

“....I live by the Faith of Jesus...”

Gal. 2:20c

Light on the Rock

by Philip Shields

Abstract: Unlock the most awesome power in all the universe: the very faith of the Son of God Himself, now available to live in you and me, if we ask, believe and receive. Learn how, in this message that can profoundly change our lives if we would just believe and practice it.

.....

(If you’ve never heard the audio of these messages, we recommend you do. These “transcripts” are only approximate transcripts. The audios cover more ground.)

Good day brethren. I trust you’ll find this topic today inspiring and very thought-provoking. Turn with me please to Gal. 2:20 – and I’m going to cover the 3rd phrase. We have covered the first 2 phrases ---being crucified with Christ, and letting Christ now live in us. This next phrase is very exciting and I’ve prayed God will convey its joy and excitement to you as we go through it today.

Galatians 2:20 “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and **the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God**, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

This last phrase we’ll emphasize- “living by Jesus’ faith” and not our own faith – is not possible until we have done the sequence indicated in Galatians 2:20: first crucified the self, and have invited Jesus to live in our hearts and lives. There’s a sequence that is absolute, in this passage. We cannot have His faith working in us until He is living in us, and that can’t happen until we crucify the self.

I must say this first: the phrase “live by the faith OF the Son of God” is translated “by the faith IN the Son of God” in most modern translations. It is true that we should also have faith in Jesus – and that’s clearly taught in many scriptures such as Colossians 1:4; 2:5; Gal. 3:26; Eph 1:15 and 3:12; John 6:29; 9:35; 14:1; John 17:20, etc.

Ephesians 1:15 “Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith IN the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints...” KJV The “work of God” is defined as believing in Him (John 6:29).

But in other scriptures, we need to know the KJV has it right to say it’s Jesus’ faith, the “faith OF Jesus”, that has to be at work in our lives. Galatians 2:16 is another such verse.

We clearly must also have faith IN Him, but in certain scriptures, it is HIS faith, “the faith OF Jesus”, that has to be the correct translation.

In the original Greek in Gal.2:20, the word translated either as “of” or “in”, is in the genitive or possessive case, which implies “belonging to”, or ownership. One Bible guide we reviewed translated it “...I live by the Son of God's faith”. That’s clearly what the Greek implies. I believe it is literally Jesus’ faith, not our faith. Scripturally that has to make sense too, if Christ is the one living in us. So I believe the KJV has it correct in this case, as it also has it correctly – that we are saved by *Jesus’* faith now flowing in us – as we also see in Romans 3:22, Gal. 2:16; 3:22 in the KJV.

I also believe doctrine can direct us here. We must have faith IN Jesus for Him to come live in us – but once He does come live IN me and with me, think about it—surely it has to be HIS mind (Phil 2:5), HIS life (Gal. 4:19), HIS righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30-31), and it is just as surely *His* faith that is working in us.

If He's living in me, I don't want Him as a co-pilot of my life but my leader, the pilot of my life. I want Him active in me, not a bystander. Otherwise, if I am living by my faith, and my faith can save me or deliver me, then I'd have something to glory and boast about. Paul says, it's all about GOD and HIS mind, HIS faith, HIS righteousness – so “that no flesh could glory”, except in Christ. Read it yourself in 1 Cor. 1:30-31 and lots of other scriptures as well.

The problem starts with us not doing the sequence in Galatians 2:20: we're not willing to let “the self” die, give up our lives and letting Christ live in us. I preach to myself as well.

What an Opportunity we Have!

So don't get me wrong: we must have faith in Christ –absolutely. But Paul is saying in Gal. 2:20 and a few other verses, that we also have the opportunity to have His very faith living in us, as we live day by day, and we can live by His faith.

IF we would let Jesus' faith live in us, God's greatest work in you -- and in me – would yet to be seen. Just imagine, if Jesus could walk on the earth this time not just as one individual, but through thousands and thousands of His people letting Jesus live in them, guiding and leading them. Even if this time around, Jesus could walk the earth, all over the earth, but in you and me and thousands of His people. This is what this is about! Let's wake up and start letting this happen more and more to the glory of the great God!

You will hear sermon after sermon about how we must become perfect – and there are certainly many scriptures which say that – but how? How do we become perfect? How do we live like God lived?

Here's “the how” – and it is simultaneously simple and difficult: the how is to let your self die (“I'm crucified with Christ”), and to now let the resurrection Jesus come live in us – and let Jesus' mind be your mind (Phil 2:5), let Jesus' love, Jesus' spirit, Jesus' actions flow through us. I said it's hard and easy. The easy part is to see that it is Jesus' life living in us. The hard part is truly letting go, and letting God. The hard part is to trust Him, believe He is in you, and let go of human fears, doubts and reasoning and to now be “in Christ”, while He is also in you and me.

I find that hard too. That's why I'm focusing so much on this verse: many preach it – and here's my own sermon to add to the thousands of others on this verse – but few use it, practice it, or live by it. The test is when you're told you have liver cancer. You're told your little boy has been hit by a car. You're told you've been fired or laid off. Now how's your mind and thinking doing? Is it your mind now in charge – or Jesus' mind, and Jesus' faith?

Imagine what our lives could be like if we could live by Jesus' faith; the faith of the One who raised the dead, who calmed stormy seas, who could sleep in a boat during a storm, who could multiple food when needed, and walk on water if that was what was needed.

Here's what Jesus told his disciples 2,000 years ago... and remember He also had said He would be with His followers to the end of the age. That has to include us, if we would just believe.

John 14:12-14

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, **the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do**, because I go to My Father. 13 And **whatever** you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask **anything** in My name, I will do it."

Do *you* believe you could do as great, or even greater works, than Jesus Himself did? So that's what we're going to cover today – living not just by faith, but living by *Jesus'* faith! I have a 3-part series on Living by Faith; you may wish to listen to that series too. But this sermon kicks it up a notch: it's not our faith, but Jesus' faith that has to be in us.

Did others do as great miracles? Peter and Paul resurrected the dead. Peter's shadow caused healing. Paul had visions of the very throne of God; so did John. Thousands were healed by the apostles.

Has God gone on vacation? Has He lost His ability to do great works, miracles and wonders? Of course not. Has He lost the ability to have peace in a storm? Of course not. We are the ones who are limiting the Holy One of Israel.

We love to have all the outward signs of being God's followers – we go to church, we sing in the choir, we have a Bible in our homes. Some talk about God openly – and millions abuse His holy name in profanity. Nominal Christians – who “have a form of godliness but denying the power thereof” (2 Tim. 3:5), probably describes many of us, much of the time. We LOOK good on the outside – kinda like the whitened sepulchers Jesus talked about – but are full of fears and shortcomings (“dead men's bones”) on the inside. We like to talk about God, but don't let His power really BE powerful in us. I preach to myself also.

If you got a chance to hear my previous recent sermons, you'll understand that we are saved by God's grace, HIS faith, HIS righteousness even (Phil.3:9), and we now have the opportunity to have REAL power, if we will just turn it on and USE it. I ask again: imagine having Jesus' faith? Imagine what our lives could really be like!

If you wish to know the sequence of how this happens, you must hear the previous sermons. We cannot have the resurrected Jesus living in us, until we first die. We cannot have a resurrection until there has been a death of the self. I covered last time how all this occurs. It is all about what God is doing in us, and continues to do in us. It is not about our works, but God's work in us. It is not about the righteousness we achieve by our hard effort – or else we have reason to boast. That is why Paul said clearly in Phil. 3:5-10, please go back and read it – that he did not want the righteousness by his keeping of the law, but only the righteousness that comes from God, by faith. I gave a 3 part series on God's righteousness where I fully explained all that.

This is so hard for people to believe. Your faith won't save you, folks. It's faith in Christ and faith of Christ that saves us (Gal. 2:16, 21; 3:1-14) through His Spirit, that is also given to us by faith, not by works as Galatians 3 so clearly explains. Ditto for Romans 2 and 3 and 4 as well.

So, assuming you've heard the other messages, I want to cover now what our lives would and should look like if we lived by Jesus' faith. Learning to let Christ live takes time. Paul taught the Galatians that he was working with them lovingly "until Christ is formed in you" (Galatians 4:19).

An important aspect of this message – but one I've covered before and don't have time to cover again – is that we must listen to the new nature, the Holy Spirit we have, even while we still have the old nature still living in us. I covered that in detail in the sermons titled "New Creation", as well the three-part series on God's Righteousness I recently gave, and even in the last sermon, "I no Longer Live, But Christ lives in me". So we sin when we listen more to the "old man" or old self, and we live righteously when we listen more to the New Creation in us. (See Rom. 8:8-9; John 14:5-8; Gal. 5:16-18; 1 John 4:4).

So now let's spend the rest of the time on the topic at hand: living by Jesus' faith, and HOW to. The first two steps were covered in my last 2 sermons: crucify the self, and then let Jesus life live in us. Now let's continue.

"I believe Lord. Help my Unbelief"

God on earth in human flesh – that was what Jesus was – encountered human worries and fears constantly. He still does, through all of us.

One time a man came to Jesus and tearfully begged him to heal his son. Jesus asked him, "Do you believe, because if you do, all things are possible for those who believe". ALL things, brethren. The man replies, "Yes, Lord, I believe...uh, help my unbelief" (Mark 9:23-24). That's one of the best examples of honest human nature. We initially give the right answer – and then realize we lied: we fear like crazy! We are full of doubt, if truth be known. "I believe, help my unbelief".

I've been praying that lately. "Lord, help my unbelief. Help me trust you more, believe you more."

Nothing destroys faith more than unbelief, doubt, fear, worry – all related issues. We see in our lives that whatever we believe becomes our truth and experience. So if we are afraid something bad is going to happen, that IS your faith at that moment, and that is what you're likely to see manifest.

Faith is believing something you don't yet see (Heb. 11:1). Faith is a most powerful tool in the universe. With it we can move mountains, Jesus Himself said, if we would believe even just a little.

Now get this: fear is also powerful kind of faith. It's believing something bad is going to happen. It's still faith. It's still belief. Fear and doubt are just very *negative* faiths. Whatever aspect of faith is strongest in you – positive or negative – is what you're going to see manifest in your life.

The word "FEAR" can be seen as a mnemonic, the first letter of 4 words: FEAR = False Evidence Appearing Real.

We are afraid because of a particular set of evidence in front of us. A giant who wants to fight us (Goliath; the giants in Canaan). A lay off notice. A lump in your breast. There is evidence. But are you going to focus on that evidence, or on the evidence you have a loving father who happens to be the Creator of heaven and earth? So remember: F.E.A.R spells out "False Evidence Appearing Real". It's not the true evidence of the power you REALLY have – not just around you and above

you, but inside of you! You have received power from on high, as well as the very presence of the Holy God Almighty Himself! Now will you and I believe that evidence? Or the physical scary thing in front of us?

Turn to Mark 6 please. When we fear, or doubt God's words (which is simply saying "I'm afraid that can't happen") we can prevent even the power of God from happening. You think I'm overstating this? Let me show you. We have to ask God – believe He is answering and has answered, and let's give up our fear!

Mark 6:4-6

"But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house." 5 **Now *He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.*** 6 **And He marveled because of their unbelief.** Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching." (also Matt. 13:58).

The very power of the Son of God Himself was limited by their faith, their *negative* faith – their doubting, their unbelief. We do the very same thing, every day! I promise you that! We have to wake up to see ourselves in these verses. That's why they're there!

About the Israelites who had left Egypt – en route to the Promised land, it is said: **Hebrews 3:19** "So we see that they could not enter in *because of unbelief*."

James 1:6-8 says if we doubt, we'll see that negative faith work powerfully indeed: our doubts will be materialized. We can say, "just like I thought; it wasn't going to happen", and we will be right. James 1 says "don't let him who doubts think he'll receive *anything*".

Jesus in you and me will have no doubts, no fears, and no second thoughts. Let Him live. If you're feeling doubt and fear, it's because you're allowing the "old man" to dominate instead of "the new creation, the 2nd Adam, Christ" to live in you.

In other scriptures, it says of Israel: "They *limited* the holy One of Israel".

How are WE limiting what God would do in our lives if we would just believe? God wants us to stand in awe of Him, realizing that He wants to give us far more than we can even imagine!

So are you worried, distressed, anxious or doubting? Those mindsets are a sin, because you are making the source of worry and doubt bigger than God. You know we ALL get there from time to time but the more Christ is in our hearts, the less and less we will have those issues. A while back I gave a series on "Living by Faith", and I recommend you hear the 3 part series.

So a first step on this journey of living by Jesus' faith is to realize doubt and fear just simply prevent us from seeing what God wants us to see and experience. In fact, the fearful and cowardly will not even be in the kingdom – you can read that at the end of Revelation!

HOW do we demolish doubt? And don't kid yourself: we HAVE to demolish doubt.

- Recognize doubt when it shows up. How? By how you're *feeling*. You'll realize you don't feel confident of something good. "Let not your heart be troubled" Jesus said. John 14:1

- Recognize you're probably doing things on your own – and you know your weaknesses. Get back to God's power! Ask God to take over your concerns and worries. Give Him your worries and concerns – and leave it with Him.
- Surrender those thoughts causing feelings of doubt to God. Repent of them. Turn them over.

2 Corinthians 10:4-6

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, **bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ..**”

- Read scriptural examples of how God delivered people in the past in impossible situations.
 - “faith comes by hearing the word” – Romans 10:17
 - Listen to songs of faith and power. Paul admonishes us to sing to one another. Put on a cd of worship songs. I find these elevate my thinking and my moods quickly.
- Replace negative thoughts with powerful praises to God thanking Him for being your Father and God and for being all powerful in our behalf.
- Focus on the greatness of God. Focus your eyes on Him without any doubt or wavering.
- Monitor and control thoughts that are affecting how you feel about things:
 - **Philippians 4:8-9** “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy -- meditate on these things.”

What are your thoughts lately about your health? Your finances? Your marriage? Your job? Your children? Your parents? Your church minister? Your neighbors? What's been your thinking about really any subject? Negative – or positive? I've really come to see how negative I can be, and am working on replacing it with more sunshine, more upbeat, more positive thoughts, words and feelings.

How often we let our thinking get negative. It's our “stinking thinking” that hurts us! Our problems are from the neck up – mostly in our head! Control thoughts = control our feelings = will control our success or failures. But again, with Christ living in us, our goal is to let His mind dominate (Phil 2:5).

HOW IMPORTANT OUR THOUGHTS ARE

The Bible is clear: we become what we think most about. What we think about comes about. Let me be more blunt: our lives are largely manifestations of what we have been thinking, focusing on and believing. Our present lives are because of what we have believed and accepted about ourselves. I believe now that God works within His own laws – and what we think about is powerful stuff and comes to maturity. If you read the Bible with that in mind, you'll see it from Genesis to Revelation.

If we wish to change what we are and who we are – we must first change our nature, and that starts with repentance and the sequence leading up to receiving God's nature: His Holy Spirit. We change our stinking thinking into the things of God. We do that with a complete surrender of the self, and *letting* Christ's mind be in us. When we do, we will start to see everything change around us. What we DO will begin to change as we change what we are, as well. Changing what we are precedes any change in what we *do*. Think godly, be godly, be holy – and in time we'll start living more holy and godly.

Why do think Jesus says “If a man lusts in his heart, he has committed adultery already in his heart”? Because we're attracting that sin the more we think about it. An adulterous person sends out “vibes” that are received by a person willing to play along with you – and BANG, it happens before you know it. That's why we have got to control what we let our eyes see. I speak especially to us men, for we are more visually oriented than most women. So a picture in a magazine, or a website featuring nude women, can easily get us thinking about things Jesus would not be thinking about!

So whose frequency are we tuning to? Satan's – or God's? Whose thoughts dominate in us? We can tell by how we're *feeling*!

We have God in our hearts when we have perfect love, for God is love. Perfect love, we're told, ‘thinks no evil’ – 1 Cor. 13:5.

Proverbs 23:7 says “as he thinks in his heart, so is he....”

If we want to change our circumstances – other than what God has divinely apportioned to us for His own reasons – if we want to change our life circumstances and patterns, we have to change our thinking! Our thinking will change our feelings, and our feelings will change everything! I have seen it in my life over and over – both positively and negatively. Changing how we think and feel about anything and everything, is like re-booting our mental hard drive. It resets *everything*.

If you think your wife is selfish – she will be. Your thoughts will be confirmed. You will find what you look for. Jesus Himself said so: “Seek and you shall find”. You think your husband just thinks about himself all the time? You'll find plenty of evidence. You think your boss is cheating you some way. You'll find evidence and it will be true for you. You think your son or dad is a jerk. That will be true for you. That's what you're looking for, and you'll find it. You can also choose to be positive though: you can start thinking what a wonderful husband or wife or dad you have – and you'll find that becomes true for you too! The thinking, and the feelings, precede the fulfillment!

Paul knew he was a son of God and that God had control of all things. So Paul learned to control his thinking. For example, whether he had a lot, or had nothing, he had learned to be content (Phil. 4:11), regardless of the state he was in. He had learned to always feel good, no matter what. In jail he and Barnabas started praising, singing, and praying – and God at that point responded by miraculously releasing them. Praise comes before victory. That's the ultimate in positive thinking!

On the other hand, Job had many fears. He was so afraid that his kids were sinning when they had parties, that he would offer sacrifices for them afterwards. And when everything started to “go south” on him, what did he say? “My fears have come upon me” – and they did! **Job 3:25** “For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, And what I dreaded has happened to me.”

So Jesus' teaching for us is this: start on the inside! Living by the faith of Jesus is an inside job. We have to crucify the self first, give up our lusts and desires, our goals and passions – and ask God to put in us HIS desires, HIS passion, HIS will, HIS mind. As we repent of our own life, we are washed in the blood of the Lamb and by His word, and become clean.

When we are clean inside (our hearts and minds) - - we are clean outside also.

Matthew 23:25-28

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee, **first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.**

27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." (also Luke 11:39-41).

We think about what means something to us. It's what the Bible calls "the HEART" of a man or woman. And what we think about happens. So Jesus says "out of the heart proceeds evil". And He also reminds us in Matthew 6:21 that "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also". You can reverse that: our heart is where our treasure is. Our thoughts are on the things that mean something to us at that moment: hunger, fear, vanity, or praise, forgiveness, love, hate Whatever means something to us at that moment.

We can tell if we are mostly carnal or mostly spiritual by what we truly are most often thinking about. Those who are carnal, set their minds on things of the flesh.

Romans 8:5 "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit."

That is why God tells us set our affections on things above – not on things on the earth. (Col. 3:1). What are we praying for? What consumes our minds and thoughts? When we're gardening, pulling weeds, or doing dishes, -- what fills our minds? Interesting thought, isn't it? If we're focused on God and the kingdom – we'll start seeing kingdom things in our lives going on now, and we'll see it more and more as we focus more and more on godly things! If we're focused on bills, debts, worry, lusts, frustrations, doubt, fears, anger – that's what we'll see more and more of as well.

Remember what James tells us? Let's read the sequence:

James 1:14-15 "Each one is tempted when he is drawn **away by his own desires** and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."

So we're commanded by Almighty God to 'watch your heart' – your feelings, what you're obsessing over, what's important to you, what you think about, or what you set your heart on!

Godly men or women set their hearts on spiritual things, things above – not on things of this world.

Colossians 3:1-4

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”

Romans 8:5-6 “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is **life and peace.**”

Sometimes we may have to “prime the pump” – so monitor what you’re thinking. You’ll more easily monitor it by how you’re feeling... but keep in mind we feel based on what’s going into our hearts. TV, entertainment, songs we listen to, movies we watch, conversations we get engaged in – all these things can be very positive, or very negative. Satan knows that, so he tries to seduce us, discourage us, tempt us, sidetrack us - - with movies, TV, the Internet, problems or gossip. So watch these things.

Instead, replace them with godly thoughts, godly praise and worship songs, godly movies if you can find any, godly conversations and godly prayers. You will have more faith and more good things come into your life.

Jesus’ example: he said over and over that everything about him was what the father told him to do, to say and to be. What an example! He said he was not here to do his own thing, his own will, but “the will of Him who sent me.” If Jesus comes live in us again, we will be more that way too.

THE SEQUENCE Jesus TAUGHT

So Jesus’ faith and example were:

- focus on things above; watch your thoughts. Seek to do God's will, not your own.
- Fight wrong thoughts with the word of God. All through the temptations of Satan, Jesus kept countering with “IT IS WRITTEN”, and then He would quote scripture. You can’t quote scripture if you don’t know it!
Even when Peter told him he would not have to be crucified, he rebuked that idea quickly and soundly and even said to PETER, “Get behind me, Satan!” – Mark 8:32-33.
- Cast out all doubt. In the case with Peter just mentioned, Jesus did not let that temptation to get out of His painful mission even get a toehold! Know Father wants us to have an abundant life, a good and healthy life, and wants more than we can possibly imagine (Eph. 3:20).

Then Jesus taught us the next natural sequence:

- ASK
- BELIEVE
- RECEIVE

Let’s analyze now each of those: ASK, BELIEVE—and then RECEIVE.

ASK

God's word chastises us for not asking for more, more often. For example, for more of God's Spirit. When was the last time you asked. He tells us in James 4, that we "have not for you ask not". Just ASK. Of course, we should be asking for God's will and godly things, not sinful or selfish things. But please ask. You may not have more than you have, because you haven't bothered asking. You have not, for you ask not (James 4:2), and when we ask it is often somewhat selfish (James 4:3-4). Ask for healing in prayer, for others, and you will be healed more likely, for example (James 5:16).

God knows what we need before we ask (Matt. 6:8), but He still tells us to ask. 1 John 5:14 says if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us! So why don't we, much more often!? If we seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness, God promises to provide all the things we would normally be worrying about – and don't need to be worrying about (Matthew 6:25-33). God wants to know we really want something enough to ask.

Luke 11:9-13

"So I say to you, **ask**, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For **everyone who asks receives**, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 11 If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

Matthew 13:12 "Whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance".
Hmm.

Need more wisdom? Ask (James 1:5-6), without wavering.

Need more Holy Spirit? Ask (Luke 11:13). Be bold (Heb. 4:16) as you come before God, because when "you" come before God, it is no longer you – but Christ, presenting Himself.

Remember, God inspired Paul to say he wants to give us more than we even dare ask for! But dare to! ASK!

John 14:13-14

"And *whatever* you ASK in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

John 15:7

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ASK what you desire, and it shall be done for you."

John 15:16 "...and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you."

John 16:23-24

23 "And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. 24 **Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.**"

Are you getting it? Within one discourse, Jesus says over and over and over: ASK! God wants us to ASK, AND ASK, AND ASK! Why? Because God wants to give and give and give!

Sometimes we have to ask more than once. Paul even asked 3x for something, 3x he was given an answer, but Paul kept on. Three times he is told "NO". He actually got an answer – "NO" – but he kept asking until the 3rd "no". Elijah had to ask SEVEN times before God answered his prayer for rain. Seven times. Naaman had to dip 7x before he was healed. Even Jesus at times had to ask in prayer for healing before a complete healing was done (Mark 8:22-25 – the blind man who had to be laid hands on twice before being fully healed; saw "men as trees" at first). The Persistent Widow of Luke 18:1-5 is another example given to us – keep asking if need be!

It's easier to ask than to believe. The problem is that we substitute asking for believing. I'm going to get into the believing part real soon.

This is the faith of Jesus! Jesus, the very son of God, prayed often. Asked often. He asked the Father to protect Peter from Satan. He asked all night long, for God to guide his selection of the 12 apostles. He asked 3x for the cup to pass in Gethsemane. He asked for Lazarus to be resurrected. He asked for a barren fig tree to wither up. He asked for – no, he commanded – the winds to calm down in a storm. He asked God to multiply the loaves and fish. ***Even JESUS had to first ASK, brethren and Jesus IN YOU wants you to learn to get over your pride and self-reliance—and ASK!***

NEXT STEP: BELIEVE IN WHAT YOU ASKED

NEXT STEP: BELIEVE. But Jesus' belief is defined this way: believe SO STRONGLY - **AS IF YOU HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED IT, EVEN IF YOU HAVEN'T YET SEEN THE EVIDENCE OF RECEIVING WHAT YOU ASKED FOR.**

Believe, live, act as if, live as if, you have already received what you asked for. Prove you believe - - by living and acting in ways that show you believe.

How strong can Jesus' belief, now working in us? Are there limitations to it? Can you believe God is willing and able to give you, without limit, whatever we ask, believing? Let's see what God tells us. What's possible? What God is trying to tell us is 'don't limit Me! Anything is possible, if you believe it is possible. And with my Son's faith now living in you, there's no limit!"

Here's what God actually says to us. God's message is a very POSITIVE message. It's not a negative one. Any preachers hearing this, I hope you get this: preach a POSITIVE message, not a scare-tactic message that is all gloom and doom.

Matthew 17:20 – "NOTHING will be impossible for you"

Matthew 19:26 – "with God ALL things are possible" (also Mark 10:27b)

Mark 9:23 "ALL things are possible to him who believes."

Romans 8:28 – says God works everything out for the good, for His people who believe. Everything. All things work together. ALL things. Are you seeing the possibilities?

Romans 8:32 says that if God didn't spare His own son, would He not freely give us "ALL things"? Now, do you believe that God means "all things" when GOD says "all things". Most of you start to immediately jump to other scriptures that limit that "all" somehow. Of course the "all things" God grants us has to be, and will be, according to His will and for a good purpose. Of course. Granting that – now do you believe ALL things means all things!?

In a nutshell, the possibilities when we believe are without limit. What is God trying to tell you and me? Quit limiting what you think God could do or would do or *wants* to do.

The possibilities are ENDLESS.

Just ASK. Then believe. Let God decide if He can do it or wants to give it to you. I say He can do all things, because that's what He says. Now believe.

LAST STEP: WITH THE FAITH OF Jesus – THANKFULLY RECEIVE.

When we ask God for something, we must believe we already have it – we must already see it in our mind's eye. We must know it's already done. This is the faith of Jesus.

John 11:38-44

"Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. 39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." [HE'S ACTING AS IF IT IS A DONE DEAL! NO DOUBTING]

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days."

40 Jesus said to her, "**Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?**" 41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "**Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.** [GOT THAT? LAZARUS IS STILL DEAD at this point!] 42 And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me." 43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" 44 And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."

Luke 17, let's read another case. There were 10 lepers that Jesus healed. Something very interesting in that story. They were told to present themselves to the priest *before* they could see any healing. It was only as they obeyed – and believed – that they noticed the leprosy was GONE! What if they were like so many of us, "I'll see it when I believe it"? Or, "I'll present myself to the priest when I see I'm healed?"

Luke 17:12-14

"Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. 13 And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

14 So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that ***AS THEY WENT, they were cleansed.***"

Are we getting it?

The faith of Jesus knows something is going to happen before it does. God – Jesus was God in the flesh remember – knows the end from the beginning (Isa. 46:10; Romans 4:17). For example, God will complete what He's started in you (Philippians 1:6). He's not into not finishing what He's started. The Father has already qualified you (Colossians 1:12) if you endure to the end, believing. And the faith of Jesus in you and me will be exhibited by the very kind of Life Jesus would be living, and did live when He walked the earth. He doesn't change how He lives. The "faith of Jesus" living in us means Jesus will live righteously in us.

HE comes into us and He hasn't lost that power, that faith. We are the ones who limit Him! In Matthew 15:35-36 we can read how when Jesus multiplied the fish and loaves, he had the crowds sit in organized groups first! He believed as if it was a done deal! He is GOD.

This isn't about OUR faith. NO, we're talking about Jesus' faith. We have to have faith IN Him that He is alive and well and all powerful still – and has now come to dwell in YOU and me! IF we believe!

All the people of God had to believe before they saw it. Moses had to stretch out the rod over the Red Sea before it split in two. He had to strike the rock before there was any water. Elisha, Elijah – they had a lot of miracles.

After Jesus had withered up the barren fig tree, Peter was amazed, and Jesus gave a basic lesson about having the faith OF Jesus:

Mark 11:20-24

"Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. 21 And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away." [obviously the fig tree didn't wither away the very next second after being cursed.]

22 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. 23 For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' ***and does not doubt in his heart***, but **believes** that those things he says **will** be done, he will have whatever he says. 24 Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, **believe that you receive them**, and you will have them."

The NIV, TEV and other modern translations have verse 24: 'BELIEVE YOU HAVE received it'. Act as if it's already done! Believe without any doubt you have already received what you asked for – even before you see any evidence!

God may TEST our faith by not answering right away. He does that quite often – like the lepers. Like Daniel – God waited until Daniel was already thrown in! Like Daniel's 3 friends: God waited until they were IN the fire before it was obvious He was delivering them. By all outward appearances, God was running a little late!

In Lazarus' case, Jesus delayed on purpose, so that we would get the point that *time is of no consequence to God*, even when it already looks impossibly too late! So let's not accuse God of being too slow. He is outside time and space and He does things for His glory, in His time and way.

PRAISE AND THANK BEFORE YOU SEE THE ANSWER

Here's the sign you really believe: start to thank God even BEFORE you see the answer, because that's what Jesus did and wants to keep doing in you and me.

AS we receive, let's be people who live life full of thanking GOD, praising God, all the time, for all things, in all things, regardless of how bleak it looks. Start thanking and praising God for your wife, your husband, your children, your boss, your health, your existence! Start thanking him for your car, or your bike, or your two legs, or your hut or your house.... Start thanking and praising for what you have already, and watch what happens. Start feeling and expressing appreciation to everyone, every time, everywhere – and watch your world change. Thank the cleaning lady. Appreciate the janitor. Tell the garbage men you appreciate them coming by. Give a compliment to the chef – every time. Surely there's something you can find good! Whenever we've done it, the chef's come out, beaming, and often has offered us a free dessert or something! It's amazing. I do it because it makes ME feel good, and makes the chef feel good.

Start praising God for your circumstances, instead of constantly complaining to Him about what else He still hasn't done for you! I'm going to say that again..... Think about that!

When Jehoshaphat and the Jews were being invaded, and decided to SEEK God's help – but God's answer was to go out and face the enemy, I doubt that's the answer they wanted! Let's read it: 2 Chronicles 20. But they had asked, they got an answer, now they believed – and then as they thanked, praised and sang to God even *before* the answer was obvious – *then* God acted.

You can read the beginning of 2 Chronicles 20. The armies of Moab and Ammon had come up against Judah. King Jehoshaphat hears about it, and initially is struck with fear, then goes to God in prayer and fasting. A prophet named Jahaziel interrupts the king! In verse 17, he announces God has informed him to tell the king that the Jews are to leave the safety of their walls and go face their enemy and watch God fight for them. They must have believed God, for that's what they did! Would WE have? Seriously. Would we have? Let's pick up at 2 Chron 20:20.

2 Chronicles 20:20-22

20 Early in the morning they left for the Desert of Tekoa. As they set out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem! **Have faith** in the LORD your God **and you will be upheld**; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful." 21 After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as *they went out at the head of the army*, saying: [the praisers are in front! Singing! Before God had done anything visible yet!] "Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever."

22 *As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated."*

The miracle happened only after they put singers in front and began to sing and praise, in the

presence of their enemy, in the absence of ANY tangible sign *so far* that God really was going to do anything. Judah was the first tribe when Israel advanced. Judah means “Praises of God”. Praises go before the answers we seek. We praise before we see what we seek. That’s the faith of Jesus.

This illustrates the kind of faith Jesus would have had, that God would have *us* have, and we need to learn from it. In a dark hour, start praising, singing, thanking God *for* all things, and *in* all things (Ephesians 5:20; Phil. 4:6). The result: the peace of God that transcends any ability to really understand it, will come upon us.

NOTHING gets us thinking positively, and attracting more positive things in our lives, and being much more upbeat ourselves – than a grateful, thankful heart that overflows into praise and appreciation for both God and fellow man.

I’m out of time... but I just want God’s children to be thinking about how have we limited what God could be doing, and would be doing, if we’d just control our thoughts, monitor our feelings, make our thinking and feeling be those of people who are upbeat and believers, then ASK, believe, and live as if the answer is already given to you – even before you see anything happening.

The early Christians were called “believers”. Are you – and am I – truly “believers”, or not?

When you plant a seed, a few days or even a lot of days can go by before you see anything happening. But you have to believe enough, even before you see anything, to keep watering that seed, and in time – a little green blade pops up out of the ground. All of life is this way. We have to die to what *our* timetable is, and just ask, believe – and receive.

What is it you need? What spiritual things do you want and need? What physical things do you need and want – especially if its to serve others. Believe you already have it. Believe that you have received, before you even see it. And you will see incredible things happening in your life. I hope you believe this – because it can change your life so powerfully!

That’s my goal. I preached to myself all through this sermon, as I always do. This is something I’m working hard on as well. As I work on the things I’ve preached here today, I’m seeing my life change, seeing circumstances change, and it’s an exhilarating ride. When I was a child, when we went to Disneyland, we would have called this an “E” ticket – the best rides, the most exciting rides. I’m at the beginning of this great exhilarating ride of living by the faith of Jesus – just the beginning so far, but it’s happening. Join me. Live by the faith of Jesus. And let’s encourage one another when we see one another faltering or flagging. Share this message and website with others who need to benefit from it. It’s freely given.

Brethren, have a wonderful day – living by the faith of Jesus. Until next time, this is your brother in the faith of Jesus, Philip Shields.

.....

WHY DO WE STILL SIN IF Christ IS IN US?

There's a battle royal going on. We have 2 natures now: our old, sinful, carnal nature is still in us. That's what "in the flesh" means. That's what Paul calls "the old man" or "old nature" in us. We all still have it. And when we are led by it, we get into trouble spiritually. That's when we sin, get worried, do bad things. That's when we ARE bad: when we are controlled by the old carnal nature.

But we also have God's spirit in us. When we have God's spirit, are led by God's spirit, and are controlled by God's spirit – that's what Paul calls being **"in the spirit"**. That's what he calls "walking in the spirit", or praying "in the spirit", and so on. It's when we are letting Christ live in us by His spirit, and FOLLOWING HIS LEAD, that we are said to living, praying, walking "in the spirit". So even though we are still flesh and blood, GOD sees as being "in the spirit" even right now. Let's read it:

Romans 8:8-9

"So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. [we ARE flesh, but not "in the flesh" – v9] 9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His."

So HOW do we let Christ live in us? By His spirit, given to us upon true repentance, baptism and the laying on of hands. Also by choosing each day to LET Him live. By starting each day INVITING His leadership and direction, in earnest prayer and quiet devotional time with Him. He lives in us by putting HIS words into our hearts by daily attention to collecting your spiritual manna - - in earnest Bible study, before charging off to work. THIS is the hard work we must be doing: working hard to stay close to God, to talk to Him often, to listen to Him constantly, to fill our minds with His word. That's our hard work. Then we're TUNED IN to God's thoughts and we have incredible spiritual power.

As Christ lives in us, HIS SPIRIT is working and will bear fruit of God's SPIRIT in its season.

John 15:4-8

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. **He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.** 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 **If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.**”

The key is to ABIDE in Him. STAY CLOSE. PONDER, MEDITATE, STUDY His word, pray daily, stay in touch – and over time GOD’S mind becomes our mind. “Let THIS mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). And over time, OUR MINDS and our thinking gets transformed (Romans 12:1-2) into the very mind of Jesus as we listen more and more to HIS mind.

Christ won’t grow in us if we don’t have Him in us, or if we don’t let Him lead us, or if we don’t follow His lead. He WILL grow in us, and there WILL be fruit, when we DO seek Him, DO ask for HIS will to be done, do follow HIS lead, and RESIST the pulls of the carnal nature.

There will be a battle, and we MUST battle the negative things.

Galatians 5:16-18 “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 *For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.* 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.”

So there’s a FIGHT going on, as we seek to do God’s will. But even as we are in the fight, we must remember who it is we follow. He is the COMMANDER OF THE LORD OF HOSTS. He is mighty, He is VICTORIOUS. We remember, like Paul said, “TO STAND IN THE POWER OF HIS might” – Eph. 6:10. We put on the armor of God – and the body-length shield of FAITH.

There are times we will feel like we are failing, but remember:

1 John 4:4

“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”

THE KEY in all of this is what John the Baptist said when He saw Christ beginning his ministry. Do you remember what he said: “**HE (Christ) must INCREASE, and I must decrease**” (John 3:30).

Remember, all new life takes time to grow to maturity – whether a planted acorn turning into a mighty oak, or a caterpillar turning into a butterfly. The transformation takes time.

Last time, I included material on what our life will be like, if Christ really lives in us. In a nutshell, we will live more and more like He lived. He will be IN YOU this time, as he was when He walked the earth almost 2000 years ago. He would be seeking God’s will, His thoughts will not be those of worry, we will be strong with HIS strength, our minds will be set on things above – not on things on this earth. That’s where His priority always was. So will ours become that way.

