

HE STILL MOVES STONES ~ WEEK 1 ~ DOUBT ~ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

READ HEBREWS 10: 35-36, 39 and HEBREWS 11:1

35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.... 39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul. ~ Hebrews 10:35-36

11 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ~ Hebrews 11:1

QUESTIONS:

1) The specific “faith” the author of Hebrews is speaking of in this particular passage is faith in the promise of eternal life for following Jesus. Do you remember Pastor G’s definition of faith that begins “Faith is the? How is that Biblical definition of “faith” different than just “really, really, really believing something you want to happen will happen?” How is this Biblical faith different from the New Age belief in “manifestation?”

2) The author of Hebrews uses words like confidence, promises, assurance, and conviction. When you think of your own faith do these words apply to your faith as well? If so, why is that? What is the foundation of your faith? How can we continue to cultivate this kind of confident faith, especially when faced with doubts?

READ MATTHEW 14:22-33

22 Immediately [Jesus] made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away. 23 After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone. 24 But the boat was already a long distance from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea. 26 When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.” 28 Peter said to Him, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.” 29 And He said, “Come!”

*And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” 31 Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and *said to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” 32 When they got into the boat, the wind stopped. 33 And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, “You are certainly God’s Son!” ~ Matthew 14:22-33*

QUESTIONS:

1) Walking on the water with Jesus was Peter’s idea! Why did he think this was possible? What was required before Peter attempted this miraculous thing? At first, he is killing it! Then he starts to sink. What do you think caused Peter to suddenly start to doubt? Jesus says that Peter had “little faith.” How little was Peter’s faith?

READ JAMES 1:2-8

2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. 5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8 being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. ~ James 1:2-8

QUESTIONS:

- 1) In this passage, James may be thinking back to the story he heard from the disciples about Peter's attempt at walking on the water. James talks about asking for something in faith. What exactly does he say we can ask for in faith and receive?**
- 2) Does this principle apply to anything and everything we want, if we ask for in faith, without doubting, will we definitely receive it?**
- 3) Based on our Biblical definition of faith what is the criteria for the things we can absolutely be confident about receiving from God when we ask for them?**

READ MATTHEW 10:1 and 8, MARK 9:14-24 and MATTHEW 17:18-20

1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness ... 8 heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give. ~ Matthew 10:1, 8

14 When they came back to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them. 15 Immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed and began running up to greet Him. 16 And He asked them, "What are you discussing with them?" 17 And one of the crowd answered Him, "Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; 18 and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it." 19 And He answered them and *said, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!" 20 They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth. 21 And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. 22 It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" 23 And Jesus said to him, "If You can? All things are possible to him who believes." 24 Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief." ~ Mark 9:14-24

18 And Jesus rebuked [the demon], and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once. 19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not drive it out?" 20 And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. ~ Matthew 17:14-20

QUESTIONS:

- 1) Reflecting on Mark 9:24, where the desperate father cries out, "I do believe; help my unbelief!" how can we likewise seek help from God to overcome moments of doubt in our own life and strengthen our faith in the process?**
- 2) When the disciples admit they could not cast out the demon, Jesus scolds them as a faithless and unbelieving generation. He also tells them they were unable to exorcise this demon because of the "littleness" of their faith. Does that mean anyone could have expelled the demon as long as they had "enough faith" or was there something specific about the disciples being able to do it compared to the average person? Why should the disciples have had enough faith to expel the demon? How does Pastor G's definition of faith apply here?**
- 3) So exactly how "small" was the disciples' amount of faith based on their actions? Obviously, Jesus wants the disciples (and us) to have "more" faith but how much faith do we actually need to have? If faith is the confidence that God is exactly who He says He is and that He will do everything He has promised to do, how can we measure the size or amount of our "faith" and how can we increase our "faith?"**
- 4) Faith healers often blame those who aren't instantly healed for "not having enough faith." How is that different from Jesus telling the disciples they have little faith in this passage? What is the litmus test for having "enough faith?"**

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

READ JEREMIAH 29:10-14

10 "For thus says the Lord, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you,' declares the Lord, 'and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,' declares the Lord, 'and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.' ~ Jeremiah 29:10-14

QUESTIONS:

- 1) According to this passage from Jeremiah, how can we increase our faith to the size of a mustard seed? According to the Biblical definitions of faith we have discussed, what can we expect to accomplish by faith? What can we NOT expect to accomplish by faith?**