

RESPONSE TO FAITH

“A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, ‘Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean’.” —MATTHEW 8:2

The faith exercised by those who were healed by Jesus was a disposition towards Him that trusted Him to do for them whatever He wished to do. Faith does not prejudge what God may do. It is the attitude of trust that allows Him to do whatever He may choose to do, and in whatever manner He chooses to do it.

If, for good reason, God chooses to allow us to remain ill, or in a difficult circumstance, or if He chooses to heal us or take us out of that circumstance is His prerogative, both results would be a result of faith. There are many times when our faith will produce good and wonderful results, but there are many occasions when God’s objectives are different from ours. It is not the consequences of our faith that measure its effectiveness. Faith in God allows God to be God in our lives, and when living by faith, we live with the certainty of His will being accomplished, whether it involves miraculous interventions or not.

The disposition of trust in Jesus does not prejudge His actions. Knowing His will in a particular situation is not a prerequisite to exercising faith in His ability. It has been stated that faith is not saying “God can”, but is saying “God will”. The above passage would suggest the reverse is true. The leper came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.” In effect,

he was saying, “Lord, I know You are able, but I do not know if You are willing.” Jesus’ response was to say, “I am willing. Be clean” (Matthew 8:3). A little later, He said to two blind men, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” (9:28). To believe Jesus is willing is to prejudge His actions, which is legitimate if He has disclosed His will, but is not legitimate if He has not disclosed His will.

To believe Jesus is capable is to have every confidence in His ability, but not necessarily to be aware of His intentions. When the blind men answered, “Yes, Lord,” Jesus touched their eyes and said to them, “‘According to your faith let it be done to you,’ and their sight was restored” (9:29-30). Their faith was demonstrating confidence in His ability, and the readiness to let Him work according to His own agenda and purpose. How God chooses to work in our circumstances is up to Him, but the reality of His working is always in response to our faith.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, I know with You all things are possible, and it is my prayer that in everything Your will be done in my life. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I praying for God’s ability to improve my circumstances or for His will to be done?