

Hard Sayings Of Jesus

Lesson 11

I. Is there anything wrong with this statement? "*Some believe that if you say, 'I believe that God can heal me if He plans to,' that is faith, but that is not faith at all. To have faith is to say, 'I believe that God IS GOING to heal me TODAY!'*"

II. This Week's Hard Saying

Mark 11:23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. KJV

Matt 17:20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. KJV

Matt 21:21-22 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. 22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. KJV

III. Why This Is Hard

- a. This is a hard saying because while the size of the faith required is so miniscule, the effect of such little faith appears to have mountain moving **potential**.

IV. The Interpretation

- a. There are two primary questions that will help us interpret this statement: 1.) **To whom** does this promise belong? And, 2.) Are the mountains that are being referred to literal or figurative?
- b. In two of the passages, the **context** reveals that the Apostles were amazed at the fig tree that had been previously cursed by Jesus. Immediately following, Jesus issues His hard saying regarding mountain moving faith. Matt 21:20 "When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away."
- c. Clearly such faith as to move mountains would be miraculous. The **purpose** of miracles, signs and wonders was to authenticate both the message and the messenger in the first generation of the Church. Mark 16:17-18 17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18. They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.
- d. It must be borne in mind that earlier Christ had appointed 12 of His disciples to preach the Gospel and to perform miracles in **confirmation** of their commission. Matt. 10:1 "And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal all manner of sickness"
- e. Luke also tells us that, "after these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two and gave them miraculous powers as well bidding them "**heal the sick**" Luke 10:9; 17.
- f. Paul referred to these miraculous powers when he spoke of, "The signs of an **Apostle** were wrought among you" 2 Cor. 12:12.
- g. Therefore, the **primary recipients** of this mountain moving faith would have been the Apostles who under a special anointing received this gift as a means of authenticating both their message and their ministry. Acts 28:3-9 3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. 4 And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. 5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. 6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god. 7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously. 8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. 9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed :KJV

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- h. The power of this faith is **illustrated** by its ability to remove “this mountain”. Rather than soften the expression by making "mountain" a reference to any difficulty, it is best to treat it literally.
- i. In two accounts, they were leaving Bethany which is located on the south-eastern slope of the Mount of **Olives** about 2 miles east of Jerusalem so it is likely that Jesus pointed to this mountain as an illustration. Mark 11:11

V. Limitations on Mountain Moving Faith

- a. The language of this passage is indefinite and unqualified, yet we should not draw the conclusion that it is to be taken without any **limitation**.
- b. Christ’s object was to assure His Apostles that if they prayed in faith for a supernatural gift or power in particular or during a **specific** circumstance, that gift or power would be granted to them within limits.
- c. We know that this promise to the Apostles of answered prayer was not a **universal** one but it was limited in its application for special circumstance. 2 Cor 12:8-9 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. KJV 2 Tim 4:20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick. KJV
- d. Therefore, this promise made by Christ with respect to the working of miracles was thus conditioned upon the exercise of a **certain kind** of faith which was the result of a unique situational gifting. 1 Cor 12:6-10 There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. 7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, NIV
- e. Matthew 17 furnishes us with an illustration of the Apostles being unable to perform a desired miracle because of their failure to meet the **condition** attached to the promise. Matt 17:16-20 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. 17 Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. 18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. 19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? 20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.
- f. We know that the **general reason** for the inability of the disciples to rid the boy of the demon was their “littleness” of belief and a difficult demon.
- g. What we do not know is the specific ways in which their belief was deficient or how they failed to meet the conditions **prescribed**.

VII. Conditions for The Use of Miracle Working Faith

- a. Miracle working faith is to be distinguished from saving faith; they are not **the same**. Miracle working faith has some conditions which we may learn.
 1. First, it could only be exercised by those who had been endowed by **supernatural** power to work miracles, which pertained especially to Christ’s servants at the beginning of this Christian era.
 2. Secondly, such faith had to rely implicitly upon the specific **promises** which Christ had made to them that when help was required He would enable them and bring about the specific miracle.
 3. Miracle working faith is actualized by genuine submission to the **will of God**, not conditioned by the desire of the servant of God. 1 John 5:14 “This is the confidence that we have in Him: that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us”
 4. Christ has left us a perfect example of **submission** to the will of the Father when He asked that His petition might be denied and the will of His Father done. Luke 22:42 “Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done”
 5. Miracle working faith assumes abiding in Christ in that moment. This implies a seeing from God’s perspective; recognizing the desire of the Holy Spirit and **comprehending** in the spirit what He will do through you. John 15:7-8 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. KJV 2 Kings 6:17-18 And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. 18 And when they came down to him, Elisha

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prayed unto the Lord, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. KJV

6. Peter exemplifies this spiritual sensitivity (**abiding**) when he healed the beggar and dealt with Ananias and Sapphira. Acts 3:4-9 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.⁵ And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.⁶ Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. ⁷ And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. ⁸ And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. ⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God: KJV Acts 5:3-4 ³ But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? ⁴ Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. KJV

VI. **Implications For Us**

- a. While the Bible clearly teaches us to pray and to expect dramatic results in answer to prayer, these verses appear to say that prayer **harnessed** by the will of God can even move mountains!
- b. It should be clear to us that only God can move mountains, that is within His own sovereignty and almighty power - **not ours**.
- c. Since the beginning of New Testament times, miraculous works of God for His purposes, have been largely confined to the first generation of the Church but that is not to say that God could not or would not do the **same today**.

VII. **Application**

- a. List some ideas you have as to what might have prevented the Disciples from being able to cast out the demon.
- b. From that list of things, how many of those things would keep you from accomplishing something that the Holy Spirit might have in store for you.
- c. What can you do about it?
- d. What will you do about it?

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- c. We know that this promise to the Apostles of answered prayer was not a _____ one but it was limited in its application for special circumstance. 2 Cor 12:8-9; 2 Tim 4:20
- d. Therefore, this promise made by Christ with respect to the working of miracles was thus conditioned upon the exercise of a _____ of faith which was the result of a unique situational gifting. 1Cor 12:6-10

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- e. Matthew 17 furnishes us with an illustration of the Apostles being unable to perform a desired miracle because of their failure to meet the _____ attached to the promise. Matt 17:16-20
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