

Prevailing Faith - Pt 3

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I. Recap

A. Last week we talked about the three expressions of faith in the New Testament: Foundational Faith, Persevering Faith, and Prevailing Faith.

B. We also talked about the reality of how the kingdom is already but not yet. It's inaugurated but not yet consummated. Which means we're living in an overlap of the ages. Though the ultimate battle was won at the cross.

- Though Satan was defeated at the cross, he has an occupying force that tries to cause havoc in any way he can. He is disempowered but still dangerous.
- The fullness of the reign of Christ is still to come after He returns. His throne will be established in Jerusalem. His glory will cover the earth as waters cover the sea. It will be an age of heaven on earth.
- In this age we fight the good fight of faith as Paul instructed us (1 Timothy 6:12).

C. This week we're going to talk about the foundational reality that causes faith to work – Love. Biblical faith is relational. It is not mechanical or formulaic. The extent that we have understood faith to be a formula is the extent that we have misunderstood what faith really is.

D. Faith is a relational trust born from knowing God and rooted in the interchange of love with Him.

II. Faith is Born from the Knowledge of God

A. Faith comes when we see God for who He is. His grandeur, His glory, His faithfulness, His integrity, His kindness, and mercy form a

character reference of credibility that enables us to believe Him.

B. The parallels between our relationship of faith in God and our natural relationships are helpful. If we don't know someone, it's nearly impossible to truly trust them. The more we know someone, the more we are able to trust their character, the integrity of their words, the intentions of their actions.

C. It is true that the more we see who someone is the more we are able to trust him. This is ultimately true about God.

D. We don't look at our lives, our trials, or our circumstances to find faith. We look at Him.

E. Continuously the scripture calls us to set our eyes on Him, set our minds on Him. When we see Him we get an elevated perspective of reality.

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

—Colossians 3:2

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

—2 Corinthians 4:17-18

Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...

—Hebrews 12:1-2

Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed

—Psalm 34:5

III. Faith Lives in the Context of Conversation

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

—Roman 10:17

- A. When someone speaks and we listen to them and respond to what they have said, with words and actions, that is a conversation.
- B. We hear His word and respond by believing what He said and saying words back to Him.

IV. Faith Works by Love

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

—Galatians 5:6

- A. The wonder of faith is that it is a product of relational love. It is not a force, a formula, or a mechanism to get stuff from God.
- B. Contextually Paul is saying something like, “You’re being told that being in Christ has to do with keeping the external rule of circumcision. But I’m telling you it’s not about that at all. What it is about is a relational faith that is empowered by love. Faith in Him and love for Him are all that matters.”

V. The Implications of a Faith that is Relational

- A. The implications of a faith that lives by conversation and is relational in nature are incredible. What does it say about God? What does it say about us? Who is the God who decides that the faith by which we function is relational - built by conversation - rather than formal required by demand?

- This is a God who wants friends and not servants (John 15:13-14)
- This is a God who desires to be known and understood, just as He knows and understand (1 Cor 13:12)
- God was never after a rule-keeping people, He was always after a family that interacts with Him in a relational trust that is living and contagious.

- Faith is not belief in doctrine it is a personal trust.

B. Faith prevails or perseveres not because we got what we wanted, but because our relationship is alive. I don't walk away from my friend when I don't get my way.

VI. Faith is Expressed in Trust

A. When my kids were little and we would be checking out at the grocery store. They would see the candy in the check-out aisle and ask for a little snack. Sometimes the answer was yes, and they got the candy and ate it on the way home. Sometimes the answer was yes but they weren't allowed to eat it till later. And sometimes the answer was no, because we were headed home to eat dinner and we planned a dessert to follow.

B. Everything I own is theirs. How and when they receive from me varies on the occasion.

C. Sometimes they didn't just want candy or something frivolous, they were legitimately hungry. Maybe it had been a long day and we had missed lunch. They wanted something to eat right now. The request was reasonable, but the reasonings why I may or may not answer the request immediately may not be apparent to them. My reasons for how and when I answered and how they received it, though unapparent to them, were always good and for their best.

D. This is the same with God. At times we receive immediately, at times a little later, at times the answer is no for now. Now matter how He answers His intentions are always good and for our best.