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SALVATION

If you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, or aren't sure and would like to become one, then you need to believe that Jesus Christ was and is the Son of God, that he was God who became a man, that he lived a sinless and perfect life, keeping the Law of God perfect in every way, that he kept faith perfectly, and that he was crucified on that cruel cross for your sins, mine and the entire world- he died for our sins! His death on the cross paid the penalty fully, one time for all sins that we have ever committed and that we will ever commit. He died; he went down into the bowels of the earth, even into Hell, and was raised from the dead on the third day in a resurrected, eternal body. He ascended back into heaven, was seated at the right hand of God, and is now Lord over heaven and earth. He is coming again to judge the world, to raise the dead, where he will give an eternal, resurrected, glorified body to everyone that has believed on him as their Lord and Savior, and to establish his kingdom one earth.

You come become a Christian right now as you read this, by personally placing your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior; believing that he is God's only begotten Son, that he died on the cross for you and that he was raised from the dead and is now seated in heaven at the right hand of God the Father. *"Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."* Acts 16:31a And when you do trust Christ, and Christ alone, as your Lord and Savior, then go to God the Father in heaven in prayer and tell him so. Tell him that you have believed on his Son, thank him for his Son, and thank him for forgiving your sins and saving you! *"That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord", and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."* Romans 10:9,10 *"For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* Romans 10:13 *"Therefore, being justified by faith (declared righteous), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* Romans 5:1

C. Concepts concerning faith.

Faith is a choice; one chooses to believe or not.

It is not an operation of the senses, nor the rationalizing of the mind.

It has no doubts in it. Faith says it's true.

Unbelief, not doubt, is the antithesis of faith.

Doubt is the wavering between faith and unbelief.

Faith is the complete confidence that something will be, will come to pass.

Ultimately, biblical faith is in a person- *Yahweh*, the God of the universe.

Faith becomes trust; completely depending on that person.

Faith can look to the person's attributes, his integrity, power, mercy, etc..

It looks at the possibilities, not the problem.

It looks towards God's ability, not our inability.

It needs to be persuaded from time to time.

It needs to be convinced of God's intentions towards us, that they are good, by the persuasion of argument or the display of evidence.

It is persistent and perseveres.

It needs to be reminded of the fact that God is covenanted to us.

Encouragement by other believers is helpful to faith.

The Holy Spirit gives us faith.

The Word develops faith.

Prayer is a vehicle that develops faith.

Spiritual activity (works) proceeds out of faith.

Faith is a sign of the new nature created by God.

Faith is concentration on the Word of God.

Faith focuses on the Lord, his Word; blocking out the rest.

It can grow, develop and become completed.

Faith is the means by which the power of the Holy Spirit is channeled into the believer who has come to the end of his works of power.

Only faith works with grace. It is the only thing that responds to and corresponds with grace. Man's works reject grace, and grace rejects man's works.

Faith says, "I can't, but God can".

Faith is in the circle with grace and truth.

Faith must always have an object, and for God's people, it's God and his Word.

It cannot be taken away by Satan. We will always be able to believe, but he will try to keep us from exercising it.

Faith looks to God and his essence as the basis for trusting him. *Yahweh* is:

Sovereign- He is in total control and has a perfect plan for my life.

Righteous- All his dealings with me are good.

Justice- He will always be fair with me.

Love- His love for me is perfect and complete.

Eternal- My faith is safe, because he will live forever, always has, always will.

Omnipotent- He has the power to handle every situation in my life.

Omnipresent- He is with me wherever I go.

Omniscient- He possesses all knowledge and has all the answers for me.

Immutable- He never changes, so I can count on him.

Veracity- He's always truthful, making him totally reliable.

D. Some synonyms for faith.

Committing- Looks at the volitional decision to entrust a matter to the Lord.

Depending- Counting on the Lord's to handle the matter.

Trust- Helpless dependence on the Lord.

Hope- The confident mental attitude that good things will happen to you in the future.

Waiting- The mental attitude of faith from the time of the request until its fulfillment.

Patience- The mental attitude of faith while persevering in a trial.

Leaning- A relying upon the Lord to hold you up.

Following- Trusting in the Lord's plan, authority and leadership.

Believing- The verb form of faith.

Resting- Total reliance on the Lord and the non stress mental attitude it brings.

Relying- Same as depending. Looks to his faithfulness.

Looking to- Another synonym for faith.

Confidence- Faith developed to completion.

Praying- An expression of faith.

Call out- Another expression for faith.

Cast your burden- A pictorial mechanic of faith.

Cry out- An intensified concept motivated by faith.

Confident statements- Confident statements concerning the future are statements of faith.

Put in the Lord's hands- Expression of faith.

Boldness- Confidence of faith before God.

Walk with God- Living by faith.

Persistent- Faith that won't let go.

Looking to the City- Stabilizing view towards eternity.

Pleasing the Lord- Only done by faith.

The Christian's victory- Over death, Satan and the world.

The Shield- Metaphor for faith using the armor concept.

As a breastplate- With love.

As eating- The metabolizing of God's Word by faith.

What we've got to do is start developing our faith in the Lord and living by faith. And in this matter we are going to have to start avoiding the ideas and influences of those who are negative to faith and having a positive mental attitude. For there is nothing that can destroy a positive faith mental attitude than being around negative people and influences. We have to realize that the world is anti faith, our flesh natures are anti faith and most definitely the devil is anti faith! The last thing he wants to see is the power of God go into operation again in another believer.

Why not become a child again in our hearts in the sense that we start *dreaming* once more? Children are so wonderful to be around because they dream about the possibilities in life. Compare them with so many adults, who trudge along like zombies who have given up. They get up in the morning, go to work, come home, go to bed, take a little side trips in life, by a home, retire, then die! And why? Because they have given up on their dreams and their faith! .

If this is us, then we can turn all this around by starting to live by faith once again and the way that we can begin this is by believing in the possibility of all things; by believing *all things are possible to the one who believes!* By combining faith ideas and the grace and power of God, the sky becomes the limit and that's how we need to live.

E. Possibility Thinking

*“And he said, The things which are impossible with men **are possible with God.**” Luke 18:27*

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

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, 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 faith come 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, believing, ye shall receive.*" Matthew 21:22

F. Facing The Mountain

“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.” Matthew 21:21 αποκριθεις δε ο ιησους ειπεν αυτοις αμην λεγω υμιν εαν εχητε πιστιν και μη διακριθητε ου μονον το της συκης ποιησετε αλλα καν τω ορει τουτω ειπητε αρθητι και βληθητι εις την θαλασσαν γενησεται

When the Lord had cursed the fig tree, and they all came back by it the next day, the disciples were amazed at what had happened, that it had withered so quickly. So they asked the Lord, “**How soon is the fig tree withered away!**” Matthew 21:20 The word *pos* is an interrogative particle which asks the question of how, or in what manner did something take place. They saw that the fig tree was withered, but they wanted to know **how** it happened! And with the use of the word, *parachrema*, they wanted to know how it happened **so quickly**. *Parachrema* meant immediately, at once, or so quickly.

Apparently the disciples were more interested in the physical phenomenon of the tree withering than they were in the spiritual lesson about the spiritually dead nation of Israel and how it was being cursed by God, or the spiritual dynamics of faith and the power that comes alongside the exercise of faith.

But the Lord answers their question of how it happened in verse twenty one. The passage begins with the word *apokrinomai*, which meant to answer a question, or to reply to someone's statement, and then he goes into the mechanics of this destructive miracle, the only one recorded in the NT, and tells them that **it was accomplished by the exercise of his faith**. And he also tells them that they can also do such things, if only they believe.

He begins his statement with the phrase, “*Verily I say unto you*” or, “*I tell you the truth*” *amen lego humin*. Amen lego humin was a solemn introductory formula used at the beginning of a statement to alert the listener that what he was going to hear was of the utmost importance, that they needed to listen to it, understand it and do what it says!

Here the Lord is giving the disciples the secret for accomplishing these mighty works of power, (which power actually comes from God), but it is a two fold condition: **one**, there must be faith, and **two**, there can be no doubting. Both conditions have to be present. What we are looking at here is the secret of the universe: faith, truth, grace and the power of God.

He then says, “*If ye have faith*”, *ean exhete pistin*. *Echete* is the present active subjunctive of the verb *echo*, which means to have or to possess something. So what he's saying is, if you have or possess faith. But when we have ean used with the subjunctive mood of the verb it brings out a third class condition of if, where the condition for something to be fulfilled is first stated, and then if the condition is there, then its fulfillment will come to be.

For example, 1 John 1:9, “*If we confess our sins*, (maybe we will and maybe we won't), (but if we do, then), *he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*. Which tells us that the condition that God sets for him forgiving our sins and cleansing us is based upon our confessing or stating our sins to him.

But the other part of the condition in addition to faith is, “*and doubt not*”, *kai me diakrithete*. *Diakrithete* is the orist passive subjunctive of *diakrino*, the word for wavering back and forth between two positions. The subjunctive mood is also used with this verb, along with the connective use of kai, which tells us that these two ideas are connected together in the condition.

Which tells us that **we must be exercising our faith**, active voice revealing the activity of the will in all this, and at the same time not be doubting. *Diakrino*, to doubt, meant to waver back and forth between two positions or opinions, which means to be believing that God will do something, then go back to not believing that he will. It's to go back and forth between the positions of faith and unbelief. Maybe it will, maybe it won't. Will it? Won't it? Yes? No?

To *believe* is used here in the active voice, which shows the activity of the believer's will is involved in choosing to believe. But to *doubt* is found in the passive voice indicating that there is something in all of us, the fallen flesh nature, that acts upon the believer in such a way that causes him to doubt, that causes him to go back and forth between faith and unbelief.

The Apostle Mark's faith is a faith expressed in prayer. Whenever there is something that the believer wants, then it is expressed to God in prayer. So **Mark's faith is a faith that prays**. “*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. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*” Mark 11:23,24

Prayer is the vehicle by which one's will is manifested and directed toward God; God's almighty **power** is its source and assurance; **faith** is the opening through which his power works; and God's **sovereignty** is its only restriction.

Christ tells the disciples that if they have faith, they will be able to not only do what he did, but even more, “*ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain*”. And we notice the word *ye*, or *you*. It's not just that **he** did it, but by the inclusion of the word *you*, he's telling them that **they** can do it! If they have faith. **They**, if **they** have faith, could say to the mountain, “*Be thou removed and be thrown into the sea*”, then it would do that!

The first word is *arhethi*, the aoist passive imperative of *airo*. The second word is *bletheti*, the aoist passive imperative of *ballo*. We notice that both words have the same grammatical construction; they are both aoist passive imperatives, which tells us that two commands are directed toward the mountain, to be *removed*, (from its place), and be *thrown...where?...into the sea*.

The passive voice tells us something else. If they were in the active voice, it would tell us that the mountain had volition, which it doesn't. There is no animus, no soul life in a mountain, so it is incapable of volitionally obeying a command. But because it is in the passive voice, it tells us that the mountain has been the recipient of a command and will be the recipient of the action.

Which is to say that the mountain will be removed and be thrown, passive voice, into the sea. It will receive the action of the commands. But there will be something else, or I should say, someone else who will be the causative agent behind all this and that is the power of God the Father.

The question and issue for all of us is, 'Do you believe this?' Not just do you believe that Christ could do this? But do you believe that any believer in Christ could do this? I think the resounding answer from most, if not all, believers is, No! Even the yes' would have a loud no behind them. Was it just idle chit chat? Was he describing a hypothetical situation that could never exist? Then why did Christ take the time to talk about it? **And then why did he use the second person plural and tell them that they could do this, if they had the faith?**

Mark 11:23 adds, “*and shall not doubt in his heart*”, *kai me diakrithe en te kardia autou*, the arist passive subjunctive of *diakrino*. This is the second part of the two-fold condition for getting God to answer our prayers. One, we must be believing, and two, we must not be doubting.

“*In the heart*” is the dative case of *en te kardia*, telling us where the location of doubting comes from, the heart. Included also is the causative sense, which is to say, that **it is our hearts that cause us to doubt**. Our minds may believe something to be true, but it is our hearts that cause us to doubt. It's the things going on in our heart that influence us away from the position of truth and faith.

The Lord talks about the heart in Matthew 15:19, “*For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:*”, and Mark 7:21, “*For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,*” Quite a list of negative dynamics going on in the heart and all of them detract from faith.

Matthew has *dialogismoi poneroi* for evil thoughts, tending toward the idea of sexually impure thoughts. While Mark has *dialogismoi hoi kakoi*, tending toward the idea of evil reasonings, or the process of human rationalism devoid of faith, which has the idea of worldly viewpoint, the thinking of the world and its people, thinking based upon emotions, assumptions, etc..

It is this process of rationalism that we have to be on guard for in the life of faith. The mind reasons that it can't be done. The reasoning process of the world's people says it can't be done. And this is where doubt enters into our minds. **We must believe God when he says it can be done!** This is exactly what Proverbs 3:5 is about, “*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*” Trust in the Lord and stop leaning on our ability to reason things out with our minds!

Doubting is not unbelief. It is the wavering back and forth, the going back and forth between the two positions of belief and unbelief. This is exactly what Elijah was describing in 1 Kings 18:21, “*And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long **halt ye between two opinions?** if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.*” If Yahweh is God, then follow him. But if *Baal* is God, then follow him! If you think that Satan, or the people of the world, or your own thinking is true, then believe it! **But if you think that Christ's words are the truth, then believe and act on them!**

The heart tends toward unbelief because of its reasonings and doubts, so it acts upon the believer in such a way that it creates an opposing viewpoint to faith. The writer of Hebrews told us about the problem of the unbelieving heart in Hebrews 3:12, “*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an **evil heart of unbelief**, in departing from the living God.*”

The Apostle James told us to purify our hearts, James 4:8, “*Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.*” To purify, *katharizo*, was to cleanse something from dirt or evil. It had the idea that something was new or clean, but became dirty, so the dirt, the unbelief, needed to be removed from it.

James addressed this very problem in our prayers to God where we are to believe while we are praying and not be wavering back and forth between faith and unbelief. He said that the believer who does this is a *double minded* believer, *dipsichos*, literally a double souled believer and is unstable in all he does. “*But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.*” James 1:6-8

The Holy Spirit inspires faith ideas, not lust ideas. But the flesh will deceive us into thinking that our lust ideas are faith ideas! So how can we know the difference? It goes back to understanding and knowing what the various categories of lust are so we can eliminate them from our prayers. “*Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*” James 4:3

Matthew writes, “*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.*” Matthew 21:21

While Mark has it as, “*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.*” Mark 11:23

Matthew has “it shall be done” and Mark has “shall come to pass”. Both passages use the verb *ginomai*, which signifies a change of condition, state, or place. And would be better translated as to become, or come to be. It doesn't exist now, but it will in the future. So when he says, “*if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it will come to be.*”

Mark emphasizes the contrast between faith and unbelief in his passage by the use of *alla*, the conjunction of contrast. He says that if we do not doubt in our hearts, **but** believe that those things that we say shall come to pass, we will have whatsoever we ask.

In an odd sort of way unbelief is a sort of faith, a negative faith, a faith that something won't happen, that it won't come to pass! When the twelve spies went into the land and came back with their reports, two believed they could, while the ten believed they couldn't! It becomes unbelief when it comes to what God says. If God says we can do it, faith says that we can!

We not only can change our life by the exercise of faith, but we can also change life on earth! The power of God coupled with our faith can change both the spiritual world and the material world. By the exercise of faith we can not only change our lives, our circumstances, our environment, but the lives of people that we don't even know, both in the present and in the future!

Hebrews 6:4-6 deals with this concept of power, “*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*”

Many Christians incorrectly think that to “fall away”, *parapipto*, means to lose their salvation. *Parapipto* was a nautical term and what it actually meant was to drift off course. At one time these believers were attending a local church, taking in Bible Doctrine and living life in the filling of the Holy Spirit. But because they were under so much social and economic pressure by the religionists, they drifted off course from grace by going back to the temple, thus crucifying the Lord afresh. And as long as they were doing that they couldn't be spiritually renewed.

They had a taste of the powers to come in eternity future that God has for the entire Royal Family of God; powers that they could see in operation through the exercise of their faith in the Word, prayer and the filling of the Holy Spirit. **God's power that we can see operate today, if we exercise faith!**