

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

TRUE FAITH

Then came she and worshiped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

Matthew 15:25-28

The LORD described the heavenly kingdom in this fashion, *"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."* (Mat 11:12) Here HE makes reference to the "means" whereby this kingdom is "entered" or experienced by those to whom such an entrance is given.

This Canaanite woman, whose daughter was vexed by a devil, came seeking ONE who could remedy her problem. She was "violent" in her unshakeable tenacity in the face of no encouragement. Blind Bartimaeus cried the louder even when he was commanded to be quiet by the multitudes that he was disturbing as the LORD passed by.

The question is, why out of all the women of similar circumstance in Phoenicia, did this woman seek the LORD? Were there not many blind beggars in the town of Jericho? Why then was there only one, this son of Timaeus, who cried out with a loud voice, *"JESUS, thou SON of David, have mercy on me."* (Mark 10:47).

The LORD answered these very questions when HE said, *"But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elijah sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian."* (Luke 4:25-27)

This Canaanite woman was an object of GOD's amazing grace and was the recipient of the greatest gift that can be given to men by the LORD, the gift of faith. The same was true of blind Bartimaeus. They did not become heirs of the kingdom of heaven because of their "faith" but it was the "gift of faith" which was the evidence that they were made heirs of this kingdom. It was in the demonstration of that gift wrought in them by the HOLY GHOST that caused their "violent" taking of that kingdom. Even as Jacob of old who wrestled with the angel and would not let him go until he blessed him.

It is this same mind which cause Job to say, *"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."* (Job 13:15) and Peter to declare, *"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."* (John 6:68) Those who are given this like precious faith, are no more able to refrain from exercising that faith than a starving man can refuse food when it is placed before him. The "violent" take the kingdom of heaven by force. They can do nothing else.

The LORD said *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."* (John 10:27) Faith is not an option for the sons of GOD, but rather is a powerful force that will not

let them stop short of that which it sees as its prize. *“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.”* (Heb 6:18-19)

Even as Christian in Pilgrim’s Progress stopped his ears (against those who would dissuade him) and ran out crying “Life, life, eternal life”, so the man who has been awakened by the SPIRIT of GOD and given faith can do nothing less than assail the gates of heaven with his cries, *“JESUS thou SON of David have mercy on me.”* What a contrast this is to the modern concepts of “soul winning” where men have to be cajoled and persuaded to believe according to a prescribed formula.

Was it not this same faith that caused David, to cry out, after the uncovering of his great sin with Bathsheba, *“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.”* (Psa 51:10-12) This was a matter of life and death to him, not some religious exercise from which he hoped to gain a blessing or somehow merit GOD’s favor. He had no way of knowing what the outcome of his pursuit would be but he was convinced that his only hope was in the sure mercies of HIS FATHER, and he could do no less than cast himself at the feet of that sovereign mercy. Did he not have the same mind as Edmund Jones when he penned these words:

Prostrate I'll lie before his throne, And there my guilt confess;
I'll tell him, I'm a wretch undone Without his sovereign grace.
I'll to the gracious King approach, Whose scepter pardon gives;
Perhaps he may command my touch, And then the suppliant lives..
Perhaps he will admit my plea, Perhaps will hear my prayer;
But, if I perish, I will pray, And perish only there.

So what can we say about true faith? **“True faith”** :

Has heavenly origins. Paul said *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”* (Eph 2:8-9) There is no shortage of books written today with instructions on how to get faith, have faith, and increase faith. Yet true faith cannot be discovered in, or applied by, any writing or teaching of men but must be bestowed upon a man by the grace of GOD quite apart from human endeavor and effort.

Is the only avenue through which a man may approach the LORD. *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* (Heb 11:6) We are justified by the blood and righteousness of JESUS CHRIST, yet it is through faith that the LORD is pleased to manifest that justification to HIS children. *“Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.”* (Rom 3:30)

Is a force which will not be denied. We see that demonstrated by this Canaanite woman who braved insults and outright discouragement but yet persisted because the power of the ONE with whom she conversed had been made known to her through sovereign grace. Of Moses (refusing to be the son of Pharaoh’s daughter) it is said, *“By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.”* (Heb 11:27)

Has a FINISHER as well as an AUTHOR. *“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:”* (Phil 1:6) HE who does all things well never begins something that HE does not finish. There are no “maybes” in the kingdom of heaven nor any subjects whose FAITH has failed.

Has one OBJECT. Most of the talk about faith that we hear today is very subjective yet “true faith” is concerned only with its OBJECT, which is CHRIST JESUS the LORD. Peter summed up the faith of GOD’s elect in his confession, *“And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”* (John 6:69) What else do the sons of GOD desire?