

Lesson 44
The Dynamic of Faith
Hebrews 11:32

Is God interested in the little man, the ordinary man, the common man? Does God work only for the famous people? A common error among Christians is thinking that God is more interested in bank presidents, heads of companies, doctors, and lawyers than He is in plumbers, carpenters, mechanics, and housewives. Man exalts wealth, education, and position, but God looks at men as they are and often uses the most unlikely people to get His work accomplished.

So often uninformed Christians will say, concerning some famous person or someone who has a great personality, “Man, if that person would ever trust Christ, he would make a great Christian?” How wrong it is to view important people this way. Furthermore, famous people often do not make great Christians when they are converted because they fight pride constantly.

God is no more interested in the wealthy than the poor, in the educated than the uneducated, or the upper class than the lower class. God is interested in saving sinners no matter what their station in life is. God saves and uses sinners who exercise faith in God. God uses faith wherever He finds it because God honors every act of faith we make towards Him. God is looking for faith from His people, for those who exercise faith shall obey their God.

We will now deal briefly with three of God’s men in the Old Testament - Barak, Samson, and Jephthah. These three men were judges in Israel. They lived in a period of Israel’s history when the nation refused to believe God and drive the Canaanites from the land. The result was that the people began to apostatize and serve other gods, and the nation again and again fell captive to the various Canaanite tribes. When the people would cry to God, God would raise up a new judge and deliver the people, but the people would stop believing and fall back into disobedience.

These three men made the Old Testament believer’s Hall of Fame because they exercised faith, but they were also men who were weak in many areas. ***“And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets ...”*** (Heb. 11:32). They, at times, did things that were not pleasing to God, but they did have a heart for God. Humanly speaking, we might think that God would not use men like Barak, Samson and Jephthah, but He did. Why? Because God uses any faith He finds in man, and He honors it, even though a man’s life might be a mixture of good and evil.

THE FAITH OF BARAK

Barak, who was a soldier, was raised up by God near the close of the twenty year period when Jabin, the king of Canaan, mightily oppressed the children of Israel (Judges 4:3). He came to power when Deborah, a prophetess, was acting as a judge over Israel (Judges 4:4). This shows the depths of decline in Israel, for a woman was running the show. God does not intend for women to rule in any spiritual capacity over men. ***“O My people! Their oppressors are children, and women rule over them. O My people! Those who guide you lead you astray,***

and confuse the direction of your paths” (Isa. 3:12).

Obviously Deborah was acting in good faith because there were no men to do the job. She is not so much to be faulted as the men who had degenerated in their spiritual responsibilities.

The illustration of Deborah gives us a hint as to whether single women should go to the mission field. If there are no men, then women must do the job. However, that is not what is revealed in God’s Word. To use women is to take God’s second best.

It was through Deborah that God spoke to Barak and told him to fight against the northern Canaanites (Judges 4:6, 7). Barak had a promise from God, and he believed it and took his army to war. He believed God and acted accordingly. God gave the victory to Barak because he believed God.

However, Barak was a weak man in many ways. He was timid and insecure and perhaps a bit superstitious because he would not go to battle without Deborah at his side (Judges 4:8). Barak, like so many people, thought that a prophetess or a minister had some special magic with God. Barak had not learned to take God at His word and act on it without the aid or assistance of anyone. God honors individual faith first, before He honors collective faith.

A preacher, or an evangelist, or the head of some Christian organization, has no more access or authority with God than the average Christian. God wants His people to exercise faith so He can fill them with great blessing and joy.

THE FAITH OF SAMSON

Samson, a Nazarite, also was a judge in Israel, and many mighty acts were recorded about Samson, who at times was a man of faith. We all know Samson as a powerful man whose source of strength laid in his beautiful, uncut hair. By faith Samson tore to pieces a lion with his bare hands; he slew a thousand Philistines single handed with the jawbone of an ass; he ripped off the city gates of Gaza and carried them up a hill; he burst asunder the strongest cords when bound by his enemies. Samson accomplished these feats by faith, and ***“The Spirit of the Lord came upon him”*** (Judges 13:25; 14:19).

A Christian can do extraordinary things when he exercises faith in God. We find ourselves doing things that under ordinary circumstances we could never do.

Samson, however, had feet of clay, and his one weakness was that he was a ladies’ man. He had what seemed to be an uncontrollable lust for women, and this influenced many of his major decisions in life. Samson’s wife was a Philistine woman, a non-Israelite and an idol worshipper (Judges 14:1-4). He took her because he said, “She looks good to me.” While the text says this relationship was somehow part of the secret plan of God in His permissive will, it was definitely forbidden in the Law for Jews to marry foreign women unless they converted to Judaism. Samson’s wife, by womanly charms, was able to get the secret of a riddle from him. At one point of his life, Samson took a harlot to himself (Judges 16:1). Then we find him in love with Delilah, and Delilah, again through womanly charms, was able to get Samson to reveal that his

hair was the source of his strength.

We may think that Samson got away with his sins with women, but it is not so. God saw to it that the Philistines captured him, put him in prison, gouged out his eyes, and made him a grinder, doing the work of an animal (Judges 16:21). Samson was sorely disciplined by God for his weakness for women, and he paid a big price for a few moments of fleeting pleasure.

How different was Samson than was Joseph, who was propositioned by Potiphar's wife and refused to commit this sin and ran from it because he knew it would dishonor God (Gen. 39:7-12). Joseph knew that to be with this woman would be a "sin against God," and he knew he would be disciplined by God if he did it. Joseph turned from the evil of adultery, and God richly rewarded him for his faith.

Christians must fight the sin of sexual lust with all their strength that they might please their God in all things.

"The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts" (Rom. 13:12-14).

Samson was a Nazarite, a religious man, but he fell into sexual sin. Position never keeps one from falling, but faith in God and fear of His discipline can, and does, keep a true child from falling into sexual immorality.

Samson's last act of faith was his greatest and best. He undoubtedly felt the strong discipline of God and would rather die than go through life a blind slave of the Philistines. Samson overturned the pillars on which stood the great temple of Dagon (Judges 16:25-30). Samson's strength did not only come from his hair but through faith in God. By faith, he did this mighty act, and God honored his prayer when he said, ***"Oh Lord God, please remember me and strengthen me just this time ..."***

This tells us that God will use any wayward saint the moment he turns from his sin and exercises true faith in God, even if he must suffer discipline for the rest of his life.

THE FAITH OF JEPHTAH.

Jephthah was also a judge and an interesting one indeed. He was an illegitimate child, and because of his dishonorable birth, he was excluded from the congregation of the Lord. ***"No one of illegitimate birth shall enter the assembly of the LORD; none of his descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of the LORD"*** (Deut. 23:2). Jephthah was driven out of his home when he was a young man (Judges 11:1-2). He became the leader of a worthless bunch of marauders who lived to steal (Judges 11:3). Yet God called this man to salvation and brought him to power in Israel as a judge. God calls the most unlikely kinds of people to do a work for Him. All God wants is faith, and He will use faith anywhere He can find

it.

The Israelites were in a state of panic because of the Ammonites, and they were so desirous to defeat them that they dared to call Jephthah to be their leader. He would have to be some kind of a leader to lead thieves. He was rough and tough, and that is why Israel called for his help, but God called him because he was a man of faith (Judges 11:9-10). God uses faith anywhere He finds it. God did give Jephthah victory over the Ammonites because God honored his faith.

We also see a weakness in Jephthah in that he was quick to make rash vows. He promised that the first thing to meet him after the victory over the Ammonites he would offer up as a burnt offering sacrifice. He undoubtedly thought it would be an animal (Judges 11:30-31). The first thing to meet him was his daughter, and he offered her to a life of perpetual virginity (Judges 11:34-35).

It seems to me that Jephthah's daughter should have been in the Old-Testament Hall of Fame for her faith because she had a humble and sweet spirit towards the will of God for her life (Judges 11:36-40).

CONCLUSION

Saved

Barak was a simple soldier. Samson was a religious man and Jephthah an illegitimate child. They all had different backgrounds and personalities, but they all had faith in the living God in common. Even though they were simple, common people, with feet of clay as all believers, they had a dynamic faith. They believed God, and God used them for His own glory. Does God use people today? Yes. Is God still working supernaturally in the lives of people? Yes. God honors a Christian's faith, and wherever He finds faith He uses it. God is waiting for you and me to exercise faith, and when we do we shall see God work in marvelous ways.

How much are you operating on faith? Is your Christianity more intellectual than personal? Do you find yourself reading the Bible and saying, "I already know that truth," or do you come to church and hear the preacher and say, "I have learned that before; I just can't learn anything more from this man!" If this is your spirit, your Christianity is intellectual, and it is based solely on discovering new truths or changing your theological position. However, what will happen when you have learned all the general theological positions (and you should learn them), and you have settled on your basic biblical interpretations? What new truths will touch you then? None! At that point, you will be forced back to the simplicity of Christianity, and you will realize that it is faith in the truth that God honors.

"But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3).

The mind can grasp the general truths of the Bible, but the heart is spending a lifetime applying them by faith. God wants faith from His people, and He will use faith wherever He finds it.

Does God use simple, ordinary, common Christians? He most certainly does. God uses faith wherever He finds it, and often He finds it among humble, God-fearing Christians. God chooses the foolish things to confound all of our worldly thinking.

“... but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, that no man should boast before God” (1 Cor. 1:27-29).

I believe some day we are going to find that God is not using the men whose names are the best known. God is using weak men and women who know how to pray and who are praying down blessing. I am reminded of the story of Charles Finney who went to a place one day and was told of a man who had just passed away, a man who had given his life to prayer. “Did he leave anything so we can find out about his life?” Mr. Finney asked, and was told, “Only a diary.” Finney said, “I’d like to have it.” In this man’s diary it could be seen that at certain times he was burdened for a certain locality, and he said, “I have given this night in prayer for that locality.” Then in another place he was burdened for “such and such a minister.” Mr. Finney took time out to investigate, and he found that when this man had prayed and spent the night in prayer, a revival had broken out in that place. The people had said, “The minister there is a man of mighty works.” That minister was not the man whom God used. It was the man who spent the night in prayer. God uses folks who are not counted great.

Unsaved

Perhaps you are not a Christian at all. You can become a Christian when you realize you are a sinner, separated from God and under God’s wrath. Then you must turn to Jesus Christ and receive Him into your life by faith, believing that He died for your sins. Wealthy and poor, educated and uneducated, powerful and weak must all come the same way to salvation - through a simple act of faith in Jesus Christ. You must humbly acknowledge that you are a sinner and then cling only to Jesus Christ to save you. It is the simplicity of faith in the bleeding Christ that will lead you to the dynamic of faith in the kingly Christ.