luke 13:17** And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.

Jesus displayed the will of God. Satan is involved in not all, but some sickness, some disease, and it is too easy for people to say "Well, this sickness and this disease is for God's glory. You must be patient and bear under it," and so on. That is human reasoning. Remember the pivotal scripture - stealing, killing and destroying come *from the thief*; abundant life comes from God.

**Acts 10:38** "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

Jesus went about doing good, that would be no surprise; He came to bring abundant life, and also heal all who were oppressed by the devil. Healing here is referring to *physical* healing; and one translation says: "whom the devil exercised dominion over". You might think to "spiritualize" this and say that this means healing people's *minds* from the devil's deception. Well that did not happen, because 99% of Galilee and Judah *remained deceived*, and they still are to this day. What Jesus was doing was that He was actually healing those who were physically oppressed by the devil. You cannot just say that all of these bad things "must be God's will for me, and I must just yield and accept them." Possibly many of these people had done that. The lady who was bent over maybe accepted this for years that it was God's will for her. Others who were oppressed by the devil (Acts 10:38) may have thought it was God's will for them.

Faith is not just accepting whatever happens, and calling it God's will in your life and humbly resigning. Faith is focused specifically on what *God has said*, and then believing and receiving. We must know the Word; not what you think the Word says, or what your congregation thinks the Word says, or what you have always heard the Word says. What does it say? Are you and I sure? Are we single minded, or are there different views, different possibilities? If we are not sure about them then we are back into doubt and we are undecided.

**I John 5:14-15** Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

We are confident because if we ask according to His will, He will hear us. This is just as Jesus said, "Whatever you ask in prayer believe you have received them and you shall have them. Reading these verses there is *no doubt here, no wondering*. We cannot say, 'Let us see what happens when we pray, and whatever happens we will call that God's will'. That is sort of cart before horse, or tail before head. You find out the will of God *first*, and then you can pray the prayer of faith and know that you have the petitions that we desire of God. Where do we find the will of God? We find the will of God from the Word of God, and we will not by rationalizing, discussing, debating, disputing or extrapolating from our experiences, good or bad. You will not

develop faith just by listening to me rambling on for an hour or so every Sabbath; it is not as easy as that. I am providing information, but what you have to get is revelation. You have to spend time in the Word, not just mechanically reading the words, but getting to know and getting to know really well, the *voice behind the word*. It is God that we are seeking, but we get to know Him through His words. If you and I desire to grow in faith we have to commit to the word of God and the voice behind it.

As I said earlier, this will be the last in this series.

I would like to tie in faith with the series that we did on the “Power of the Tongue”. Remember that the scripture said that death and life are in the power of the tongue. How we use our tongues is a vital part of living by faith. It is one of the corresponding actions that makes our faith a living faith. Most times we release faith by our words. Earlier we saw the key illustration where Jesus had been talking to the fig tree. After He cursed the tree Peter was amazed to see it all withered up. Jesus told them to have the faith of God, and whoever says to the mountain, “Go” and believes that he will have what he says, then he will have what he says. In my experience I have not come across that many people who speak to their mountains, even though that is the instruction from Jesus. Most people speak only to God, and then if necessary they will bawl and squall and beg and plead; and actually do anything *but speak* to the mountain, even though Jesus said, “Speak to the mountain”. Does it seem odd to *speak to* situations in our lives that we want to change? Yes, it does seem odd. Our natural mind rather balks at something that seems so silly, and no doubt the apostles thought the same too. I imagine when Jesus cursed the fig tree they probably thought, ‘Talking to fig trees, what next, this guys is real embarrassment’. Talking to things, to us humans, does seem a bit strange. But actually talking to things is really how we release faith.

**Matthew 17:14-16** And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. "So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him."

Is that the case today? People would say, 'I guess it is just not God's will. No doubt the father will be learning some very important lessons of patience, endurance and humility. God knows in the big scheme of things that these spiritual qualities are far more important than healing this boy. So let us all accept the perfect will of God'.

That is what people would say today, and you know it. But it was not true then and it is not any more true now.

Jesus was not pleased.

**Matthew 17:17-18** Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me." And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.

It is always God's will.

**Matthew 17:19-20** Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

Faith is released by speaking.

**Matthew 17:21** "However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

So if you have faith you will say to this mountain or whatever it may be.

**Luke 17:5** And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

It may seem strange to speak to situations the first few times that we do it, like Jesus told us to. Our physical mind might think that seems a bit strange, speaking to situations to change. Jesus said speak to the mountain; not meaning Mount Everest, but talking about big situations, big obstacles in our lives. Jesus said we are to speak to them to go, and I think that you can speak to situations to come. Jesus said, 'If you have faith.... You can do it'. He is saying that it is not just because He is the Messiah that He can do this. Often we try to water down some of Jesus' statements, and we say they apply to Jesus because He is who He is; or they apply to the Apostles, or they apply to those in the first century, but they do not apply to us, do they? Well that is not biblical. Jesus said, "*If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, be uprooted.*" If you had faith *you would say*. If you had faith *you would speak*.

**Romans 10:8** But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach):

So it is in *two places*; in *your mouth* where you have to say it, and in *your heart* where you have to believe it.

**Romans 10:9-10** that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

The word of faith is in your mouth and in your heart. You believe it and say it. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. If we believe, *we will say* and *we will speak* words corresponding to our faith. Faith is released by our words, speaking to situations and to circumstances.

**Mark 4:35-39** On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" Then He

arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

Was Jesus embarrassed to speak to things? Clearly He was not. He could do it and He was who He was, and He said that you and I are to speak to mountains and so on. That is the illustration that He left us; it might seem strange for the first few times that we do it, but why not follow the instructions?

**Mark 4:40** But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

Fearful means that they were full of fear, which means that they believed bad things were going to happen, rather than believing Jesus' word. Should they have not spoken to the wind and to the sea? Is this what Jesus is getting at when he told them they had no faith?

**Luke 4:38** Now He arose from the synagogue and entered Simon's house. But Simon's wife's mother was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her. So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them.

When you rebuke a fever you are admonishing it, you are reproofing it, and *talking to it*. You do not just stare at it, you say, 'Go! You cannot stay, go, shift, get out of here'. That is admonishing, reproofing or *talking to* the fever. You might say that you cannot talk to a fever. Well Jesus did. This is a situation that has to move.

In recent years when I have been asked to pray and anoint people, after thanking God for His provision for our healing and His willingness, I then *speak to the complaint* and command it to leave, and then call the individual well and whole. We want to do things that seem right to us; we are physical and we have been around thirty or fifty years, we know a thing or two. Well God has been around a lot longer and He knows a thing or two. When He says do it this way, I guess the idea would be to do it that way! Do what Jesus did, speak to the mountain, speak to the

situation, rebuke the complaint and tell it to go. I know a lot of people pray *to God* to move mountains (and I have been among that category in times past). But it does not say beg, plead and squall for God to move this mountain. God is telling us that *we are to talk* to the mountain so why are we asking Him to talk to the mountain? Jesus said, “whoever says *to this mountain* be removed and cast into the sea.....” We say that we do not like that idea and we will pray louder to God for Him to move the mountain. It is not that difficult; Jesus said to *talk to the mountain* and believe in your heart that you will get what you say. But if you doubt and you are not convinced about talking to the problem, then you might as well forget it.

**II Corinthians 4:13** And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak,

Because when we believe, we speak; *faith speaks*. You speak to fevers, you speak to situations and circumstances. If we believe, then we will speak. Paul says this is the spirit of faith. Do we have a spirit of faith? If we do, just as it is written in scripture, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe and we speak out our words of faith, and we speak our words of belief. Faith is not presumptuousness, faith is not resignation to whatever happens, faith is not hope, faith is not foolishness, faith is not feeling, *faith is believing* that what God has said in His Word is true.

We will conclude there for now. For some of you, as I said earlier, this might be just a refresher. Some of you might not be familiar with some of these ways of looking at things, and I understand that. You might want to take time to ponder and chew over the material that we have covered. But remember that faith is not just a nice idea, not just a luxury; the scripture says, “The just *shall live by faith*”. You and I have to make sure that we are growing in understanding so that we can literally *live our lives by faith*.

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*Transcript by Patricia Plunkett (many thanks Trish!)*