

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

A weekly study to strengthen families

Now Faith

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JOHN 11 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?

2 CORINTHIANS 6:2 NLT For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you." Indeed, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation.

MARK 9:22-24 And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

Lazarus, a friend of Jesus, fell very ill. Jesus made a promise that the sickness was not unto death but, contrary to everyone's expectation, he ultimately did die. The promise should have reminded Lazarus' friends and family that there was still hope, because Jesus declared that death would not be the end of this particular story. However, sisters Martha and Mary both despaired at the loss of their brother. And while they still maintained a measure of faith, their faith was rooted in the past (what might have happened had Jesus come earlier) and the future (what might happen to Lazarus in the end time) only. They appeared to have lost their "now faith," the belief that God could, and would, do a miracle right then.

Faith is how we access everything in the kingdom of God. Without faith it is impossible to please God, Hebrews 11 tell us. But with faith, all things are possible! Often, however, our faith either gets stuck in the past miracles that we've seen, or in some abstract, future "someday" when we will see God do the miraculous in our lives. Jesus' words to Martha and Mary ring through the ages and speak to us today: If you would believe (present tense) you will see the glory of God. Let's believe God for the miraculous right now. For as Paul wrote, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation.

Application

We serve a God who does miracles – but what miracles are you believing Him for? Physical healing, inner wholeness, spiritual transformation, etc, are all promises we can claim from the Word of God. The greatest miracle, however, is the transformation of a life when one is born again of water and Spirit. Are we believing for the miraculous in the harvest? Let us seek that miracle above all others. To see His kingdom increase in our community, workplaces, and schools.

Discussion

1. By placing our faith in the future, i.e. all that God is going to do, we risk missing what He wants to do right now. How can we cultivate "now faith," and live with a constant expectation of the miraculous?
2. Why do you think Jesus healed the man's son in Mark chapter nine, when his faith appeared weak (he doubted Jesus' ability to heal) and confessed to have unbelief?
3. What other parts of John 11 stand out to you? What are some of your takeaways from Lazarus' story?

Prayer Focus

1. Pray for the gift of faith to operate in the body of Christ, releasing God to do whatever He wants to do in and through us.
2. Pray against doubt and unbelief.
3. Pray for God's kingdom to come in our communities, with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power.
4. Pray for a demonstration of the miraculous in the harvest.