

## THE PRAYER OF FAITH

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"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Matt 21:22)

Faith is the most important quality of a prayer that God answers. Faith is that quality that trusts in and clings to God. Faith attracts God. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith is the raw material upon which the answers to our prayers are produced. Need and circumstances do not move God as much as faith. God is moved by faith.

Jesus has promised that whatsoever we shall ask, if we believe, it shall be granted us. God always responds according to our faith- "be it done unto you according to your faith". There are many passages and stories in the bible showing God's reaction to faith and to unbelief. Let us examine a few of them.

### ***Man sick of Palsy: Matt 9:2***

"And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."

Jesus was ministering to crowds. There came some men carrying a man who was sick of palsy. Mark 2:1-5 gives us a detailed account of what happened. These men wanted Jesus to heal their sick friend. There was no way to get to Jesus. Guess what they did. They made a giant hole at the roof so that their friend can get healed by Jesus. The house was not theirs. They were visitors. Now that is called faith, and Jesus noticed it. And he acted according to it. He saw their faith. He acted on their faith. Faith acts.

### ***The woman with the issue of blood: Mark 5:24-34***

"And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him. And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague."

This woman had had protracted and profuse menstruation for 12 years. She had suffered so much. She was treated as an outcast according to the laws of Moses. She was unclean. She had spent all her money on doctors who couldn't help her. One day she heard of Jesus. She thought in her heart- "if only I could touch his garments" She pressed her way crawling on the ground. She reached Jesus and touched his garment. Everything stood still. Jesus stopped. He turned around and all of a sudden declared "someone has touched me". Everyone was baffled at the statement of Jesus. He repeated again- "someone has touched me". His disciples thought him to be out of his mind. They said to him- "there are crowds pressing on you on every side". But Jesus held his ground and repeated "Some one touched me"

This is one of the most remarkable stories I have come across in the ministry of Jesus. How was it that thousands were pressing on Jesus and touching him and nothing happened? Yet one poor woman who believed, touched Jesus and got his attention. The reason is faith. Jesus said to her- thy faith hath made thee whole. Faith attracts the attention of heaven. The prayer of faith attracts God. It makes Him stop everything He is doing and like Jesus, God says "someone is praying". There may be millions praying but the prayer that attracts God's attention is the prayer of faith.

### ***The prostitute: Luke 7:48-50***

"And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace".

What made this woman act the way she did though it was obvious that she will be rejected by the religious circle of her day? What made her to take the risk of rejection and to show up at this party Jesus was attending? It was faith. Her faith made her to be forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee.

Why is faith important in prayer? It is important because God does not answer according to our prayer. He answers according to our faith. "Be it done according to your faith", "Your faith has made you whole", "Your faith has saved you". "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb 11:1-2,6)

Faith involves laying hold of things that are invisible and they become visible in our hands. Without faith we can not please or serve God. The summary of ministry or work for God is believing and trusting in Him. "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (John 6:29)

If we are to serve God acceptably, if our prayers are to reach the throne of God, we need to believe. We need to have faith. We need to trust in God. How can we build our faith?

1. It is an act of the will it is not just a feeling. I can decide to trust or not to trust in someone.
2. It can be nurtured by meditating and obeying God's word. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).
3. It can be encouraged by the testimonies of others.
4. The knowledge of God increases faith. The more we know God, the more we trust and believe in Him. We can say with Job "Though he slay me I will trust in Him" (Job 13:15)

Unbelief on the other hand limits God. Where there is unbelief there is a limitation to what God does.

### **Jesus visits Nazareth**

"And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." (Matt 13:54-58)

The Bible shows us clearly how mighty God is. It shows us that there is nothing too difficult for Him. Jesus did so many miracles in various places but when he came to his own home town, he couldn't do many miracles. Why? "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief"

My prayer for you my brother, my sister is that you shall believe. If you believe, nothing shall be impossible for you- absolutely nothing. "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Mark 9:23

Faith, too, is humble and persevering. It can wait and pray; it can stay on its knees, or lie in the dust. It is one great condition of prayer; the lack of it lies at the root of all poor praying, feeble praying, little praying, unanswered praying" E. M. Bounds