

Mark

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Preacher: Delves, Stanley (1897-1978)

- [0 : 00] As the Lord may help me, I will speak from the Gospel according to Mark, chapter 11, verse 22.
- And Jesus answering, said unto them, Have faith in God. The Gospel according to Mark, the 11th chapter, the 22nd verse.
- And Jesus answering, said unto them, Have faith in God. We need not, I feel, spend time on considering the context of this word.
- This one expression is quite self-contained, have faith in God. But I will just take note of this, that we read, And Jesus answering, said unto them, Have faith in God.
- And, I know not whether this may be an answer to anyone's case this evening.
- [1 : 33] For, I do believe, that the Lord directs his word, not only in a way of general profit and edification, but to particular cases.
- And, I think it is often, well, that the Lord's servants should not know the particular cases that there are in the congregations that listen to their word.
- If they did, they might try and direct the word to them, and that would not be the same. Then, Jesus answered, Anyway, I feel that this is an answer to many difficulties, many problems, and many fears.
- Have faith in God. And, we may regard, then, this word, first, as being in the nature of a gracious exhortation and direction.
- Have faith in God. For, exhortations from the scripture need to be very carefully set forth and graciously received.
- [3 : 02] For, exhortations can be wrongly enforced, and there may be an unprofitable reaction to them.
- For instance, if it should be taught with regard to any exhortation, and perhaps this somewhat especially, that it implies that it just rests with us to have faith in God, that anyone, at any time, can just have faith in God.
- The state and experience of those who have feelings in these matters will react against it. It would seem to them, almost like mocking them in their helplessness and dependence, to bid them have faith in God. So, exhortations do not imply ability, in and of ourselves, to respond to the exhortations.
- But then there's another mistake with regard to exhortations. And that is to turn them down, because we have not ability to respond to them.
- [4 : 23] If, for instance, there should be, I don't feel there would be, such a reaction to this word as this.
- Well, it's all very well to say, have faith in God, but I can't give myself faith in God. And so leave it at that. Now, the word of God is not to be turned down like that, my friend.

It really isn't. They're both wrong reactions. I mean to suppose that the exhortation implies ability in ourselves to respond, or that the exhortation is such that, not having ability, we just leave it at that.

What is the right response? Well, it is to seek as we may be able to submit our mind to the exhortation, and pray that the Lord will give us grace to respond to it.

Gracious God, do help me to believe in thee, and give me faith in thy holy and blessed name. For this is a very needful exhortation.

[5 : 41] In very many ways, it's applicable, and I want to show some applications of it before you this evening. Have faith in God.

Have faith in God. And we may regard it as being also in the nature of a reproof.

That seeing we have such a faithful, and such a gracious, and such a merciful God to look to, that we have so little faith in God.

There is no doubt that unbelief lies as a worm at the root of much of our inability.

Not that unbelief is an inability. You must make a difference, friends, between an inability to believe, which arises from weakness in ourselves, and a reaction against the word, which arises from unbelief.

[6 : 55] I mean, weakness of faith would believe, but cannot. Unbelief wouldn't believe. Unbelief would never express itself in such a word as this, Oh, could I but believe.

Then all would easy be. I would but cannot. Lord, believe. My help must come from thee. Now, faith in its weakness would believe, but unbelief would not believe.

But although I make this distinction, it's not easy to make that distinction in ourselves, and to just see how far its weakness of faith in us, and how far it's the insidious, subtle working of unbelief.

But then, my friends, who can understand himself, really? Who can understand himself, really? We're subject of many complex feelings.

We just can't sort them out from right and wrong. But anyway, we'll leave there. It is a reproof, especially because not to have faith in God in the exercise of it, is very dishonouring to his holy and gracious name.

[8 : 33] It implies, more or less, that we can't trust him. And you know how unbelief acted in the children of Israel when God had brought them out of the promised land, delivered them from that bondage, brought them through the wilderness, delivered them from Egypt from the bondage of Egypt, brought them through the wilderness to the borders of the promised land, and then they hadn't paid in God to go into that land.

And when the ten spies brought back that report, the land is good, clothes with milk and honey, but we can never enter into it, the opposition's too strong, the cities, with some exaggeration, and unbelief always does exaggerate, they're walled up to heaven, we can never overcome them, and they're warlike people, and giants in the land, it's no use, we can never enter into this land.

Oh, what a provocation that was in the sight of God. So I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest.

It was so dishonouring to God that they couldn't believe him, that he would bring them in. When it came to it, their spirit failed, they had not faith in God.

Now, I'm not suggesting that things will come to that path with a child of God, but still, not to have faith in God is grieving in his sight.

[10 : 31] Have faith in God reproves our lack of faith. And then, also, we may take this word, have faith in God, as being a very encouraging word to us, and especially, if the Lord is pleased to clothe the word with some measure of life and power to our hearts, it is not only an exhortation, but it is an enabling.

Now, when the Lord is pleased, graciously, to clothe any exhortation with life and power to our hearts, the exhortation becomes an enabling.

So that, if the Lord would be pleased to clothe this word in that way, with life and power to us, well then, we should feel encouraged to have faith in God.

As well as reproves for our lack of it, and exhort it to exercise it, we should feel encouraged by it. Well now, may we receive some profit through this word tonight.

Have faith, then, in God. now, we must understand the difference between the possession of faith in the heart and the exercise of that faith in different ways in which it pertains to faith to believe.

[12 : 18] Now, there is a distinction here between the possession of faith as a spiritual and vital principle and the exercise of that faith in its liveliness.

faith. For faith is a principle, a real, vital, spiritual principle.

It's not just a turn of the mind, it's a vital principle in the heart. And it is a very precious principle too, as the Apostle Peter speaks of it, as having obtained like precious faith with us.

For there is only one faith. And that's the same faith in every child of God in the nature of it. It's like precious faith in every case.

It's stronger in some, weaker in others, but it's the same nature in all. And it's a very spiritual nature. It is precious in the nature of it.

[13 : 36] The most precious principle it is to possess precious faith. Precious in its nature, precious in its exercise.

And this precious faith, as we believe, is entirely the gift of God. No one can give faith to himself or persuade himself to believe or be persuaded to believe with regard to the possession of faith.

No, it's God's gift. Whatever it is, it is God's gift that soul by grace you are saved.

It is through faith and that not of yourselves. It is nothing that we can bring forth in and from ourselves at all. It is the gift of God.

And how does God give it? Well, we read, and as we may be able, we must be instructed by the word of God in these essential matters, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

[14 : 55] That is to say, God causes the word to have that effect in the heart which brings forth true and living faith.

And that faith stands not in the word of man, nor the will of man, but in the power of God. as you read, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Now, the word of God has come with power into our hearts. It's had an effect, for power always produces an effect, and the effect shows the power, power, and the effect of the power of the word is to bring the heart to believe.

Indeed, it is my understanding that faith is brought forth in the heart originally by the new birth.

But then the new birth is brought forth by the word of God, as Peter says, being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abides forever.

[16 : 22] Well, so is faith imparted to the heart, precious faith, vital, living, God-given, and God-believing faith.

But it is not with regard to the possession of faith that this word applies, have faith in God, because it is perfectly clear that the disciples, Peter and the rest, had already been born again through the word of Jesus Christ, and that they did believe in God, as regards the possession of faith.

They were not unbelievers when Jesus said this word to them, so that although the possession of faith is the vital thing, the Lord here speaks not so much of that, because they had faith, but with regard to the exercise of it.

have faith in God with regard to the exercise of faith. And this is very suitable, that we should have faith in exercise in God for various reasons.

One is, of course, it is very quieting to the mind in times of stress and trial.

[18 : 09] You read that word in Isaiah, they would keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusted in thee.

Now, trusting is exactly the meaning of this word. Have faith in God means trust him, trust him, and they will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusted in thee.

And then follows, again, the exhortation, trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

have faith in God, oh, how that quietens the mind, steadies it, comforts it, strengthens it.

Oh, well, I remember an experience I had with regard to that word. They would keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.

[19 : 16] when I was brought into a state and trial of mind, I should never have thought of anybody who had any faith at all could ever come into, but I won't feel the sermon this evening by relating my experience.

When that word came to me, they will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusted in thee.

was that I saw a gracious hand, came right down to me, and took hold of my sinking spirit, and lifted me out of the depth I was in, and put me on that rock.

For that expression, trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah, his everlasting strength, you would find in the margin or the rock of ages.

then have faith in God. That's the way to quietness of mind and spirit.

[20 : 27] And there's so much that causes agitation, turbulence, restlessness and fear. There's many causes of disquiet.

There's only one cause of quiet, and that is having faith in God. as far as that faith is in exercise, we feel a resting spirit in our minds.

God's faith in God. And here's another consideration. Have faith in God, because this is so strengthening.

Unbelief, as I've said just now, is a terribly weakening thing. And we're often more conscious of the effects of unbelief than we are of the unbelief that causes the effects.

It's like a worm at the root. It's unbelief. It eats away the very vigour and strength of our spirit. when I was pondering over this word this afternoon and seeking that the Lord would direct me to a word to speak in his name this evening, I thought of that verse in the 11th chapter of the Hebrews.

[21 : 52] By faith Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed and was delivered of a child when she was past age.

Now that seemed an impossibility and when it was first spoken to Abraham that he would have a son, Sarah couldn't believe it. She laughed, not with amusement mind, but with the very thought of such a thing, as that a son could be born to her at her age.

You know my friends, it is sometimes the case that at first faith failed. We're in the end, it conquers.

Now at first her faith failed. Oh, this can never be, she said. This can never be. But through faith, Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed.

strength, and because he judged him faithful, that had promised. Now that is exactly having faith in God, to believe that God is faithful, that has promised.

[23 : 13] And though it may seem impossible, that promise can never be fulfilled, yet to receive strength, that it shall be fulfilled, fulfilled, because to just dwell a moment longer on that word, he received strength to conceive seed.

Now if God has a purpose in any, he will give them strength to guarantee that purpose that he has for them to fulfill.

it isn't a question of whether they can fulfill that purpose, or that duty, or not. It isn't a question of it at all.

Sarah could never bring forth that son, never. He was past age. But then, if God has a purpose to fulfill, he will give strength to fulfill that purpose.

But he will give strength through believing. You must ponder over this very carefully to get into the heart of it. We read too easily, we split too easily over the surface of the scriptures through faith.

[24 : 36] Now it was not through faith he conceived that child. It was through faith he received strength to conceive that child. through faith he received strength.

How needful then is this word? Have faith in God, because it's through believing in God that he imparts strength to our poor, needy, and sometimes so very helpless hearts.

have faith in God and you will receive strength. I would like now to apply these considerations for the rest of the time.

I mean, show how the word applies. We minister cannot apply the word effectively to the hearts of our hearers, but we seek to show how the word itself applies.

Now, it applies very much with regard to a prayer. Have faith in God.

[25 : 57] And so, you will remember again that word, he that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Now, as the Lord, by the Holy Spirit helps us, we must have faith in God in our prayers. I won't go into the context of this word, except just to notice that Jesus went on to say, for verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be there removed, and be there cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith.

Therefore, I say unto you, whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall receive them.

this is difficult to understand, that we must always understand one scripture, in the light of another scripture, and another scripture must go with this, and that is, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth for we may ask many things, not according to his will, maybe according to our will, but not his will, but even so, this gives a very large, a very large promise to prayer, whatsoever ye shall ask, believing, so that it is according to his will, ye shall receive, well, it's a great thing to have faith in God as a prayer hearing, and a prayer answering

God, for he is that, you know, and what testimonies, all through the ages, up till now, and now, what testimonies the people of God can give to this, they have proved him to be a prayer hearing, and a prayer answering God, and yet, our spirit is to lose faith in God in prayer.

[28 : 52] For one thing, of course, we're apt to lose faith in God in prayer when he keeps us waiting at his throne, and does not soon grant to us the desires of our hearts, faith.

And there's no doubt that that is often the way that God takes to try faith. You know, faith is tried. It's always tried.

And one way in which God tries faith in regard to prayer is not is not to appear to answer. But it may be sometimes there's no answer because there's no real exercise of faith.

No, we may pray for many things customary. There's the things it is usual to pray for and right to pray for. And yet, there's little faith in our hearts.

but even then, the Lord is very compassionate and very merciful. And although we may seem as though we pray and can hardly expect prayers to be answered, but we may very well live to prove they are.

[30 : 17] I remember my father. My father was a godly man and a very praying man. I think perhaps my earliest impressions with regard to spiritual things, I won't say that they were of a spiritual nature, but they were impressions from the weighty nature of which my father used to pray.

He had a particularly weighty way of praying. It seemed to me after these long years still the memory of it. But when one or two of my brothers and I gathered round, perhaps I was the only one, around our father's deathbed, for by that time the Lord had been pleased to show his grace to us, it may have been my brother Jesse and me, or possibly my brother Edgar, but we were around our father's deathbed, and my father said, I've often prayed for my children, but I never expected to see the war caused by grace like this.

So there you are. But my father might have died and never seen it. And then the Lord answered his prayers. Well now then brethren, have faith in God in this matter of praying.

And delays are not denial. And it isn't only that. But even if there may seem to be a denial with regard to prayer, in one way, it may be answered in another.

When the child of Bathsheba and David was smitten and lay dying, David lay on the ground all the time and would eat no meat, because he said, maybe God will spare the child.

[32 : 26] But God did not spare the child. It came to pass that the child died, but then there was a Solomon given instead and raised up to be the king that he was over Israel.

Pray on, brethren. the Lord may answer prayer in quite another way than you may have in your own mind when you plead with him.

But he will always regard the prayer of faith. You may be sure of that. He will never go disregarded by a prayer hearing and a prayer answering, God, now have faith in God in this matter of prayer.

And then again, we need to have faith in God with regard to his dealings and ways with us in matters.

We need to have faith in his wisdom where we cannot see his way. He is the only wise God and there is no real wisdom especially of a spiritual nature apart from him.

[33 : 45] It is all folly with us. We are short-sighted. There is much we cannot foresee and understand but he is a God of perfect wisdom.

Have faith in God to guide you. Remember that word of the psalmist Asaph, was it, when he came to a very distressed state in mind, conflict and temptation, as for me, he said, my feet had well nicely I was almost gone.

It seemed to me as though my faith in God was slipping out of my heart entirely. I couldn't really seem to believe. that the Lord appeared for his tried and tempted servant in the sanctuary of God.

And brethren, never let the condition of your mind, for it verigates you coming into the house of God. Never think it's no use for me to go into the sanctuary in this state of mind.

Asaph might have said that, that he went into the sanctuary of God and there God put masters right with him. And what faith in God that raised up in Asaph's heart, thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory.

[35 : 23] As I would say, Lord, I can trust thee, I can trust thee to lead me and guide me. I believe thy counsel is a counsel of infinite wisdom.

I don't say anything about the way, whether it shall be rough or smooth, dark or light, short or long, pleasant or painful.

I say nothing about it, Lord. I leave it all with thee. The one thing is that thou shall guide me with thy counsel. Now that's having faith in God.

And there's every justification for it. Oh, what wisdom there is in that counsel of his. His holy mind and will have faith in God.

But his dealings with you and with me may sometimes seem very confusing. and we contrast no more traces goings than in the sea.

[36 : 30] His way we read is in the sea. Not only in the sanctuary where he may make things plain and clear to us, but in the sea where we can't trace them.

It's very much the exercise of faith to believe, where we cannot see and where we cannot understand. Have faith in God.

Have faith in God's power and grace and everything that pertains to his holy name and nature with regard to his dealings with you.

Have faith in God. Trust him. Trust him. Commit your way into his hand. Own that you feel you of no wisdom, no strength and no power and fall into his gracious hand.

Have faith in God. We might apply it also to times of especial, trial and affliction.

[37 : 45] God's Now all things we read work together for good to them that love God and are called according to his purpose. That includes of course all afflictions and trying dispensations.

How often can we see when we're in such cases how they're working for good? good. And the Lord doesn't always make it clear to us how they're working for good.

How little could Joseph see how all his trying and painful trials could ever come out for good? good. But there's no doubt that Joseph was enabled to have faith in God through all those dark days of his.

Have faith in God with regard to the issue of things like that. Now there's just one more word in my mind to say and then I will close tonight.

have faith in God. Now have faith in God with regard to the end. For the end will be the last occasion for faith and it is very often the last trial of faith.

[39 : 22] The end. And it may be anticipated sometimes with some dread of mind. There's no accounting for deathbed experiences.

I remember Mr. Sawyer said that to me once. We were discussing these matters and he said there's no accounting for deathbed experiences and there isn't. For some die in joy and others are tried in their last days.

These all died in faith mind. they all died in faith. Not all in joy and triumph. I've been thinking of that word of John Bunyan, of John Bunyan and the Pilgrim's progress.

Which I think is very touching. Where he depicts Christian and his companion getting nearer to the heavenly city until they came to that river and Bunyan says at the sight of it they were daunted or distressed in mind and they said to one there asked whether there was any way to get to the celestial city otherwise and through that deep dark river and the answer was yes there is another way but only two have gone that way or ever will go that way to the end of the world that was of course Enoch and Elijah well then

Christian asked whether the waters were all of the same depth and the answer was no the waters are not all of the same depth some are deeper some are shallower but then the answer was that we cannot help you in that case because the river is deep or shallow according as you believe in the king of the place that's it the river is deep or shallow according as you have faith in God when you come to it now the passing of the river is the last exercise of faith anyway beyond that it's sign and sometimes it's the last trial of faith and sometimes when it's been a trial of faith at the very last it all comes out clear we had a godly member a widow in our church some years ago she was always fearful of herself although she ventured forward to be baptized and I don't think she ever regretted it but she always said she was never sure and she was always fearful of the end and to be helpful for she only had a companion and the companion couldn't be expected to be about all day and night as well the last two nights of her life

[42 : 58] I set up with her and I was with her and she died she died early in the morning and when I perceived that death was approaching I leaned over her and they were Mrs.

Bond and I said Mrs. Bond we very often son in the house of God when I tread the verge of Jordan bid my anxious fear subside no I said you're there you're treading the verge of Jordan there are there any anxious fears she shook her head she could hardly speak no there are no anxious fears what a pity she had so many before she got there but what a blessing it was she lost them when she did better have fears before we get there brethren and lose them when we get there and have no fears till we get there and then fears seize on us much better well now I will leave this word with you have faith in God the Lord bless the world it's the answer to many problems the way through many difficulties the strength against many temptations to have faith in

God have faith in God Amen let us let us know close with hymn 605 the 605th hymn tune hymn hmm hmm hmm hmm

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