

# **Praising YHVH our Father *BEFORE* we see His Answer**

## **Vital key to answered prayer**

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All scriptures are NKJV unless noted otherwise.

### **Summary:**

*This sermon will change your life and the number of dramatically answered prayers you receive—if you practice the keys revealed from scripture in this message. Learn the lesson of the 10 lepers, the fig tree, the key from the resurrection of Lazarus, what David said to Goliath, and so much more.*

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Shalom, dear family of the God and Father of Yeshua – and OUR God and father too! This is Philip Shields sharing with you from Orlando, Florida some more hope and focus of good news with all of you. As usual, I recommend you also hear the audio even as you have the transcript printed out in front of you. There's sometimes more in the audio as the "transcript" is only an approximation. It's pretty close – but not exact.

*Today I am going to share a topic with you that is one we all "kinda" know – but I doubt too many of us really practice. It has a lot to do with faith and divinely answered prayer. I'm convinced if we all could learn to practice this, we'd be happier, we'd see more dramatic answers to our prayers, we'd have much more peace, and far less worry. Does that sound good?*

This topic began as part of my own struggle recently to keep my head clear of doubt and fear and to keep my focus on Yeshua. Have you noticed the many recent blogs I've written on this website? So many have to do with the message of keeping your focus locked in on Yeshua. Well, this sermon was born from my own struggles with something I kept reading in God's word and knowing it's what I should be doing too – but at times was still struggling with. But as I learn to consistently do this, to practice it, the peace is amazing. And the fear is amazing too – when I DON'T do what you're about to hear.

There are many "keys" to answered prayer. You could rattle off a lot of them, I'm sure, such as:

- being sure to ASK, first of all, so we can receive (Matthew 7:7-8)
- then praying according to our Father's will for us (1 John 5:14-15)
- praying in faith (James 1:5-7). So many times Yeshua says "your faith has made you whole."
- praying in Jesus' name (John 14:13-14)
- refusing to let in any doubt (James 1:5-7) no matter what we see going on around us
- abiding in Him and letting his word abide in us (John 15:7)
- being pleasing to God, in Christ (1 John 3:22-23)
- praying for one another, so that YOU may be heard (James 5:16)

And there's more. Actually if you want a full 3 part series on "Living by Faith", check out my sermons from **October –December 2004**. Good topics are timeless! But even what I've written and just said about some of the keys to answered prayer alone, already would make a good study for you.

Also remember to be looking over the [blogs on this website](#). There are dozens of them with topics you'll find interesting and helpful.

**There's one more VITAL key to answered prayer and it's an aspect of faith is on clear display all through the life of Yeshua, our Messiah.** One striking example of it is just before our Savior commanded the dead man Lazarus to come forth. Lazarus had died four days earlier. He was "deader than a doornail", as we might say.

First, as a brief digression, there is some teaching that Jews of Yeshua's day – and maybe even today – believed that one's spirit lingered in the body for up to 3 days after apparent death. So maybe this could be one reason why Yeshua lingered so long – so the witnesses of the great Lazarus miracle knew without any question that Lazarus had been dead. In fact his body had begun to stink and decay. Notice also that Yeshua was in the tomb, dead and buried, for three days and three nights, so there may be something to this. God perhaps was making sure we all knew also, that Yeshua was absolutely dead when he was put into the tomb.

Now back to Lazarus and be turning to John 11. What did Yeshua say and do just before ordering Lazarus to rise and come out of the tomb?

**John 11:38-44**

38 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."

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. [KJV: ...that thou hast heard me.]"** 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."

*Hang on, brothers and sisters. He thanks Father that "You HAVE HEARD ME". Lazarus was still dead. Very dead. Nothing had happened visibly yet to change anything but Yeshua is thanking Father for something not yet physically apparent. Yeshua is living by faith, not by sight.*

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."

***There, did you catch the secret?*** Here's the point of this sermon, and I'll illustrate it with many scriptural examples so we LEARN it. We're missing out on SO MUCH joy, so many miracles, because we're making excuses for God or ourselves and so we're not seeing what Father wants to pour out to us.

**Here's the point: We must start learning to THANK GOD FOR, AND BELIEVE we have already been heard, and that our request has already been answered – BEFORE (this is KEY), BEFORE we see the evidence of answered prayer. (Repeat).**

Many of us kinda know this but I don't think many of us believe it deeply enough to truly practice it as a way of life. Instead we do something like the "Importunate or Persistent widow" of Luke 18 and just ask and ask and ask.... And there's a time and place for that too.

**But how about doing what Yeshua did? Thank God for the already having answered your prayer though the PHYSICAL evidence still says otherwise.**

**I think many of us hold back on doing this because:**

- We may not have been aware of this powerful secret
- We don't feel worthy to be so expectant of answered prayer. I think this one is a huge one.
- We don't believe God really hears us, especially if we've slipped up in sin lately.
- Or we feel God has to be *cajoled* into giving us good gifts. He has to be persuaded. He has a lot He can share, but in our hearts we feel He is not eager to share it all, at least not with us.

Am I right?

**Father does not have to be cajoled into giving us good gifts and answered prayer. He WANTS to pour out blessings on to his children. He sends rain and sun even to the unjust – as Matthew 5 says.**

**Matthew 7:7-12**

7 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much MORE will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!**

We have to get out of our heads that we have a God, a heavenly Father, who is holding back on us. But – it can SEEM that way. I grant you that. You have lots of room for many, many more blessings, right? You could truly use and need far more income than you have now, right? So the evidence we see is that God is not raining down more than we can accept . . . so we go to the next step and listen to the Serpent whisper in our ears, "God is holding back. He doesn't want you to have what you could have."

But the Serpent is lying to us. God's word tells us that eye has not seen, nor ear heard, the things God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Cor 2:9-10). Paul tells us that NOTHING can separate us from God's love, NOTHING (be sure to read Romans 8:35-39). Then Paul tells us that Father in fact wants to do FAR ABOVE what we even dream of asking!

**Ephesians 3:20-21**

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen

He is ABLE to and he WANTS to. We need to get the notion OUT of our head that we have to cajole God into releasing some blessings! I know a lot of us believers have this problem. We have to understand that if carnal human grandfathers or fathers are looking for ways to surprise their kids and grandkids, how much more does God want to!?! We just read that in Matthew 7.

*We've got to learn to start PRAISING, THANKING AND BLESSING God for having ALREADY heard us, BEFORE we see anything has changed.*

*Yeshua, in front of the dead man's tomb, said, "Father I thank you that you HAVE HEARD ME.... You always hear me."*

### **LESSONS FROM THE FIG TREE**

Now let's learn some more lessons about believing before we see what we asked for actually happening. This time turn to Mark 11:12-14 and the story of the unfruitful fig tree.

#### **Mark 11:12-14**

12 Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. 13 And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. 14 In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." And His disciples heard it.

Apparently the tree didn't shrivel up and die instantly or it would be stated as such. Then he went to the temple – cleanses it of the money changers... and then we pick up the story again.

#### **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."

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.**

I want you to notice several things here again –

- First Jesus SPOKE or SAID something out loud. Just like the case of Lazarus.
- THEN he believed as if it were already done
- And it was done.
- Yeshua says if we want to have the same results (v. 24), with “whatsoever things you ask” – everything -- BELIEVE you already have it done, and you will have them! I choose to believe my Savior!

WORDS, SPEAKING – has power. That's why we'll be judged by idle words. Or cruel words. We need to repent of those. I do too.

#### The APOLOGETICS (Holman) version

#### **Mark 11:22-24**

Jesus replied to them, “Have faith in God. I assure you: If anyone says to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. 24 Therefore, I tell you, ALL the things you pray and ask for—**believe that you HAVE RECEIVED THEM, and you will have them.**”

He then goes on to speak of another topic which we'll cover in other sermons – that if you want answered prayer, be sure to forgive those who have hurt or sinned against you  
So here's another scripture telling us to believe we have ALREADY RECEIVED the answer – praise, sing, and give thanks for that. BEFORE you see any answers.

**Romans 10:17**

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

Hear stories from others who have been healed or have had miraculous answers. Hear yourself speak out the truth of your answered prayer. Hear yourself rebuke Satan. Hear yourself speak out loud a great hosanna of thanksgiving for having heard your prayers – yes, even before you see any tangible results.

**KEY here: START WITH PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING before anything else.**

***You speak it – but before anything else, we need to thank him for already having answered us even before we see it.***

The first tribe to lead the nation of Israel into the Promised Land was always Judah (Yehudah) – which means “Yehu be praised” – Praise Yah, Praise YHVH.

We start the firm belief that we've already been heard by proof: we're already PRAISING God for it.

Look at this inspiring example and story from King Jehoshaphat of Judah. His name means “YHVH is my Judge.”

**2 Chronicles 20:1-19**

It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. 2 Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which is En Gedi). 3 And Jehoshaphat **feared**, and set himself to **seek** YHVH, and proclaimed a **fast** throughout all Judah. **4 So Judah gathered together to ask help from YHVH; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek YHVH.**

5 Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of YHVH, before the new court, 6 and said: "O YHVH Elohim (LORD God) of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? 7 Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? 8 And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, 9 'If disaster comes upon us — sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine — we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.'

10 And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir — whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them — 11 here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. 12 O our God, will You not judge them? **For we**

**have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You."**

13 Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before YHVH.

14 Then the Spirit of YHVH came upon Jahaziel [his name means "May God-EL- see"] the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. 15 And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! **Thus says YHVH to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.** 16 Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. **17 You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation (yeshua) of YHVH, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear** or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for YHVH is with you."

**2 Chronicles 20:18-27**

And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before YHVH, worshiping YHVH. 19 Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise YHVH God of Israel with voices loud and high.

20 So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in YHVH your God and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."

**21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to YHVH, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out BEFORE the army and were saying:**

"Praise YHVH,  
For His mercy endures forever."

22 **NOW WHEN THEY BEGAN TO SING AND TO PRAISE, YHVH** set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. 23 For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

24 So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped.

25 When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies, and precious jewelry, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much. 26 And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berachah, for there they blessed YHVH; therefore the name of that place was called The Valley of Berachah until this day.

**Wow, wow, wow. Look at all the right steps:**

- They first feared,

- Then they looked to YHVH in fasting and prayer
- Listened to inspired guidance from God though the action they were told to take was scary: leave the protection of man-made walls and walk out there and face your enemy.
- So they stepped out in faith – and faced the trouble, They OBEYED what they were told to do. This is also key.
- **God stepped in visibly when? When they began to sing and praise – before the visible proof was evident.**

We need to start praising, thanking God even IN, and during, the presence of all our trouble. Praise Him. For God has not gone away. Let me remind you of Philippians 4:6-7.

**Philippians 4:6-7**

“Be anxious for nothing, but **in everything by prayer** and supplication, **with thanksgiving**, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and **the peace of God**, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Read that again, To worry and fret is to say “Father, I don’t know if you can handle this.” Yeshua told us the gentiles and unbelievers worry, but children of the Highest should not. A lot of times we start by worrying, like Jehoshaphat did, but as long as we end up praising and locking our gaze on our Savior and Father – all is well.

**Notice some other points from the Jehoshaphat story:**

- **The battle is not ours – but God’s.** The REAL WARFARE is going in spiritual realms way above us. And our God is a “man of war”, a valiant powerful fighter when He needs to fight. See **Exodus 15:3** says “YHVH is a man of war; YHVH is his name.”

WHY is it God’s? WHY? Because you are his beloved child! Once you’re a dad or mom, you know you’d take a bullet any day for your child. You’ll go up against any one, anything that is threatening your child. How much more will God do that?

**So the battle is not ours. This is another reason we can confidently thank, praise and BELIEVE that the outcome is already done, already certain. It’s not up to us! It’s up to God. He never fails.**

**Ah, but you’re already throwing rebuttals to me, in your mind.** My spirit hears them. “But what if God doesn’t want to? What if he’s not happy with me? What if it’s my fault? What if I caused the problem?” What if, what if, what if....

**My fellow family of the House of Yah, listen:** You are now IN Christ. WE can, in the new covenant, come BOLDLY and confidently before the throne of GRACE – the throne of unmerited FAVOR – because Father no longer just sees me, but sees YESHUA, sees HIS perfection, sees HIS holiness, sees HIS faith, sees how pleased He always is and always will be in HIM. That’s why we are called ONE BODY. We’re ONE, in HIM. The body is HIS body. The “church” is part of his body. We focus on being part of the group of humans as the “body” instead of focusing on being part of HIM DIRECTLY. I died WITH Christ on the tree. I was buried with Him. And I was resurrected with him. That’s what Romans 6:1-5 says!

**So my point is: TELL SATAN to go back to his hell!** Tell him – “Yes, I know I still fail, I know I still sin, I know I still fall short. But that’s why I have a SAVIOR and HE took on

himself my failures so I can take on HIS perfection. HE took on himself my sins, so I can receive HIS holiness. He took on himself my pain and sickness, so by His stripes I am healed. Get out of our Garden of Eden, you serpent! You have no grounds to accuse me, Satan – get out of here! Be gone! You have no place here where we are, at the Tree of Life! Hallelujah, hallelujah!”.

Faith comes by hearing God’s words being spoken. Hear YOURSELF speaking truth.

Jahaziel said in v 17 (2 Chronicles 20:17), in essence – “quit seeing what you see with your physical eyes. See instead the Yeshua (salvation) of YHVH, who is WITH you.” So that’s what I’m saying too. God is with us, for us and wants to protect us – His family!

***Ah, but I’m still just a man myself. This is easy to preach, hard to do. But let’s start doing it!***  
And then watch the miracles start to flow into your life far more frequently than they are now.

So go back and read the whole account about Jehoshaphat and also about Lazarus’ resurrection in John 11. Before the resurrection, Yeshua was urging Mary and Martha to believe and they would see a good thing! Interestingly enough, Martha even said something like “even now I know,..

Then when it looked like Yeshua wanted to see Lazarus again, she reverted back to the visual –“he’s dead and stinks.” This is what’s obvious. We all would have said or thought the same thing. But Faith is the evidence of things NOT seen” – Hebrews 11:1.

So when Yeshua thanked God for having already heard his prayer, Lazarus was still dead. When Yeshua began to call for Lazarus, up until that moment, Lazarus was still dead. But he thanked anyway. He called for Lazarus anyway. What was physical evident before him was NOTHING compared to the powers available to Yah when HE decides to move in our behalf.

Same thing with Jehoshaphat’s story: when they began to praise and sing – that’s when God moved. But even as they prepared to start praising and thanking, the armies facing them were all still very much alive and a threat. Are we getting it?

### **TIMING is up to GOD**

Now – how about the matter of timing? Do we thank God over and over even when we don’t SEE any results for days, months or years? You and I know it can take a long time. ALL the patriarchs died, NOT having received the promises—yet (Hebrews 11:13). In fact everyone before our time has died. Some got answers quickly, some later, some not at all in this life.

#### **Hebrews 11:13-16**

**These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed** that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. *Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.*

They died, not having physically received the promises, but they learned the lesson of FAITH. They saw the answers in their hearts. THEY were living by the spirit, not by the flesh. They were seeing with the spirit, not the flesh. They were walking in the spirit, not the flesh.

In the case of Lazarus' resurrection – it was instant. So was the miracle with Jehoshaphat. If ours has taken much longer, perhaps part of the reason is that we haven't been doing what Yeshua and Jehoshaphat are teaching us: PRAISE AND THANK BEFORE we see the visible results – THEN you're more likely to see visible results.

There are so many cases in the Bible where we know God is working behind the scenes in ways not visible on earth. **Our battles are not here on earth so much as in the heavenlies.** Satan is trying to derail your faith! **Daniel** prayed and prayed and got nothing back for 3 weeks once (Daniel 10:12-14) – until an arch-angel appeared, telling him that he had been blocked by demonic powers for weeks until Michael the super-angel came to his aid. There are some titanic battles going on folks. It might be a request for your healing and there could be forces trying to block that.

My point is – YHVH can well be working things out without our visible awareness yet.

**And for that matter, God has REASONS for doing what He does, for allowing what He does. God sees life in terms of eternity and what HE is accomplishing in our lives.** This is another reason we can believe we have already been heard and we should give thanks: because nothing is happening to you and me outside of his awareness! In fact, HE may be the One allowing or even causing these things we deem to be problems, for HIS purposes. Poor Joseph, the son of Jacob, for example, went through years and years of suffering, jail, problems, false accusations – all so God could set it up for him to be ready to be the #2 man in the world and save his family and bring them to Egypt – where God wanted them to be. Remember what Joseph said, after his father died and his brothers were afraid that now Joseph might take revenge?

**Genesis 50:15-21**

15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him." 16 So they sent messengers to Joseph, saying, "Before your father died he commanded, saying, 17 'Thus you shall say to Joseph: "I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you.'" Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

18 Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, "Behold, we are your servants."

19 Joseph said to them, "**Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? 20 But as for you, you meant evil against me; but GOD meant it for good, in ORDER TO BRING IT ABOUT as it is this day, to save many people alive.** 21 Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

So open your eyes. God is using everything you're going through to prepare you and prepare others for the incredible mosaic of intertwining lives that are affecting one another.

**Now back to you and me**

**Now how about you and me? Here are some assignments:**

- **Your difficult marriage.** Start thanking God for your difficult spouse—now. Thank him for already sending the solutions HE wants. Praise, sing and thank – before anything visibly changes. And start SEEING the changes and improvements in your mind's eye....just like the patriarchs who "having seen them afar off, were assured of them."

**SEE IT WITH THE EYES OF FAITH before you can see it with your human eyes of flesh. Walk in the spirit, not in the flesh. See with the spirit, not with the flesh. Live by the spirit, not by the flesh – and we can since we have our Father's Holy Spirit.**

- **The financial mess you're in.** Thank God that He is with you, even in this mess, even if it was your fault. And then praise Him as you can see already a resolution by faith, in your heart. Believe it before you see it in the flesh. Walk in the spirit. Your house payment problems will resolve, if you look to the right place.
- **The news about that cancer, or growths, or bad heart, or pain in your back or hip, or the doctor's scary diagnosis or whatever.** Thank God for the news and that HE is our Creator and can make us every whit WHOLE again. Thank Yeshua for saying he DOES want you to be well. Praise Him for the beating you took so YOU won't have to be in pain. QUIT looking to the physical evidence that nothing's changed yet – and look instead to your HEALER. Believe Yeshua wants you to be well. Don't waste his beating and stripes – by which we are healed. Claim them. Thank Him for going through it. Tell Him you don't want it wasted – but want to use it on yourself too! And then praise Him for that before you see and feel the answers. (And pray for me too, as I'm still learning all this.)

Remember what Yeshua said to Thomas when Thomas said he would not believe until he first could see and feel the holes in the side and hand/wrist of Yeshua? (John 20:25)

**John 20:26-29**

And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" 27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

**29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."**

- WHATEVER your concerns, worries, problems and issues are – take them before God and thank him that you can come boldly now before Him in Yeshua's name, and thank him for having already taken care of your issues. Then praise and sing thanksgiving to Him.

**Other examples of believing before it was evident**

Let's quickly look at other examples of believing before the evidence of answered prayer was evident. As we go through these, one more aspect will come into view. We have to OBEY what Christ is telling us to do: start praising, do whatever else you're told to do by God or his word.

- **Luke 17:12-14 the 10 lepers**

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.

**The 10 lepers** who asked to be healed. Jesus told them to go present themselves to the high priest. Apparently as they left, at first they saw or felt nothing change. BUT they still obeyed. Humanly that's crazy to be going to the High priest while you're still leprous. Yeshua hadn't even prayed for them or touched them! But it *was AS they obeyed*, as they stepped out in faith, their leprosy was cleansed. And only one, a Samaritan leper, came back to say "thank you".

Even **Naaman** the Syrian who had leprosy had to step out in faith and obey – dip in the Jordan 7x – before he actually was healed. But for him to do that, he must have had confidence that he was going to be healed. He had to see the healing in his mind's eye before he could see it in the flesh! The full story is in 2 Kings 5.

- **John 2:1-10-- The men who took the jugs of WATER Yeshua had turned into wine:** what were they thinking as they took what they had seen to be water -- to the governor? Their jobs or lives could have been on the line. Have you thought of that? But they obeyed Mary who said, "Whatever he tells you do, do!" – and it was fine wine. John 2. So step out in obedience even when you don't understand it all. (Keeping holydays, getting time off work – a good example.)
- **David told Goliath BEFORE they started fighting that the victory was sure for David. As David said what he said, the giant was still there in front of him, very much alive still. But David wasn't looking at the giant problem but the giant GOD David served!**

But what do WE do? I do it too – we give God a way out to fail us! We say, "if it's God's will, such and such could happen." Though that's technically true, I'm trying to learn to speak with more confidence. Hence this sermon!

#### **1 Samuel 17:36-37**

But David said to Saul,...36 Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." **37 Moreover David said, "YHVH, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He WILL deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."** And Saul said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you!"

#### **1 Samuel 17:45-47**

Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of YEHOWEH of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 **This day Yehoweh WILL deliver you into my hand**, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. 47 **Then all this assembly shall know that Yehoweh does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is Yehoweh's**, and He will give you into our hands."

- Sometimes the obedience isn't instant. Abraham obeyed – went to a land... but record shows he actually delayed for several years in Haran (see Genesis 11:31). So God called him out again in Genesis 12 and this time he moved all the way to Canaan.
- **The promise of a son to Abraham – he initially laughed. Abraham even offered that Ishmael be the promised son instead (Genesis 17:15-18);** But Ishmael was the result of HIS efforts to work things out, and not by faith. And it was through a servant – Hagar – not through the gracious wife. So Ishmael would not work out.

- Sarah laughed (Genesis 18:12) when she heard she was going to have a son when she was 90, but so had Abraham (Gen 17:17) – but Hebrews 11 speaks of her faith. She came to the point of believing the promise before it was evident! And the record we have in Hebrews 11 is how she ended up. She started lacking in faith – and even lied – but ended up in faith.

**Genesis 18:10-12**

*And He said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son." (Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.) 11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. 12 **Therefore Sarah laughed** within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"*

**Hebrews 11:11-12**

*"By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude — innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore."*

*ABRAHAM believed so much, that even when he went to offer Isaac, and had fully intended to sacrifice his only son of promise, notice what he says:*

**Genesis 22:4-5 NKJV**

*Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. 5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and WE will come back to you."*

**Hebrews 11:17-19**

*By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.*

- **RAHAB'S faith ...**

**Joshua 2:8-9**

*Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, 9 and said to the men: "I **KNOW** that YHVH **has given** you the land [as good as done in her eyes], that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you*

*The 2 spies: Their verb tense – WHEN HE WILL GIVE US... NOT quite as strong.*

**Joshua 2:14**

*So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, **WHEN** YHVH **has given** us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you."*

*When they finally began to circle JERICHO – here's **what JOSHUA – a type of YESHUA – said:***

**Joshua 6:16**

*And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, **for YHVH HAS GIVEN** you the city!"*

The city of Jericho was still standing at that moment. The walls don't crash down until verse 20. The walls were as impregnable as ever at that very instant, at that moment. There were no battering rams, no scaling towers, and no catapults – just ram's horns and ... Joshua – the name sake of Yeshua – here is living by faith. His name Yehoshua means "Yah is salvation".

**The ULTIMATE THING TO BELIEVE and praise God for—and YOU HAVE NOW**

*There's a most difficult area I need to speak on now, as we come to Passover, where we need to thank God for – before you see it perfectly working in our lives: God's gift of HIS righteousness, which we receive by faith.*

**Philippians 3:9. Hebrews 11:7** characterizes the faith of all of the people in Heb 11 as those who were "the heir **of righteousness which is according to faith.**"

FOLKS, I don't always see myself as righteous or always doing right or being right or walking right. Far from it. But it wouldn't be by FAITH if we could SEE the perfect righteousness of God being lived in ourselves 100% perfectly all the time. Christ died to take my sins upon himself. He who did no sin, became sin for us, took our sin upon himself – so that WE, who knew NO true righteousness of God could receive the righteousness of God by faith, through Christ.

*If it was something we could clearly see, then it would not say "by faith". By very definition, "by faith" means "the evidence of things NOT SEEN"-- yet (Hebrews 11:1).*

*As we come to Passover, BELIEVE in the work of the son of God in your behalf.*

Believe, see, proclaim, announce, sing and praise – that you are saved, are being saved, and that you have been declared cleansed, forgiven, and perfectly righteous by the imputed life of holy and perfect Yeshua. (Romans 5:17-19; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Cor. 1:30-31; Philippians 3:9-11)

**John 3:16** and so many others like it fill the New Covenant: whoever believes in the Son of God shall not die, but have everlasting life. God didn't send His Son to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved (verse 17). He is our ROOT, and if the root is holy, so are the branches - that's us (Romans 11:16). We've got to start praising God for this and believing this with our whole being, without reservation.

**Romans 5:17-19**

For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of **the GIFT of righteousness** will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)

18 Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. 19 **For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.**

**Philippians 3:8-10**

8....Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ **9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness,**

which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection....”

*We're coming to Passover. We have to praise, thank, sing out for the wonderful deliverance, cleansing, forgiveness, grace and pardon that we have received. And beyond that, He also left a GIFT for us - - HIS holiness, HIS righteousness. I've spoken long about these things in the past, but many Christians do not know how to accept this gift in faith. **Read Philippians 3:9 again** and again until you get it. We can't be saved by the best we can do – not even WITH the Holy Spirit – because you and I still fail, still sin, over and over. Paul said the same thing – “that which I hate, I do”. If Paul could admit that, surely we can too. Romans 7:15-20 – read that again.*

*But I do not have to fear that I won't “make it” into the kingdom of God unless I become perfect somehow in my own life. No, the way I end up in the kingdom of God is by believing in Yeshua as my Savior and accepting HIS righteous life in my stead.*

**Brethren, get this: Father is not trying to salvage my present life. NO, no, no. I died. You died, if you accepted Yeshua and were baptized into Yeshua. The life we now live is Christ (Col. 3:4). We died on the tree with Him and were resurrected with him into HIS new life. The life that saves me is not my reformed life, but the NEW life of Christ Himself. BY faith. GET that distinction!**

*And the point of this sermon is – as we come to Passover – praise, believe, see, sing to, accept – THIS by faith as well, even before we see His perfect life being lived 100% of the time perfectly in us yet.*

It's more than just forgiving me of my sins. It's also believing that He is saving me by giving me His righteousness (read **2 Cor. 5:21; Galatians 2:20; 1 Cor. 1:30-31** as well). I'm not the one making myself perfect. I'm not my own savior. I'm not saving myself – it is GOD who is doing it. Yes, even Philippians 2:12 is explained in verse 13, that it is GOD who is doing it. HE is my Savior and yours. HE is the Creator of all things, ESPECIALLY the new me and the new you! YESHUA ALONE is perfect and since I am in HIM, that's how you and I are also going to be seen as perfect. HE covers us, HE forgives us, and HE puts us into HIS body.

Yes, I know about “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” in **Philippians 2:12**, but I also finish the sentence in **verse 13**: “for IT IS GOD who works in you, both to will and to do”.

*Romans 6:1-12 says we DIED with him in baptism. We were raised with him in his resurrection into HIS new life. Colossians 3:3 says OUR life is HIDDEN in Christ, in God. It goes on to say in Colossians 3:4 “When Christ, who IS OUR LIFE appears, then you will appear with him in glory....” My old self is dead, as far as God sees. That's what Galatian 2:20 says also.*

*Folks, we've got to start believing this even though we still see ourselves stumbling in sin from time to time. That's our old dead self. Now HE is our perfection. Notice these verses:*

*Hebrews 10:14 (also see Colossians 1:27-28)*

For by one offering HE has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

**And do you believe 1 John 4:17?**

“Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.”

IN Christ, scripture says we also have been transferred/translated to heaven already, in spirit, and are seated with our Master in the heavenlies. See it, feel it, praise God for it, and believe it!

**Colossians 1:13-14**

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Notice the past tense in Col 1:13-14. "Delivered, conveyed/translated".

Since I'm IN HIM, and he in me, and since I'm part of His body – THIS MAKES PERFECT sense. The full completion of the process will take place at the resurrection. That's when we will be crowned with the crown of righteousness that the Judge will give us at that time (2 Timothy 4:8) – but it's going to be because of HIS perfect righteousness bestowed on us who believe on Him.

DO YOU believe that? If not, you're going to be buried under a ton of guilt, despair and failure. **So START BELIEVING THIS TOO, even before you see all of its tangible, visible perfection.** What God has promised, He will do. WE have to accept it, praise Him for it, and exult in the joy of being gifted His love, being gifted his righteousness, being gifted HIS access to the Father of the Universe—GOD MOST HIGH, in and through Christ. This is also what grace – unmerited favor – is all about.

*If you would all truly understand the message of this sermon, we would all – even I – start having so much more peace. We'd accept the hard knocks of life much better. We'll see God acting in ways we don't understand yet – but have the confidence in the end – like Joseph – we'll be able to say, "GOD did all this for his righteous purposes....Praise be to Yah!"*

So have true faith. Go by the spiritual sight of knowing your healer, even BEFORE you see your lumps or pain or issues go away. I believe many of us will see more dramatic answers and healings when and if we start praising IN, and FOR, our problems even before we see physical results.

The alternative is to be like Thomas – "I won't believe it, until I see it with my own eyes." Well, brother, you'll miss the blessing of our Messiah then. I repeat, HE said, "**Thomas, because you have SEEN Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**" (John 20:29)

**Folks, I want to be among the "blessed" in John 20:29. I want the blessing of my Messiah.** Let's read it again: "blessed are those who have NOT seen and yet have believed."

This is something that gets preached, sorta, and we "kinda know it" – but then again we're not practicing it. At least I need to grow much more in this. Start praising and believing the promises are happening in your life BEFORE you see them – and you WILL start to see them in this life more often than you are now!

*See and know the dead parts of your life are being changed to spiritual life – see in faith. Just as Yeshua knew Lazarus was absolutely going to come out of that tomb while he thanked God, while Lazarus was still dead!*

**SEE and THANK AND PRAISE God for fighting your battles for you even as your equivalent of a GOLIATH, your giant problem, still stands there in all its fearsome size....**

Or even as the Jews could still see the thousands of enemy before them, **Jehoshaphat** had them singing praises BEFORE they were vanquished. And do you remember what we were told? “AS they began to praise and sing” – GOD took care of the problem! But when they were just beginning to praise and sing, the problem was still there! But they stepped out in faith, and THEN God took care of the problem.

(Bonus paragraph) Family of God: we've got to learn this. Start praising and singing in your pain. Remember Paul and Silas in the prison, at midnight, after being beaten and in severe pain, began to sing. Read it yourself – **Acts 16:22-28**. It's so inspiring. And as they sang, God unlocked their prison. Hallelujah. You want the prisons of your mind unlocked and doors opened? Start singing and praising even IN your pain and IN your prison. Hallelujah.

*So that's the message of today's sermon: Praise, sing, give thanks – and SEE in your mind's eye that we have a SAVIOR, a HEALER, and a very active God who intervenes for us. But we need to BELIEVE WE HAVE ALREADY received the answer – BEFORE we see it, but we praise and thank him for it nonetheless, even before we see tangible evidence.*

Until next time, this is Philip, your brother in our Messiah asking for blessings, peace and shalom to all of you as you walk in *His* light. May YHVH bless you and keep you. May he put his guardian angels around you and yours. May He heal you, bless you. May He open your eyes and mind and heart to His new LIFE for you and in you. May we bring Him great joy as we accept what He offers us.... Even before we see it. And may He put HIS name on you and bring you peace/shalom. In Yeshua's mighty name, Amen.

Until next time.... Shalom and joy!

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[Note: I'd love to hear from more of you. What do you need? What topics would be helpful? If you've found this helpful, let others know about our free website. I know many of you are coming to this website from China, Russia, Japan, Ukraine, Germany, Italy, Australia, Canada, USA, the Philippines, Israel and dozens of other countries. We'd love to hear from you.]