

MAKING THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE

By faith Christians receive Christ as Saviour and believe on Him for their salvation. They do not have to physically see Him to know what they believe because they walk by faith, not by sight (CP 2Cor 5:6-9). Sight is one of the human senses. Faith receives as fact that which is not revealed to the senses. It makes things hoped for as real as if they had already been received (CP He 11:1). Faith is the present assurance of a future reality. It is the conviction that what God says is true and that what He promises will come to pass. Without faith it is impossible to please God (CP He 11:6). Faith chooses to believe God's word above the evidence of the senses, knowing natural circumstances are to be kept subject to the word of God. Faith is not in denying the circumstances, but in believing that God's word can overrule them. Faith makes the impossible possible (CP Mt 17:20; 21:21; Mk 9:23; 11:22-23; Lu 17:6). We will look at those scriptures again in more detail as the study progresses.

Whether Christians act on God's promises in scripture is determined by what they believe He means. Sadly, many try to rationalise scriptures and so render themselves unable to partake of God's blessings in this life. They do not understand that God means what He says in scripture and says what He means (CP Nu 23:19; Psa 89:34; Isa 55:10-11; Jer 1:12). God's word has the power within itself for its own fulfilment. Whatever God has promised in scripture will come to pass. His word cannot fail. It is Christians who fail, not God's word (CP Ro 3:3-4). If God's promises are not being fulfilled in Christian's lives, it is not God's fault. Christians have to look to themselves (CP 2Cor 13:5). God will always be found to be true to His word and Christians must not try to rationalise it. They must take it at face value and act on it in faith believing that God will perform it, as He promises. Then they will have whatever they say (CP De 7:9; Josh 21:45; 23:14; 1Ki 8:56; Psa 31:19; 1Cor 1:9; 2Cor 1:19-20; 2Ti 2:13; Tit 1:2; He 10:23). While God's word has never failed, He has only obligated Himself to fulfil His promises in those who act on His word in faith, doubting nothing. To rationalise God's word is to doubt His word. Faith in God to perform His word need be no greater, metaphorically speaking, than a tiny mustard seed. It is not a matter of the quantity of faith, but of its quality. It must be free from doubt (CP Mt 17:20).

Jesus means a literal mountain here. It is not simply a figure of an obstacle, hindrance, or humanly insurmountable problem, as the vast majority of Christians in the contemporary church have rationalised it to mean. Jesus is referring to the literal mountain upon which His transfiguration had just taken place (CP Mt 17:1-2, 9, 14-20). In V 20 here Jesus was responding to the disciples' question as to why they could not cast the demon out of the boy, as He had. Jesus replied that if they had faith as a grain of mustard seed, they would not only have been able to cast out the demon, but could even command the mountain on which He had just been transfigured to move, and it would obey them. Jesus said a similar thing to this about a literal tree in Lu 17:6 (CP Lu 17 3-6).

In Mt 21:21 Jesus was responding to the disciples'

amazement at a fig tree dying from the roots up after Jesus cursed it (CP Mt 21:17-22). We see here that Jesus literally spoke to the fig tree, causing it to die. He told the disciples – and by extension every Christian throughout the church age – that if they had faith and did not doubt, they could not only do the same as He did to the fig tree, but that they could make *this mountain*, like the mountain on which He was transfigured, also move itself. *This mountain* here is the Mount of Olives (CP Mt 21:1; Mk 11:1). Paul did not rationalise these mountains to mean anything other than the literal mountains they were (CP 1Cor 13:2). Christians must believe that Jesus is referring to both a literal mountain and a literal tree in these teachings, and that if they act out their faith, though it may only be as tiny as a grain of mustard seed it will produce the results Jesus promises. Jesus places no limit on what Christians may speak into being or ask for in prayer if they act in faith, not doubting, but believing God to fulfil His promises in scripture (CP Mt 21:21-22; Mk 9:23; 11:22-24). Every Christian is promised everything they ask for in prayer providing they qualify for an answer (CP Jn 15:7-8; 2Cor 1:19-20; 1Jn 5:14-15).

If Christians' faith does not extend to taking God's word at face value and acting on it instead of trying to rationalise it, then they will never be able to produce the results Jesus promises in scripture (CP Mk 16:17-18). Sadly, this scripture too has been rationalised by Christians to mean that the signs Jesus promises here that will follow Christians ... *them that believe*, were only valid for the first century church, and do not apply today. These signs are the outworking of the baptism in the Holy Spirit which Jesus promises to everyone who will believe in Him (CP Mt 3:11; Lu 11:11-13; Jn 7:37-39; Ac 2:36-39; Ga 3:13-14). *All that are afar off* in Ac 2:39 includes Christians today and all who will come to Christ in the future (CP Ac 5:32). *Them that obey him* here refers to every Christian in every age from Pentecost onward (CP Mt 28:20). Jesus qualifies the life of His commands and promises to the church here by adding "... *and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*". That means that Jesus was not only talking to His disciples of that era, but to His disciples throughout the whole of the church age. What applied then applies today too. This clearly refutes any teaching that the signs in Mk 16:17-18 were only for the first century church. Signs were not limited to the first century church any more than Christ's command to preach the gospel and baptise repentant sinners was (CP Mk 16:15-16; 2Cor 5:18-20).

Signs are the evidence to a lost world that Jesus is alive – He confirms the ministry of those doing the work of God's word with signs following (CP Mk 16:20; Ac 5:12). Signs are a demonstration of the Holy Spirit and of power that awakens unbelievers to a consciousness of the presence and the power of God, which raises their faith in Jesus and they get saved (CP Jn 20:30-31; Ac 2:41-47; 3:1 – 4:4, 5:12-14, 8:6-7; Ro 15:18-21; 1Cor 14:22). Signs include casting out demons, speaking in tongues, healing the sick, the working of miracles, prophecy, restoring life to dead people, exercising authority over the elements, walking on water, turning water into wine, making the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk and the

dumb to speak. Everything that Jesus did, He promised that Christians could also do (CP Jn 14:12-14). This also is a promise to every Christian throughout the whole of the church age. It is clearly inconsistent with scriptures to teach that God only empowered the first century church for service and that the same empowering is not for today. If the contemporary church is also to fulfil Christ's command to disciple all nations, then it has to have the same empowering the first century church had and to teach otherwise is totally wrong. All Christians have to do is believe God's word and act on it and God will confirm the word with signs following.

In the natural realm it is impossible to make mountains move or trees uproot themselves and be planted in the sea. It is impossible to turn water into wine or raise the dead to life again. It is impossible to walk on water or control the forces of nature etc. But God does not operate in the natural realm – He operates in the supernatural, or spiritual realm, and He has empowered Christians to do the same. They simply act on His word in faith, believing Him to perform it. Faith acts on His word (CP Lu 5:1-7). This is a lesson in faith for every professing Christian. Notwithstanding that in the natural realm Peter had fished those waters all night and caught nothing, he did what Jesus said “... *nevertheless at they word I will let down the net.*” Because Jesus said it, Peter did it, and it worked. And it will work for Christians today too if they will but believe totally in the testimony of scripture and act on it in faith. In so doing they release the creative power of God's word to work in their circumstances and change them, if need be (CP Ac 3:1-16).

Here again we see Peter acting out his faith in God to perform His word. He simply spoke the desired end result over the man's circumstances and God changed them – the man who was a cripple from birth for over forty years now had a miracle worked in his life – he was made whole. Many in the contemporary church teach that it is sheer audacity for Christians today to think that they could just walk up to someone in the same predicament as the beggar and get them healed, like Peter and John did here. Yet they did no more than what Jesus has given every baptised in the Spirit believer in the New Testament church the mandate – the authority – to do in His name as all the scriptures subject of this study clearly prove (CP also Jn 16:7, 23-24). There is a much needed lesson for the church in what Peter and John did with the beggar. They did not ask him if he wanted to be healed – they just exercised their faith in God to perform His word like Jesus promised. The man got healed and God was glorified (CP Jn 15:7-8 with Ac 3:8-10). The disciples had the mandate to do what they did as Christians today have too (CP Lu 24:49; Ac 1:1-8).

To be God's witnesses in the world includes not only preaching His word, but also demonstrating the outworking of His power in Christians (CP Ac 8:4-8; 1Cor 2:4-5; 2Cor 12:12; 1Th 1:5). Over five thousand souls got saved as a result of the beggar being healed in Ac 3 (CP Ac 4:1-4). New Testament Christians should never sit under any teaching in the church that might suppress their faith to believe in the implicit truth of God's word, and that they have the same mandate to do what Peter and John did. Christians

must never be afraid to exercise their faith in God to perform His word anywhere, anytime, in the name of Jesus, for God's glory (CP 2Cor 1:19-20).

A lesson also learnt from what Peter and John did with the beggar in Ac 3 is never to just leave people to their own devices after praying for their healing. Christians must challenge them to act out their healing in faith. Peter did not wait for the man to rise up of his own volition – he pulled him up and made his mind up for him (CP Ac 3:7-8). Jesus also gave Christians a good example of how to challenge someone to act out their healing in faith (CP Mk 8:22-25). When complete restoration of sight was not immediately manifest here, Jesus kept challenging the man until it was. Where it says in V 23 that Jesus asked the blind man if he saw anything, this means in the literal English rendering of the Greek that Jesus kept asking him “...*do you possibly see anything?*” and laid hands on him again, and made him look up till his eyesight was completely restored. This is the only record in scripture of Jesus healing someone in two stages and Christians must be prepared to also persevere as He did if complete healing does not manifest itself immediately, for whomever they are believing it.

That over five thousand souls got saved as a result of the beggar being healed in Ac 4:1-4 proves how crucial signs are in God's purposes to awaken unbelievers to a consciousness of the presence and the power of God in Christians and to raise their faith in Jesus for salvation. The more signs that are wrought through Christians, the more souls will be won to Jesus. Jesus placed great importance on the signs that followed His ministry (CP Jn 10:36-38; 14:8-11 with Lu 7:19-23). The signs that followed Jesus proved who He was in God. Christians should place great importance on them also. They prove who Christians are in Christ. The first century Christians showed no fear in exercising their authority in Jesus for all the world to see and neither should Christians today (CP Ac 4:29-33; 5:12-14; 6:8; 8:4-8; 14:8-10; 20:7-11; 29:3-9; Ro 15:18-21; 1Cor 2:1-5; 4:20).

Another reason why many Christians do not act on God's word is because of their fear of failure. Yet the outcome does not depend on them. It depends on God. All Christians have to do is act on God's word in faith, believing that He will do it. It is God's responsibility, as scriptures clearly teach. Let us now study the scriptures that teach this in detail. The more they are studied the more one's faith is built up to act on them (CP Mk 11:22-24). This is a Divine object lesson on faith. There are absolutely no limitations whatsoever on what those whose faith is in God to perform His word, may speak into being, or ask for in prayer. Jesus promises that *he shall have whatsoever he saith*. Every Christian without exception is promised everything they ask for in prayer providing they qualify for an answer (CP Jn 15:7-8). Conditional upon Christians abiding in Christ and His word abiding in them they can ask anything of God and it will be done for them. He is glorified in the answered prayers of fruit-bearing Christians. The fruit they bear are His promises being fulfilled in their lives (CP Jn 16:16, 23-24). Here Jesus promises the disciples, and by extension every Christian throughout the church age, that everything they ask the Father in His name, the Father will do it. This is the Christians'

Power of Attorney – the legal right to use Jesus’ name. All Christians have to do is ask the Father in Jesus’ name for whatever they desire in prayer and it will be done for them, that their joy may be full (CP Mt 7:7-11; Lu 11:1-10).

There is not one promise of God in scripture that is not to a Christian (CP 2Cor 1:19-20). The clear teaching here is that every promise of God in scripture is still valid for today – able to be appropriated through faith in Christ by all who will believe God for the promises to come to pass, and meet the conditions. The word *Amen* in V 20 affirms the truth of what is being said and declares the certainty of the promises being fulfilled. This is a revelation of the integrity of God’s word. Let us read those scriptures again that teach this (CP Nu 23:19; Josh 21:45; 23:14; 1Ki 8:56; Isa 55:10-11; Ro 4:17). Christians must not let anxiety over anything overcome them (CP Php 4:6-7). This teaches that all Christians have to do is pray for the requests they desire, and thank God in advance for granting them. By praying this way they are assured of answered prayer because the peace of God will settle their hearts and mind through Jesus. Anxious care by Christians is forbidden. God will grant the requests they desire. That is His promise (CP 1Jn 3:19-22). We learn from this that Christians can know that if there is no unconfessed or unrepented sin in their lives then they can know that God will hear and answer their prayers (CP Psa 34:15-17; Pr 15:8, 29).

Christians can rest assured in the knowledge that whatever they ask of God in faith they will receive (CP 1Jn 5:14-15). *According to His will* here means

according to His word. God’s word – the Bible – is His revealed will. Christians complying with God’s word can be sure that whatever they ask for accords with His will. Christians walking in fellowship with God’s word will never ask for anything outside of His will and this ensures that the answer to their prayers will always be yes (CP Psa 34:15-17; 145:18-19; Pr 15:8, 29; Mt 7:7-12; 18:19; 21:22; Mk 11:22-24; Eph 3:20; He 11:6; Jas 1:5-8; 5:14-15; 1Pe 3:12; 1Jn 3:19-22). Those scriptures all teach that to comply with God’s word means being in obedience to His declared will. Those who know God’s word like this will never want for answered prayer. This is the confidence they can have in Him, that, if they ask anything in accord with His word, He hears them: and if they know that He hears them, whatsoever they ask, they know that they have their requests granted. *Whatsoever we ask* (KJV), is another confirming promise that there is no limit whatever on what Christians may ask of God in prayer.

It is not the author’s intention to condemn Christians in this study, but to challenge them to accept God’s word at face value and to act on it in faith, doubting nothing. The same faith by which they believe for their salvation will suffice – that is enough to make the impossible possible (CP Mk 9:23).

(For related teachings on this subject see author’s studies on *Faith and confessing God’s Word* in his book **Foundational Truths of the Christian Faith**, and *Signs and Wonders in God’s Redemptive Plan* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 1)**).