

THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD #2

How Faith Comes

Review

This is part 2 of our extended study of “The Power of God’s Word” and...

WHAT THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD WILL DO FOR US

- It will save us from our sins
 - It will heal our bodies
 - It will feed our souls
- It will provide deliver us and prosper us
- It will bring us wisdom and knowledge
- It will give us victory sin and over Satan
- It can cleanse us from sin and make us holy
 - It will give us Divine guidance
 - It will supernaturally transform us into the image of Christ

In in our 1st message we discovered that the entire creation came into being through the power of God’s Word energized by the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 33:6 NIV

**The heavens were made by the word of the Lord,
and all the stars, by the breath of His mouth.**

The word “breath” in Hebrew is “spirit”-confirming the Creation account in Genesis 1:1-3

Genesis 1:1-3 NKJV

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

Here is how all that is came to be; the Spirit of God activated by the power of the the spoken Word of God! And what does that mean to us?

Derek Prince: “If we have the Word of God and the Spirit of God, we have the total creative power of the universe within us.”

If we are born again, we have the Spirit of God and the access to all the power of God's Word! So why don't we have more of the power of God's Word in our lives?
And the answer is; we lack *faith*.

Hebrews 11:3

Through *faith* we understand that the worlds were framed (formed) by the Word of God...

All the potential power of God's Word is useless to us unless we have this thing called "faith"! Even the power of the Gospel has no effect without it.

Hebrews 4:2

For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Not only can we not be saved without faith...

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith, it is impossible to please God; for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Notice that In addition to believing that God exists, the individual must believe God when He speaks. **I found this in a commentary:**

It is possible to believe in God without believing God. God has spoken and His declaration is set forth in the Bible. If one believes that God exists without believing what He has spoken, he has not the reality of faith. It is possible for men to believe that God exists, to believe that He has spoken, and to stop short of applying the truth to their own personal need.

So 3 questions arise: What *is* faith? How do we *get* it? How does faith work?

I. Fundamentals of Faith

A. What is It?

1. The only specific definition of faith in the Bible is Hebrews 11:1:

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:1

2. Faith is more than simply saying that we believe: faith is “substance” and “evidence” that we believe.

- a. A court cannot convict a person of a crime without *evidence*.
- b. We cannot convince ourselves we have faith without evidence.

Joyce Meyer

If you are accused of being a Christian, there should be enough evidence to convict you.”

c. If we truly have faith in God it will be reflected in our lives; there will be substance and evidence that confirms that we believe.

“Faith is an action based on a belief, supported by a confidence.”

Evangelist R.W. Shambach

3. True faith is belief *accompanied by* substance and evidence; true faith is verified in how we speak and what we do.

James 2:17-18 TEV

So it is with faith: if it is alone and includes no actions, then it is dead. But someone will say, "One person has faith, another has actions." My answer is, "Show me how anyone can have faith without actions. I will show you my faith by my actions."

Then 8 verses later:

James 2:27

So then, as the body without the spirit is dead, also faith without action is dead. (TEV)

Faith without works is dead. (KJV)

Faith without deeds is dead. (NIV)

4. So faith in God’s Word saves us; we please God by having faith in God’s Word; and our faith in God’s Word will shape the way we live. That’s what faith is. So the next question is...

B. How Do We Get Faith?

1. The short answer is, we receive it as a gift.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves—it is the gift of God.

Ephesians 2:8

a. Faith is a “grace gift” from God; we do not deserve it; we cannot earn it.

b. But many make the mistake of thinking that because faith is a gift, we have to just sit around waiting for God to give it to us.

c. But the Apostle Paul wrote this to the Church at Rome:

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

Romans 10:17

2. There are 3 elements of power here: Faith; hearing; and the Word of God.

a. Many miss the meaning because of the way the verse is written but it is actually a formula:

• The Word of God + Hearing = Faith comes

3. “Word” in this verse is not the Greek word for a word that is written, which is “logos”; it is the Greek word “rhema”, which always refers to a word that is *spoken*.

a. If the Greeks wanted to refer to a word that was written, they used the term “logos”; but faith comes by hearing the “rhema”, the Word that is spoken. This is the word used in Hebrews 4:12....

Hebrews 4:12 NKJV

For the word of God (the “rhema” of God, not the “logos”) is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

b. Maybe this will help you: your Bible is the “logos” Word of God; the black on white, ink on paper; but when the Holy Spirit “speaks” and you “hear”, faith comes!

“When the Holy Spirit speaks the Word it comes alive! It is that personal word that changes us; it is that word in that moment.”

Derek Prince

4. Faith does not automatically come by just *reading* the Bible:

- I know many people who have read the Bible who never come to faith
- There are skeptics who read (and even study) the Bible just to find fault with it
- You can read the Bible and get nothing. But when the Holy Spirit speaks to you out of the written Word and you hear what He is saying, faith *comes!*

5. How many times were you just reading your Bible and suddenly some verse just “jumped” off the page”? Now you know what happened. The written word became the living Word. The “Logos” became the “Rhema”. And faith came alive!

a. Or you were listening to a sermon and suddenly you hear one particular point of the preaching and BOOM-faith comes alive.

b. The great Puritan scholar said...

Matthew Henry

“The beginning, progress, and strength of faith, all come by hearing. The word of God is therefore called the word of faith: it begets and nourishes faith. God gives faith, but it is by the Word as the instrument. The hearing which works faith is by the word of God. It is not hearing the enticing words of man’s wisdom, but hearing the word of God, that will befriend faith, and hearing it as the word of God.”

6. Theologian John Piper is one of many pondering the problem of the lack of power in many modern American churches and comments on the message preached in so called “seeker friendly churches.”

“There seems to be a loss of confidence that declaring what the Bible says in the power of the Holy Spirit can create and sustain the church of Christ.”

John Piper

a. The subtle shift away from faith in the power of God’s word

“It seems to me that a growing number of Pastors have lost confidence in this truth (the preaching of the Word). They have concluded that the gap between the glory of Christ and the felt needs of their neighbors is simply too great for the fullness of God’s word to overcome. The result seems to be the minimization of the Word of God in its robust and glorious fullness.”

John Piper

7. If we water down the Word into a sermon series of self-help seminars we can’t expect God’s people to have dynamic faith because “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God”!

Review

1. So what is faith? It is substance and evidence that we truly believe
2. How do we get faith? It *comes* by hearing the Word of God; the “rhema” word quickened to us by the Holy Spirit
3. So let me close with a dramatic example of how faith works and what it looks like, using the

C. What Does Faith Look Like?

1. One of the greatest miracles of the Bible is the incarnation of Christ; how the Son of God, the 2nd Person of the Godhead, literally “became flesh and dwelt among us”.

2. In Luke chapter 1, the Angel Gabriel appears to the Virgin Mary, and speaks a “rhema” Word to her.

Luke 1:30-31

Then the angel said to her...behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus.

a. The Greek word translated “behold” could be translated as “listen”! (As it is in these translations: HCSB, NET, NCV and Apologetics Study Bible)

b. Why do I like “listen”? Because “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God!”

Luke 1:34

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

3. This is not doubt or unbelief; it is a reasonable question! The Word of God spoken to her was that she would conceive and bring forth a Son, but she had never been with a man; so she simply asks “How can this be?”

a. This is how we feel when God speaks something to us that seems impossible in the light of our circumstances:

- Someone lies dying in a hospital, then hears, “by His stripes we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5)
- Another is boarding on bankruptcy, then hears “God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory”. (Philippians 4:19)
- Another discovers his friends have betrayed him, then hears, “no weapon formed against you shall prosper and every tongue that rises against you in judgment you shall condemn.” (Isaiah 54:17)

b. When God’s Word promises these blessings in the face of our circumstances, our mind is like Mary’s: “how can these things be?”

4. But listen to the answer from the Angel! Don’t miss this because it’s a key to understanding how the power of God’s Word is released into our lives:

Luke 1:35

And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

5. Here we have the same demonstration of the power of God’s Word as we saw in the creation of the universe: the Spirit of God “comes upon us” and the power of the most high overshadows us; the Word of God is spoken; and Word and the Spirit brings forth the miracle of what was spoken!

6. Then the Angel adds this...

Luke 1:37 NKJV

For with God nothing will be impossible."

But other translations have this:

For with God nothing is ever impossible and no word from God shall be without power or impossible of fulfillment. AMP

For no word from God shall be void of power. ASV

7. It was the power of God's Word that created the universe; and it was the power of God's word that brought the Creator of the universe into the womb of the Virgin Mary! But there is a difference.

a. In the creation of the universe God spoke by Divine decree; He created the universe "from scratch", out of nothing (*ex nihilo* in Latin).

b. But in the incarnation, there is a *person* involved. God speaks the Word to a *person*; faith came to Mary by the Word of God, but that Word had to be *received*. And that's what happened in v.38:

Luke 1:38 NASB

And Mary said, "Behold, the bond slave of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. (NASB)

Luke 1:38

8. The deed was not done until Mary received the Word in the humility of faith!

"The angel brought a rhema word-the initiative was with God speaking to her. Mary received that word in humility! The rhema brought faith to her and her faith released the miracle working power of God. Every spoken word of God contains the power within itself to accomplish whatever it says, the power of its own fulfillment."

Derek Prince

9. Let me close with my personal belief that this account of the incarnation of Jesus, Who is the Word of God, is a pattern lesson for you and me.

a. When we hear the Word, and we receive it with holy humility, faith comes and the substance of what was in that Word is "made flesh"; it is fulfilled.

III. Conclusion

A. Review

1. There is power in God's Word to fulfil whatever it says.

2. But God's Word will not profit us unless it is "mixed with faith".

3. And faith comes to us by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

“Faith does not come to us by hereditary descent, by dreams and visions, or through the eloquence or earnestness of the preacher; faith comes only by hearing the Word of God.”

Charles Spurgeon

B. Applying the Truth

1. Read the Word. Meditate the Word. Listen to the Word. Speak the Word.

2. As you do, the power in God’s word causes faith to come; and that Word will be fulfilled in your life.

3. Mary said, “Be it done unto me according to your Word.” But Jesus says to us:

“According to your faith let it be done unto you.”

Matthew 9:29

Testimony/Prayer/Communion