

August 2011

UU. Only believe.

“As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, **Be not afraid, only believe.**” Mark 5:36 μη φοβου μονον πιστευε.

This is where Christ came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue where a young girl was ill. The crowd thought she was dead, but the Lord said she wasn't. He told her to rise up and walk and she did. But in verse thirty six he gave us a very important doctrine to live by, to **be not afraid, only believe!**

These two verbs are both found in the imperative mood of command. To **fear** is the present middle imperative of , and **only believe** is in the present active imperative of *pisteuo*. Which would translate out as, “stop being afraid”, because of the use of the word *me* telling us that the command is to stop an action in progress; they were afraid and were to stop it. And the next one would be to “keep on believing”, because of the use of the present active imperative, which has the idea of one being commanded to continue on in the action they were doing.

The word *monon*, from *monos*, meant only, alone, the only one, isolated, by itself, the only thing. Whatever is being discussed is to be the only thing involved. Which tells us that we're to live our lives **only by faith!** And that faith in God and his Word is the only thing that is to be circulating through our stream of consciousness! There is to be no place for doubt, disbelief, or fear – only faith.

And we want to notice that in both commands the active voice is used to show that the believer in Christ **is** to do this, to not be afraid and to only believe, **but it also tells us that he can do this!** That's the good news about living in the spiritual life dynamic. **We are not victims and we are not hostages to the world around us and to our situation. We can choose to believe!**

In John 14:27 the Lord told us that he left his peace behind on earth for us to possess, experience and enjoy. “*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*” To be **troubled** is the present passive imperative of *tarasso* and be **afraid** is the present active imperative of *deiliao*.

Tarasso meant to be agitated, disturbed, confounded, unsettled, stirred up, thrown into a state of disarray, or agitation of the soul. *Tarasso* would be a **nondescript agitation going** on inside us. It would refer to what we refer today as being **stress in the soul**. Making a distinction, pressure would be that which is **external**, while stress would refer to what we have **internalized** in our souls. Pressure is inevitable; but stress is optional. Once we have **stress**, or this nondescript agitation inside us, then the next thing that will come along is the activation of the emotional complex with usually the first emotion being **fear**, then followed by anger. So lack of faith opens the way for the external problems and pressures of life to become stress in our souls followed by fear. But the word for fear here is not *phobeo*, but *deiliao* which is one of the words for fear, but a fear that results in timidity or cowardice.

Faced with the prospect of being all alone in a world that hates Christ, like children without parents, and having the one that you love, the only one that you really love, leave you to go to another place is understandable that their hearts are stressed, with all kinds of things going on in their minds, with fear one of them. But such a kind of fear that would cause them to be afraid, to shrink back. It's like they would want to go run and hide, **but Christ's antidote for the poison of fear is his peace. So he tells them to stop being agitated and afraid because his peace will handle everything in life.**

Christ told us these things so we can have peace in this life, **but we will have to exercise faith in what he has said!** “*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*” John 16:33

“I have told you these things, so that (for the purpose) in me you may have peace”

Christ has been instructing his disciples on many things in chapters 15 and 16, one of them was on the ministry of the Holy Spirit to them when he comes to earth. The word **told** here is *laleo* and was used to denote instruction in a conversational tone and form. Some people think that there is such a thing as preaching and teaching, where teaching is something one does in Sunday School, but preaching is where one modulates the voice, gets a rhythm going, cranks up the volume and throws the emotions into it to get people worked up.

Where what is really going on is just communicating God’s Word. The preferable form, which one uses when dealing with positive volition is *laleo*, a normal speaking voice. If one is dealing with negative volition it goes to a **rebuke**. And if it is dealing with strong negative volition it goes to a **chewing out**, often accompanied by warnings and sarcasm.

Now *hina* plus the subjunctive introduces a purpose clause. Christ has been instructing his disciples in a conversational tone on several matters and he’s doing it for the purpose that they might experience the peace that he has. **Christ has peace; he has always had it; he’s giving it to them and he wants them to experience it also!** But experiencing peace is not an automatic thing. There are some things involved that one must apply, if he wants to experience and enjoy inner tranquility. Certainly one would need to go back over chapters 15 and 16 again and again to understand what Christ is talking about and metabolize it by faith. What this will do is not only give the believer knowledge, but a frame of mind concerning spiritual realities. The he goes on to explain to us the reality of where we are in this world and a word of encouragement concerning our lives and the future.

2. “*In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world*”

“In the Cosmos you are having pressure. But take heart (be encouraged)! I have overcome the Cosmos.” **Christ is stating an objective fact to them that in this world system, on this planet they will have trouble, *thlipsis*, pressure!** (Anybody having pressure in his or her life?) Living in a world presided over by the devil, living in an hostile environment, surrounded by millions of people with sinful natures, having a sinful nature in the flesh ourselves, having to deal with harsh natural elements, having to fight just to survive, living on a planet filled with demons - yes, there is pressure! And it is not that pressure might exist; the indicative tense of *echo*, to have and to hold, tells us that we will have pressure! And in the present tense it is a **constant reality**.

But he hits us with *alla*, the conjunction of contrast! But he says, “**take heart**”. *Tharseo* meant to be encouraged, to take heart, thus leading one to be confident, instead of fearful. When one looks at the things mentioned that are found in the world; the things that cause us pressure in life, we will be fearful. And **fear robs us of our peace**. So he tells them to take heart, to be encouraged and gives them the reason why; he has overcome the world! And because he wants us to be continually confident and courageous toward our life, toward having to live in this world “with devils filled”, **we have to be continually be believing the truth that Christ has overcome all of it**. He uses the perfect tense of to overcome to tell us that he had already done it prior to the time that he made this statement. **Courage and calmness for the believer comes through exercising faith in the Word!**

The word for *overcome* is *nikao* and it meant to overcome, to be the victor, to prevail, to conquer, to win. It was used in winning your case in the legal arena, to conquer your enemy on the battlefield and to being the victor in an athletic contest. But what's interesting here is the use of the perfect tense and not the future, for he states **that he has already overcome the world, perfect tense, and this was before his crucifixion and resurrection.** The perfect tense looks at the action of the verb from four different standpoints; the beginning of the action, its progress, its completion and the existence of its finished results. And with the use of the indicative mood it **signifies the action as having been completed from the point of view of the present time.**

So when he says that he has overcome the world it's very significant, because he's telling them that he has already overcome the world prior to him telling them that. But when did this begin and end? How did he do it? And what was the concept by which he overcame the world?

The Apostle John wrote on this subject of overcoming the world. He says, "*You have overcome the evil one*", 1 John 2:13 This was **because they were believers in Christ and were strong because the Word of God was in them due to metabolizing it by faith.** It brings in the idea that you have to be stronger than the enemy to win the battle. "*I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.*" 1 John 2:14

He also talks about how they were **victorious** over the teachers of false doctrine, the demon spirits, the people belonging to the cosmos and the spirit of the anti-christ, because they are believers in Christ possessing the Holy Spirit. "*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world*", 1 John 4:4

He also writes that it is **our faith in Christ** that has given us the **victory over the world.** "*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*" 1 John 5:4,5 "*He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.*" Revelation 3:5 "*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*" Revelation 3:21

At exactly what point did Christ overcome the world? It's hard to say; some say at birth due to him being God and being sinless, but the use of the word *nikao* precludes that conclusion. *Nikao*, to have the victory, or to be the conqueror, implies that **there first has to be a battle!** It is the contest, the court case, the battle for there to be a winner and a loser! And if faith and doing the will of God are a crucial point in all this, then there has to be a test.

It could very well refer to the testing Christ went through by the devil at the end of the forty days in the wilderness, where the devil offered him the world and everything it has to offer. **Christ promptly rejected it** in his faith in the Father's provisions and his commitment to the Father's will giving him the victory over the world. The concept of Christ's victory over the world appears to indicate that Christ had already overcome the world in every aspect by the time, and prior to, the time he was talking to them. The idea would be like, I have already overcome the world. Christ had already lived in the world for some thirty years by this time. He was exposed to everything found in the world, people, life, the religious system and so on, and had already overcome it in his mental attitude.

VV. All things are possible.

*“Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, **all things are possible to him that believeth.**”* Mark 9:23
ο δε ιησους ειπεν αυτω το ει δυνασαι πιστευσαι **παντα δυνατα τω πιστευοντι.**

A **possibility** refers to the prospect or potential for something to be true, or come true, for something to come to be, for that which does not exist to come into existence. It's opposite, **impossible**, means that something cannot happen or will not happen.

So, what kind of thinking do we have that governs our lives? Something **won't** happen? Something **can't** happen? It probably won't be! Is our thinking along the lines of **possibility**? Or **impossibility**? Perhaps we need to review once again what the Word of God says.

We need to focus our thinking and faith on what the Word of God says and not listen to other people or our own negative thoughts! *“But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; **but with God all things are possible.**”* Matthew 19:26 *“And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: **for with God all things are possible.**”* Mark 10:27 *“And he said, The things which are impossible with men **are possible with God.**”* Luke 18:27 *“But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; **but with God all things are possible.**”* Mark 14:36
*“Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: **is there any thing too hard for me?**”* Jeremiah 32:27
*“Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, **all things are possible to him that believeth.**”* Mark 9:23

This is it! This is what we have to believe! If we want to get our faith up and running again; the one thing that we have to have is we have to be totally and thoroughly convinced of the idea of possibilities! Not to just adopt the concept of looking at the different possibilities that there are in life, or the various possibilities there are to deal with our problems, but to adopt the possibility thinking that all things are possible with God!

The key to all this is to start focusing our complete attention, once again, back on the teaching of the Word of God. For it is as we start concentrating on the Word with our entire soul, and having confessed any sins we might have committed, that we recover the filling of the Holy Spirit; and it is there in the sphere of the filling of the Holy Spirit that **our faith starts to soar.**

Some believers only look at the impossibility of things, while other believers look at the possibilities. Some look at things from the eyes of faith, while others look at things from the standpoint of unbelief. When the twelve spies went into the land, ten came back and said it was impossible. Too many giants (problems). While the two came back and said we can do this! Their reasoning was that if God told us he was giving us the land, and if God told us to go into the land and conquer it, **then God was going to make it all possible.** They were looking at the possibilities of it all because they believed the God with whom all things are possible!

The possibility thinking of faith gives us freedom, while the negative thinking of unbelief binds us, restricts us, enslaves us. Possibility thinking gives us freedom from our past, our present circumstances, our weaknesses, our failures, the opinions of others, the world, flesh and the devil. Possibility thinking is “the sky's the limits”, while negative thinking is “this is the best it'll ever get”.

The possibility thinker looks not to himself, but to God who has the power. He knows that he can do all things through Christ who strengthens him. While the negative thinker looks to himself, to his circumstances, to his abilities, and says it can't be done...(because I can't do it)!

But we don't have to concentrate on a doctrine dealing with faith to get our faith back up and running, we can look at many passages of scriptures. For example, we can look at a passage that deals with the difference between the soul and our bodies, "*For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*" 2 Corinthians 4:16. The body is decaying each day, which can be quite painful and discouraging. But when we concentrate on the soul, the inner man, which is the real us inside, we see that it can be renewed each day. And Paul said because of that they didn't lose heart, faint, get discouraged.

There are many and mighty workings of God's power when his people exercise their faith, as both the Old and New Testaments attest to, but there are other wonderful workings of faith that may seem smaller in comparison, but nonetheless just as wonderful and powerful as the others. Such as, to be encouraged instead of discouraged, to have hope instead of despair, to go on in life with a smile on your face, instead of sitting down and giving up!

Or the type of faith that applies the Word of God to our lives which motivates us to keep moving forward in life with faith in the Lord and his Word after suffering disappointment, or failure, or the loss of friends, or the loss of loved ones. "*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,*" Philippians 3:13

Then there was the story of the man who had a young son who was demon possessed. Now the man recognized what was going on with the boy, but he knew that he didn't have the ability to do anything about it. So he took the boy to the disciples to have them cast it out, but they couldn't. Finally he took the boy to the Lord to have him cast it out. "*And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;*" Mark 9:17 He had a faith idea!

Here's where we see that the Lord reproached them, not for not believing on him, they had already done that, but for **lacking the faith necessary to accomplish the job!** "*He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.*" Mark 9:17 The way he words it implies that they **all** should have been able to do this!

Afterward the disciples came to the Lord to ask why they weren't able to do it themselves, to which he replied that this category of demon required prayer and fasting. "*And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.*" Mark 9:28,29 Prayer and fasting was a setting aside of normal things in life so one could give himself over to the Word and faith.

Christ told the disciples that **all things are possible to the one who believes**. "*Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, (and you can), all things are possible to him that believeth.*" Mark 9:21 In Matthew 19:26 the Lord said, "*But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.*" The word for *with* in the statement, but with God, *para de theo*, is *para*, which is used to designate motion to a position alongside, which is to say that, **when God comes alongside a matter that we can't handle, He can do it!**

And that's where prayer and our faith idea comes in. When we go to God in prayer asking him to do something for us, something that we can't do, and believe that he will do it, then God comes in alongside the matter and takes care of it! **But we have to go to God in prayer and we have to believe that he will do what we have asked him to do!** "*And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, (you) believing, ye shall receive.*" Matthew 21:22

Probably the shortest and best definition of enthusiasm is this:

Enthusiasm is seeing the possibilities and believing they can happen! Enthusiasm comes to us when we see the endless possibilities in life and believe they will come to be! Enthusiasm comes to us from really believing what the Lord had to say in Mark 9:23, “*Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, **all things are possible to him that believeth.***”!

In a way belief and unbelief have one something in common. Faith is where you believe that something **will come to pass**, that **you will receive** what you have asked God for. While unbelief is where you believe **it won't come to pass**, that **you will not receive** what you have asked for! Just like hope is **believing that good things will come to you in the future**. While despair is **believing that bad things are going to happen to you in the future!** The one is where one's faith is in the **positive**, while the other is where one's faith is in the **negative!**

When the twelve spies came back from spying out the land, ten of them said we can't do it because there are giants in the land. But the other two came back and said we can do it! Those with the negative perspective always have their reason of why it won't work, or why they can't do it, or why it can't be done. But all they're doing is diverting the real reason why from themselves over to something else.

They never come back and tell the truth and say, it's **me**, or it's because **I** don't believe, or it's because **I'm** negative, or it's because **I** don't have the faith. They always have to go back and blame it on something else, in this case, the giants in the land. They always have a reason as to why something can't be done, but never say that it's because of **their** lack of faith. These are the “Yeah..but” crowd, or, they already tried it, or it can't be done, or why bother, or it's already been done, etc., etc.. They always have something negative to say to wipe out somebody else's positivity! Why? **Because if they let somebody else's positivity go on to success it will reveal their negativity!**

To climb out of this negativity and start having a positive mind full of faith once again, we will have to start saturating our minds with this one thought...“***all things are possible to him that believeth.***”! And when we do, we will find ourselves coming out of the dregs of despair, discouragement, negativity and unbelief and start having a genuine attitude of enthusiasm for life, for our life!

Faith always has to have an object and for the Christian our object is God. There is no merit in faith; the merit is always in the object of faith, which is God again. So when we talk about faith, we are not talking about what faith can do, but what God can do when we look to him in faith.

Paul stated in Philippians 4:13, “*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*” Or literally, “*I am strong for all things through Christ who strengthens me.*” It wasn't Paul's faith that strengthened him, it was Christ who strengthened him as Paul trusted in Christ. Many believers have fear about the things that they may have to go through in life and that fear will rob them of their faith and enthusiasm, but if they can see that Christ will strengthen them so they can go through anything in life and come through it victoriously, then they can be enthusiastic about life.

Peace, joy, hope and enthusiasm come to the believer in Christ as he or she exercises faith in the Word of God. Paul reveals how this works in Romans 15:13, “*Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*” “*In believing*” is in the sphere of faith, that is, joy, peace, hope and the enthusiasm for life comes to us in the sphere of faith in the Word of God. All we need to do is keep within the sphere of faith in God's Word.

WW. Christ's sheep believe him.

“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.” John 10:26 αλλ υμεις ου πιστευετε ου γαρ εστε εκ των προβατων των εμων καθως ειπον υμιν.

Christ had been explaining to the Jews that he was the Good Shepherd and how, as the good shepherd, he not only protected the sheep from the wolf, but also that he would, and did, lay down his life, literally his soul - *psuche*, for the sake of and as a substitute for the sheep. *“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” John 10:11*

He sets himself apart from the **hireling**, *misthotos*, who not only does not protect the sheep in his flock, the local church, from the predators in the world, but abandons the sheep when the wolf comes. The reason why is that he is an hireling. A hireling is one who works for wages and today's equivalent would be the word employee. These men are employees of religious corporations, who may hold the title of pastor, or some such other thing, and in actuality their function is one of a general manager of this nonprofit religious corporation, but they are in it for the money.

Now Christ is speaking in principle form that applies to all men and cultures down throughout the centuries, but there is a special application to these religious leaders there in Israel. These religious leaders are involved in organized religion under the guise of being God's men and representatives here on earth, but they are **not** God's men; **they do not know Christ** and they are only in it for the money, the fame, the glory, or the power! They certainly do not care anything about the sheep or their souls! And remember, it is **Christ who laid down his soul to save the souls of his sheep!** *“The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.” John 10:13*

But there is something else about this relationship that Christ has with his sheep, and remember, it is the Father who gave these sheep to his Son, and that is **he knows his sheep and his sheep know him!** *“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.” John 10:14 KJV “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me.” John 10:14 NIV*

Now we get down to the matter of faith. Christ's sheep not only have believed in him as their Savior, but **they also believe him!** Whenever Christ speaks, whatever he says, we believe! That's what separates us from all the unsaved of the world, but also from those who claim to be of God, or who say they are Christians! And that's what separates these religious Jews from being his sheep.

Christ states that they do not believe him in John 10:25, *“Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye **believed not**: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.”* Actually he uses the emphatic negative **ou** to make the point that they absolutely so not believe him, that they refuse to believe him. Then he goes on to explain the reason **why** in John 10:26 by the use of the word *gar*, which gives the reason why something occurs or is true. You do not believe me and the reason **why** you don't is **because you are not my sheep**. And he uses the emphatic negative **ou** once again. *“But ye believe not, **because ye are not of my sheep**, as I said unto you.”*

Then he goes on to reveal something more, something that will be the thing that divides the sheep from the goats in this matter of who belongs to Christ and who doesn't, and that is the whole matter centers around the Word of God. **Do they listen to and believe Christ's words or not?** *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:” John 10:27* They don't listen to other men, be it the pope or any other religious leader, but they do listen to God's Word and follow Christ!

