

03/01/08

2 Chronicles 20:13

### WHERE ARE YOU STANDING TODAY?

When problems, challenges and circumstances seem to have you totally surrounded, and fear is coming in like a flood to your mind and body, you need to take time to get away and get alone with the Lord. That is the first step towards victory, and that's exactly what the Jews and King Jehoshaphat did when they were warned about the huge army coming against them. It says they gathered themselves together to seek the Lord, and today's verse says they **STOOD BEFORE THE LORD** to ask for His help. Now I want you to realize today that getting all these people together was not an easy task to complete. We're not talking about a small group of 4 or 5 people, but rather, an entire nation, in this case, probably tens of thousands of men, local and civic leaders, and various people from all walks of life. It says **ALL OF JUDAH** was there, along with their women, wives and little kids. This takes some effort, doesn't it? I mean, you can't just send out the word, and have everybody at your doorstep in a few hours, especially with how slow communications were in those days! The point I want to get across to you today is that it took a concerted effort to gather everybody together to stand before the Lord. It wasn't easy, and for you and I, many times it won't be easy either. We have schedules to keep, children to drop off at school, work to go to, or schoolwork to complete. Yet, we **MUST** understand the vital importance this plays in getting the victory we so desperately want and need.

Isaiah 40:31 is a great verse to meditate on along these lines. They that **WAIT UPON THE LORD** will have their strength renewed. In the Hebrew, the word "renew" there actually means "exchange". So it more accurately says that if you choose (and it **IS** a choice) to wait upon the Lord, or to stand before the Lord, as Jehoshaphat did with his people, you're **EXCHANGING** your strength for the Lord's strength! Imagine that! So let me ask you, when was the last time you spent time standing before the Lord? When the crises of life hit you, where do you go first? To the medicine cabinet? To the doctor? To the banker? To your friends and confidants? Or, do you go to the Lord, and stand in His presence, basking in His glory, power, counsel and omni-everything? It's a discipline friend, no doubt about it, but a discipline you **MUST** cultivate if you expect to gain the victory when you're under the gun, and surrounded on every side by the enemy and his lies. This story in 2 Chronicles is one that I've fed off of for years, and it never fails to give me a great spiritual lift whenever I read it. I can just picture in my mind how this must've looked, as all the families stood together before the Lord, looking up to Heaven, from where they believed their help would come from. Try to picture their faces in your mind, looking up to heaven, totally dependent upon God, and totally defenseless against such a large, invading army. And don't you know this scene was awesome and so pleasing to the Lord! Why? Because it's an expression of **FAITH!** Just like when you stand before the Lord, it's your expression of faith in Him too. As you finish reading the story, you can see how God delivered them miraculously, and convincingly. He'll do **EXACTLY** the same thing for you if necessary, He's no respecter of persons. So make time, and take time, wait upon the Lord, and come into His presence with singing, praise and worship. Stand before the Lord, and watch Him glorify Himself for your sake!

03/02/08

Matthew 12:37

### THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK!

I think this is one of the most important verses to understand in all the Bible. By **OUR WORDS** we shall be justified, and by **OUR WORDS** we shall be condemned. Not God's Word, or the devil's word, but by our words! Truly, this statement put a priority on managing our mouths, does it not? If you intend to spend eternity with Jesus in heaven, you better pay attention to what is coming out of your mouth, because your words carry the power to either save your soul, or damn you forever. Wow! That's

something to really pray over, meditate in and study! And because our mouths are so vitally important to our eternal well-being, we owe it to ourselves, and to God, to think before we speak!

Unfortunately, most believers speak and then think, just like 99.9% of the rest of humanity. But if you read the Bible carefully, you'll find that it is a book of words about words. From the beginning to the end, God is always talking to us about the importance of verbal management. Why? Because it is by your words that you either license God, or license the devil, to work in your life. Your words are the key. God won't do anymore for you than your words allow Him to do, and the same is true concerning the devil. So, **THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK!** Take time to analyze your words **BEFORE** you speak them out your mouth, because once they're spoken, the power within them is released, for good or for bad! It's good to be a wise steward of your mouth, and say only what agrees with what God has already said! That is how you keep God involved and active in your life, and how you keep the devil at bay 24/7! Remember, if what you are about to say violates the word of God in some way, don't say it! Keep your mouth shut, and protect yourself from the attacks of the enemy!

03/03/08

Matthew 11:28

### ARE YOU TIRED OF BEING TIRED?

Are you tired of being tired all the time! Then follow Jesus! Only by following Him will you find true rest for your soul, and strength for your body. The closer you are to Him, the more energy you'll have, in the natural as well as in the spiritual. Jesus is the epitome of peace, in fact, the Bible calls Him the "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). So many times, if we're not careful, we find ourselves running around like chickens with their heads cut off, and that's not the way we're supposed to serve the Lord. If you truly wish to stay close to Jesus and serve Him in ways which please Him, then you'll never allow yourself to become "stressed out", or "burned out", or "maxed out"! Notice what Jesus said. His yoke is **EASY**, and His burden is **LIGHT!** Easy and light, not hard and heavy!

Have you ever found yourself talking about how hard it is serving the Lord? Or, have you ever heard others say things like that? I have, many times. I've even been guilty of doing it on more than one occasion (I know that's hard for you to believe, but believe me anyway!) Without thinking, we start talking about how hard it is in this life, and how challenging it is to serve the Lord. But that's exactly the opposite of what Jesus said. The more you follow Him, the easier and lighter your burdens should be! So, what does that tell you when you find yourself weighed down with the cares of this world? It should tell you that you're not really following Jesus at that time in your life, at least in the areas where you're all bent out of shape due to worry, fear, stress, pressure and anxiety. What should you do? Make a quality decision to **LET** Jesus be Lord of your life, in every area. Cast **ALL** your cares over upon Him, and He will take good care of you! The key word here is the word "let". Jesus won't force His peace upon you, and He won't make you walk an easy and light life in Him. He wants that of you, but if you insist on being worn out with the weight of worry, He'll just leave you to go on your merry old, stressed-out way! But if you're tired of being tired, then rejoice! The more you trust Jesus, the lighter your "load" will become! His yoke is **EASY**, and His burden is **LIGHT!**

03/04/08

John 15:9-11

### OBEDIENCE PRODUCES JOY!

God expects us to obey Him. Period. No excuses, no reasons why we can't will ever seem reasonable to Him. He has been, and will forever be, kind, generous, gracious, merciful, forgiving and patient with all of us, and in return, He **DEMANDS** our obedience to His Word and His will. **IN** fact, Jesus addressed this very issue when He asked the people one day, "Why call Me Lord, Lord, and then don't do what I say?" (Luke 6:46). In our passage today, Jesus is reminding the disciples about the

importance of obeying His commands and laws. In essence, He's saying that if you really love Him, you prove that by doing what He wants you to do, when He wants you to do it. Anything less than this is spiritual hypocrisy! To say Jesus is Lord of your life, and then basically ignore His Word, and His expressed desires for the way we live our lives, is HYPOCRISY! And so, where do you fit in all of this? Where do I fit? These are questions we must ask ourselves continuously. To what degree am I truly obedient to God? That might help you understand the level of joy you presently have in your life. Look carefully at vs.11 from John 15. The more obedient you are to God's Word, the more joyful you become! Think about that for a moment!

I don't know about you, but I want as much joy in my life as I can get! The world is full of misery, stress, pressure and suffering, so when God comes along with a guaranteed promise to find and enjoy His joy, I should perk up and pay attention! And so should you. Do you want more joy today in your life? Then commit to being as obedient as you can possibly be in your walk with the Lord today. Settle it in your mind right now, that whatever He tells you to do or say, or even think, obey! And at the end of the day, if you can look back and know in your heart that you've been an obedient child before the Lord, I guarantee the joy of the Lord will be the strength in your life it promises to be. In my own life, I know from experience, that the more obedient I am before the Lord, the more joyful I become. The less obedient I am, the more discontented I am in my spirit. Knowing I have been disobedient just has a way of eating away at me from the inside, and I hate that feeling! On the other hand, knowing I've been a loyal, faithful and obedient child in God's eyes brings such a feeling of peace within me, and I love that feeling as much as I hate the other! So, purpose in your heart today to be as obedient as you can be for the Lord. Honor Him, and demonstrate your love for Him by being obedient to Him. Its what He demands, what He expects, and what is due His Name!

03/05/08

2 Corinthians 1:12

### THE TESTIMONY OF YOUR CONSCIENCE

When Paul was writing to the Corinthians, he talked to them about the TESTIMONY OF HIS CONSCIENCE. Do you have a testimony concerning your conscience? You should, and so should I. What does that mean? It means that when you are examined at the judgment seat of man's opinion, or standing at the Lord's judgment seat in heaven someday, you can boldly, and without hesitation, talk about your life as a living example of faithfulness to God and His word. No one will have anything of which to accuse you of because you always strove to obey God and do His will. That's what Paul was saying to those he wrote to that day. He was telling them that even though they were questioning his calling, and his authority to lead them, he knew he had done exactly what the Lord had told him to do, nothing more or less. Therefore, he could boldly stand before the court of public opinion with joy because he knew God knew how he had lived his life. You and I should be able to say the same thing, but sadly, many of us can't make that kind of statement. And if that's you, its time to turn things around and build for yourself a living testimony of your conscience!

How do you build your conscience testimony? By making the decision to obey God whenever He speaks to you. Do whatever He says, and say only what He tells you to say, and you'll be on your way towards building a powerful testimony of conscience. Then when someone attacks you, or accuses you, or tries to malign you in anyway, you can stand tall with your shoulders square, knowing you're on solid ground because of your obedient lifestyle in Christ. And most importantly, someday when you stand before the Lord to be judged for the life you've lived, you can stand there with confidence, knowing you've been a good, loyal and obedient servant all the days of your life. That's the way it should be! That's what I'm working on in my life, and I pray you are too. How obedient have you been in your walk with God? I know in my life I can do better, and probably you can say the same thing. So, let's get going,

and purpose in our hearts that from now on, our #1 priority will be to obey God, and build for ourselves a powerful testimony that pleases God, and salves and strengthens our conscience.

03/06/08

Psalms 55:22

#### WHY WORRY?

God has your back! He's always alert, and one step ahead of the game in your life. Wherever you're going to be tomorrow, He's already there waiting on you! Fill your mind with these thoughts, and worry will become a foreign concept to you! So many people worry about things that they don't really have any control over, like terrorism, the stock market, the price of goods and services or the cost of living. In our verse today, God is reminding us that no matter what happens in this world that may seem to be an unexpected or sudden attack against us, its not a surprise to God! He is well-able to take care of you in the midst of some sudden attack, He's seen it coming and has already made provision and a way of escape for you. That's why its pointless to worry! Why worry when you know that God has your back, and He is your shield and rear guard?

God will never leave you or abandon you, especially in times of duress or stress or pressure. In times like those, you need to remind yourself that God is still God, and nothing has caught Him by surprise. Wherever you are today in our daily fights of faith, know that God has already been there, waiting on you! He's always ahead of the game, and always light years ahead of whatever the devil is planning against you. And isn't it comforting to know that even though satan may work hard to camouflage his plans against you, God sees it all and is already at work to protect, provide and empower you during those times of attack. In fact, one of the Holy Spirit's responsibilities while here on earth is to show us THINGS TO COME (John 16:13). So relax and praise God! Spend time in His presence, and let Him surround you with insight, power, protection and provision. Never worry! Ever! Why worry when God is on your side?

03/07/08

John 6:67

#### HOW LONG WILL YOU STAY?

There are times in our lives when we face situations or circumstances which we have no explanation or answer for. This was one of those times for the disciples. They had just heard a sermon that was very hard to hear, and very hard to understand. Jesus was talking about spiritual things, and they didn't understand what He was talking about. The crowd didn't either, because it says that many stopped following Jesus after hearing this sermon. And when Jesus saw that many were leaving because of His teaching, He turned to His disciples and asked them if they wanted to go too. In other words, He wanted to know how long they were planning to stay with Him. And although Peter was guilty of saying many things that were wrong, in this case he was right on the money. He said to the Lord in reply, "Where would we go Lord? You have the words of eternal life!" Wow! What a great answer! But even though Peter's answer was right on, it was given in spite of the fact that he didn't understand the message anymore than any of the rest of them. In time, they would come to understand all these things, but at that time, they were pretty much in the dark, spiritually speaking.

And when we find ourselves in places like this, with questions and no answers, what should we do? Should we just walk away, as so many did that day with Jesus? Or, should we hang in there and trust God for answers and explanations later? My friend, serving Jesus is an eternal commitment, not a temporary one. When we give our hearts and lives to the Lord, its forever, not just until the first crisis comes along that causes us to scratch our heads with perplexity. In 2 Corinthians 4:8, Paul talked about being PERPLEXED, but not in despair. That means there were things that had happened to him, and which were happening to him, that he had no answers for. But that's ok, as long as you walk by faith, not

by sight, and TRUST God all the way with your life. Remember that in due time, all questions will be answered. Whether it be in this life or the next, you can rest assured everything will be fully explained by the Lord Himself. But just like what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13:12, for now (in this life) we see through a glass dimly. That means we don't always see things clearly, and sometimes things happen to us that we can't explain, or even find a reason for from the scriptures. Don't worry! Its ok! Just submit your questions to the Lord, and go on serving Him with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. Answers will come, guaranteed! Serving God requires trust, that's what the life of faith is all about. Remember that, and the next time you're facing a situation that you have no answers for, relax and know that in spite of your lack of understanding, God DOES understand, and WILL take good care of you because He loves you.

03/08/08

Joshua 24:2-13

### REMIND YOURSELF FOR YOURSELF!

One of the best ways to encourage yourself when you're being tempted with discouragement is to remember all the things God has already done for you in the past. This is what God was doing when He used Joshua to speak forth all the things God had already done for the children of Israel. By doing that, the people's hearts were once again encouraged to obey God and trust Him for their deliverance, provision, protection and victory. In other words, they needed to be reminded! And so it is for you and I, we also need to remind ourselves of what God has already done for us, and there's no better time to do that than when you're right in the middle of the latest fight of faith! When all hell seems arrayed against you, and it looks like you're doomed to defeat, REMEMBER! Take time to go before the Lord, waiting upon Him to renew your strength (Isaiah 40:31). And one of the best things you can do while waiting upon the Lord is to recount everything He has already done for you, and all the victories you've enjoyed by His hand in the past. By doing that, you strengthen your heart, and your faith rises to a new level of confidence and expectation.

All of us, including myself, have faced difficult times in life and ministry. As I sit to write today's verse-a-day devotional, our ministry is going through a challenging time financially. But when I'm tempted to become afraid for the future, I need to do exactly what I'm telling you to do, and what Joshua did for the Jews way back when. I need to go before the Lord, and wait upon Him to have my strength renewed. I need to stop, get quiet and reflect and remember all the wonderful victories of the past. I need to remind myself that my God is FAITHFUL, and He will not allow my defeat if only I will chose to trust Him. This was the message of Psalms 91. All the verses of that Psalm are great, but especially the last few, where God specifically tells the reader what He will do for those who put their trust in Him. Read those verses carefully and prayerfully, they will help remind you of what God promises you for the future, and what He has already done for you in the past! That will encourage you, exhort you and prepare you for what lies ahead. Victory!

03/09/08

Luke 8:15

### BRINGING FORTH FRUIT WITH PATIENCE

Our race we run in Christ is not a sprint. It's a marathon. Its for the rest of your life, so you have to understand the need for patience. Too many of us (myself included) have fallen prey to impatience over the things of this world, or even the things of God, and it shouldn't be that way. Why? Because Jesus said in several places that the entire kingdom of God operates like men planting seeds in the ground (see Mark 4). That being the case, we MUST understand the importance of patience, or else we'll never see the promises of God come to pass in our lives like we want. That's a problem with many, partly because of the pace of living which we have in this day and age. Everything is geared towards being

faster, faster, and still faster. The pace is such that many are falling like flies, torn up and torn apart by stress and tension. That is NOT the way God wants us to live our lives. In fact, Jesus said that if we are truly His followers, our yoke would be easy, and our burden light (Matthew 11:28-30).

So what about you? How patient are you, with God, with others, and with yourself? Our verse today specifically says that fruit will come only after our work is coupled with a patient heart. Jesus said we will bring forth fruit WITH PATIENCE. In other words, without patience, fruit isn't going to come forth for the glory of God! So get off of the world's hectic, frenetic pace, and start enjoying the ride called your life! Be patient, more patient than ever before. Yeah, but Apostle Mike, what about all the lost souls worldwide? Time is running out, and we've got a big job to do. That's true, but let God do the leading, and the setting of the pace of activity, ok? He's well aware of the time, and the magnitude of the job ahead of us. Let Him be God. You, however, should find His will for your life, and with patience, go about the Father's business, just like Jesus. And think about it with me for a moment. Jesus started His public ministry at the age of 30. He finished it around 33 and a half. So where was He for those first 30 years of life? Waiting. Being patient. Our Lord, the Savior of the human race, did nothing in terms of Divinely sanctioned and ordained ministry for 30 years! 30 years! Not one miracle. Not one sermon. Not one parable. Nothing. Why? Because He was a patient man. Like you and I need to be today. Patient! That's how you persevere all the way through to victory. So when (not if) you're tempted to become impatient with God, with others or even with yourself, just take a deep breath and relax! God is still God, and everything is on schedule according to your faith!

03/10/08

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become impatient with God, with others or even with yourself, just take a deep breath and relax! God is still God, and everything in on schedule according to your faith!

03/11/08

Joshua 24:15           **CHOOSE TO SERVE THE LORD!**

I believe the greatest gift God gave to us is the gift of free will. Unlike so many other creatures that God has created, mankind has the power of choice. We can choose who to follow, and whom to serve. And no matter what some may say, all men serve! Nobody is a person unto themselves, everybody either serves the Lord, or the devil. The stupidity in choosing not to follow the Lord is that everybody will bow their knee to Him sooner or later anyway, so why not open your heart and surrender to His Lordship now, in this lifetime? Philippians 2 says that EVERY KNEE will bow to Jesus, in heaven, earth and under the earth. That means that all these poor souls who choose not to acknowledge Jesus in this life will be FORCED to acknowledge Him in the next life, but by that time it will be too late for them to avail themselves of the blessing and free gift of salvation.

Joshua made the classic statement that all men should make if they're wise. As for me and my house, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD! Once again, realize that you're serving somebody today, whether you know you are or not. ALL MEN serve! Unsaved men serve the devil. Saved men serve the Lord. Its really that simple. But one day, when Jesus is revealed from heaven, and this age is finished and we move on out into eternity, all men, no matter where they are, will bow their knee to Jesus and acknowledge Him as the Lord, the son of God, the savior of all mankind. So, if you've made the choice to serve God, good for you! You've made the wisest choice any man could make. You've said in your heart of hearts: me and my household WILL serve the Lord. That's an act of choice, an exercise of free will! Let me exhort you to continue making that choice daily for the rest of your life. You've made Jesus Lord of your life in a general sense, now make Him Lord in a personal, daily sense. Do that today, and everyday! Remember, ALL MEN will bow their knee to Jesus. All demons, and the devil himself, will do the same. Better to do it now, where there are rewards attached to the decision, than to do it later, when all you'll have is remorse, regret, and the pains of eternal damnation! Choose wisely! Choose Jesus, and choose to serve Him now!

03/12/08

John 7:28           **THE POWER OF PURPOSE!**

One of our Lord's keys to success was His ability to maintain His ultimate sense of purpose. If you read through the four gospels carefully, you'll see He was constantly telling people about where He had come from, where He was going, and what He was doing here on earth. You and I would be well to follow that example, so that we don't become distracted with the cares of this world. Why is that important? Because the world is full of distractions that seek to lure you away from God's perfect will, plan and purpose for your life. You can't let that happen! Be like Jesus, and constantly your sense of purpose so that you won't end up wasting your time and your life.

Frequently, in my travels or just in the daily grind of taking care of the affairs of life, I stop and talk to myself about what I'm doing and why I'm doing it. It's a great mental exercise that I encourage you to engage in also. Have you ever just stopped and objectively analyzed your coming and going daily? Are you just pushing paper from one side of your office desk to the other, day after day? Are you just a taxi service, spending most of your day driving from one stop to the next, day after day? What are the things that have become the time occupiers in your life? Why have they become such? And if they aren't directly related to God's plan and purpose for your life, why have you let them become so important? **DISTRACTIONS!** Remember 2 Timothy 2:1-7. No man that is involved in warfare (that includes you)

will allow himself to become ENTANGLED in the affairs of this life. The devil doesn't entangle you, you do it to yourself. So let me encourage you to take stock of your life right now, today. And if you find that the cares of this world have successfully distracted you from the more important things of the spirit, then it's time to make some major adjustments. Time for waiting on God. Time for prayer. Time for Bible study. Time for outreach and ministry. Time for re-discovering your real purpose!

03/13/08

Isaiah 40:31            **THE WAIT MAKES YOU STRONGER!**

In my morning time with Lord today, I was once again reminded about His greatness, goodness, generosity, patience, mercy, and everything else that's wonderful. And in doing so, I was also once again reminded that the waiting upon Him is such an important part of our day, so important it can't be overlooked or neglected. In our verse today, we see an important truth that too many times is forgotten in our daily busyness and routine. But we **MUST** remember that the only way to stay victorious in this life is to be strong enough to prevail against the enemy, the flesh, and the world system all around us (see James 4:1-7, our three enemies). And the only way to truly stay strong is to include time spent waiting upon the Lord. There is no short cut or substitute for this, you must prioritize and make time to do this daily.

The word "wait", as found in our verse today, is a Hebrew word which means "to expect something with confident excitement". In other words, the word "wait" here does not mean we're just sitting around, doing nothing, expecting God to do everything while we do nothing! No! It means we're excited, confident, and expectant concerning the promises of God which we're standing on. It means we're active and busy about the Father's business, doing all we can do while believing that God will do what we can't do. It's spending time in His presence, worshipping Him, praising Him, and showering Him with your love in faith and confident expectation. In our ministry and life right now, we're facing some impossible situations financially, that unless God intervenes, we're in trouble! Well, I'm not worried, I'm not afraid, and I'm not nervous. I'm waiting! I'm spending time with God, renewing my mind to His faithfulness and to His promises, and re-establishing myself in confident expectation concerning the areas where we need His help in. I encourage you to do the same. I believe 2006 will be our finest year of ministry, and I believe for the same concerning you! So make time for God, and learn the value and power of waiting upon Him!

03/14/08

Matthew 4:19            **FINDING YOUR PURPOSE**

This verse today reveals the ultimate plan that Jesus has for your life. It is the reason for why you're still here on earth, rather than being up in Heaven with the Lord. Have you ever wondered why God chooses to leave us here after we accept Jesus as the Lord and Savior of our life? It's to do what He's describing here, to be a "Fisher of men" like He was. Jesus wants you to be a co-worker with Him in winning souls, and that is the prime purpose for your life as you know it on planet earth. This fact alone, if you really want to see it, would radically change the way most Christians live and prioritize themselves on a daily basis. The sad fact is that very few of us have this truth as the platform and foundation for our lives, and that needs to change. Does it need to change in your life?

Prosperity is for the purpose of winning souls. Health is for the purpose of winning souls. The exercise of our authority in the Name of Jesus is for the purpose of winning souls. **EVERYTHING** God promises is ultimately for the purpose of winning souls. Why? Because that's all that really matters to Him! What? Do you think God's priorities lie with your desire to have a bigger house, a nicer car, a closet full of new clothing every six months? Of course not! He wants you involved in winning souls, in becoming a "Fisher of men" with and for Jesus. If you do that, all the other stuff, cars, houses,

possessions, etc, will be added (Matthew 6:33). God's not opposed to you having nice things, but He is opposed to you being covetous and selfish! And that's the difference between what some people call "prosperity", and what God calls prosperity!

03/15/08

Mark 5:30

### HAVE YOU TOUCHED JESUS LATELY?

In our verse today, we find a woman making a faith connection with Jesus. Doctors had told her there was no hope for any improvement in her physical condition, but in faith, she came to Jesus, expecting her healing. The Bible says that when she TOUCHED the hem of His garment, power from God transferred to her from Jesus, and years of hard work by the devil was destroyed in a moment of time! And the moment God's power left Jesus, He knew it! He turned in the crowd, and asked who it was that had touched His clothing. My question to you today is this: have you touched Jesus lately with a touch of faith? Have you made your faith CONNECTION with Almighty God? Hundreds of people were touching Jesus that day in the crowd, but only one made the touch of faith! Only one made the faith connection and got her healing.

You need to know that NOTHING moves God except our faith. Not our crying, our pleading, our tithing, our church attendance, not even our praying. Many people pray, but not that many pray the prayer of faith. Think with me for a moment. If God was moved by things other than faith, the devil would have a field day with us! But no! Hebrews 11:6 says that without faith you CAN'T please God! And that's why all those people were touching Jesus that day, and didn't get any of the power that was available to them. Only the one woman who touched His garments in faith, she got exactly what she needed immediately. Remember what I'm telling you, because I've learned this lesson in over 25 years of public ministry for the Lord. If you want to make a connection with Heaven's power, you can only do it through your faith. That's why the "faith message" is so important, and why the devil fights it with all his might. So make your faith connection today with Jesus. He is always ready, willing and available to meet you at your point of need. All He's waiting for is your faith, your trust in Him, and Him alone.

03/16/08

Mark 5:34

### YOUR FAITH CAN MAKE YOU WHOLE!

Yesterday, we began to take a look at the story here in Mark's gospel, where the woman with the issue of blood came in the crowd, touched the hem of Jesus' clothing, and got her healing. She made the "touch of faith", and got healed as a result. How do we know it was her faith that made her healing possible? Because Jesus said so. In our verse today, as we see our Lord and this woman discussing her new-found miracle, Jesus commends her by saying that it was her FAITH that made her whole. Not her crying, or her praying, or her church attendance, or her tithing, or anything else. It was her faith that did the job. In fact, if you read through the four gospels, and look carefully at the miracles that Jesus performed, almost every time He specifically told the miracle recipients that it had been their faith that had made their healing or miracle possible. FAITH! And for us today, the good news is that nothing has changed about how God meets the needs of humanity. Its still by faith, and faith alone!

This is why the devil has fought the "faith message" with such ferocity. He knows that when people get a hold on the importance of faith in their lives, they'll be well on their way towards victory over him in every area of life. Faith for healing. Faith for finances. Faith for a better job. Faith for a successful ministry. Faith for anything and everything. Your faith can make you whole, healed, successful, prosperous, victorious, anything you want or need can be obtained through simple faith in God and His word. God is a faith Being, and He can only be reached and touched with faith from the heart. There is no other way God responds to the needs of humanity. Why? Because that's Who He is, and

that's the way He operates. Go back and read carefully Hebrews 11. Take special note of the first few verses, where it says that through faith we understand the worlds were "framed", or created and put in their place. It says that things that were made (the universe and everything in it) were not made from things that do appear. In other words, God used something you can't see to create everything you can see. What did He use? His faith! To say that God created the universe from nothing is really inaccurate. He used something to create with, and that "something" was His faith. We're made in His image and likeness, so we've been given the same ability and capacity for faith as God has for Himself. And, He expects us to learn how to use our faith like He does, and appropriate everything He has promised us in this world, and in our lives. Faith is the bridge that connects the provision in Heaven with the needs on earth. Nothing else does the job, so get busy and check up on your faith! Make sure you're walking by faith, and not by sight!

03/17/08

Isaiah 40:31

### THE EXCITEMENT OF WAITING UPON GOD!

Walking by faith will always demand an understanding of the importance of waiting upon the Lord. Faith and patience are, as one preacher put it years ago, the power twins. You can't have one without the other. If you're going to develop your faith, you must also develop your patience. Why? Because God is not operating on your timetable, but His. And also, Jesus told us that EVERYTHING involving the kingdom of Heaven is like men planting seeds in the ground (see Mark 4). In other words: seed time and harvest time! And of course, you know that there is a time gap in between the time a seed is sown, and a time for it's harvest, right? That's why patience is so important. James chapter 1 talks about this. Luke chapter 8 talks about this. All through the Bible, God emphasizes the importance of having patience when standing in faith for needs to be met. So how patient have you been with what you're standing in faith for?

In today's verse, the word "wait" is important to understand. It says that if you WAIT upon the Lord, you will renew your strength. Well, that word doesn't mean what many would think of when they think of waiting. We're not talking here about just sitting down somewhere to relax, take it easy and do nothing, expecting God to just move heaven and earth to provide for us. For many people, the idea of waiting is really nothing more than spiritual laziness in disguise! No my friend! The "waiting" God is talking about here in this verse is an active, excited attitude of expectation! We're waiting upon God, so we're praising Him with all our might! We're doing all we can do, anxiously expecting God to do what we know we can't do for ourselves. This kind of waiting is not laziness, but rather, an enthusiastic lifestyle that joyfully goes about the Father's business with confidence and peace, KNOWING THAT WHAT GOD HAS PROMISED, HE IS ABLE TO PERFORM! Right now, as I write this devotional for you, I'm excited in my spirit about all the impossible things God is at work to do in my life and ministry. I'm not worried. I'm not afraid. Instead, I'm excited about HOW God is going to deliver our ministry from some impossible challenges we're facing now. For me, its not a question of IF God is going to come through for us, but rather, HOW He's going to do it and glorify Himself on our behalf! That's the kind of "waiting" God is talking about, and that's the kind of waiting that empowers God and keeps our faith active and alive. So today, as you stand in faith for your needs to be met, ask yourself how excited you are over the outcome. Are you brimming with joy, hardly able to contain yourself for the sheer exuberance of knowing your faith is out there, and God is faithful to respond? That's how you're supposed to be waiting!

03/18/08

Mark 5:39

### LEARNING THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH

When our Lord came to the house where Jairius' daughter lay dead on her bed, He wondered aloud why all the people were crying in anguish and sorrow. Specifically, He asked: Why are you people crying, the girl IS NOT DEAD, BUT ONLY SLEEPING. What's wrong with Jesus? Doesn't He know the girl is dead? Of course He does, because He was right next to the girl's father when servants informed him of her death. So He KNOWS she's dead, but look at how He expresses Himself to the grieving crowd. He boldly declares that she is NOT dead, but sleeping instead. Again I ask, is something wrong with Jesus? Did He lose His mind? He is out of touch with reality? That's exactly what the crowd thought, as they laughed at him scornfully. And that's exactly what MOST Christians to think of you if you dare to make similar declarations of faith. Why? Because faith is a language, and you have to learn how to speak it in order to make the "connection" with God and His exceedingly precious promises throughout His word. Recently, God had me write a book specifically addressing this subject. Its called "The Language of Faith", and you can order it from our ministry anytime. I would recommend it to you, because chances are, you don't know too much about the language of faith! That's not a put-down, its just an honest fact. Most believers aren't really believers at all, at least not in the sense of walking by faith on a daily basis. How do we know? Just listen to their conversation, and you'll know. In the same way you could listen to me talk, and immediately you'd know I'm speaking English because you speak English. Well, it's the same for faith. If you speak it, you recognize immediately when others are speaking it.

On the other hand, if I'm speaking German, and you don't know the language, what I'm saying might sound funny and strange to you. You certainly wouldn't be able to communicate with me, right? Well, God speaks faith, and it's the only language He speaks. Jesus spoke it, but His disciples, and those who trailed after Him everywhere He went didn't speak it either. That's why here, as just one example, the people laughed at Him because He said the girl was just sleeping, not really dead. They didn't know that when you speak faith, you ALWAYS call those things that be not as though they were, and you ALWAYS speak the desired end-result. When you learn about the language of faith, you immediately understand there are two kinds of truth. There is physical, or natural, truth, the truth that governs this world in which we live. Then there's a higher truth, spiritual truth. Spiritual truth governs both the spiritual world AND the physical world down here, and is ALWAYS the higher of the two truths. So what was Jesus doing here in our verse today? He was speaking faith, and declaring the end-result based upon the higher truth of God's word. Yes, it was true the girl was physically dead, but that's the lower truth of this world. The higher truth of God's word says that ALL THINGS in this world can be changed to conform with God's word if we have faith to believe. That's what Jesus did. He simply chose to raise His conversation to the level of higher truth, and when He did it, He immediately tapped into the power that raised the little girl back to life! It works for you and I the same way as with Jesus. To walk in faith you must speak the language of faith.

03/19/08

Mark 9:23

**ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE THROUGH FAITH!**

This verse is one of my favorites in all the Bible. Its so "all-encompassing". ALL THINGS are possible to Him who believes! Now either that means exactly what is says, or Jesus is a liar, right? Well, we know our Lord is not a liar, so that means He was telling us the truth, and that WHENEVER you exercise your faith, that faith has the ability to produce everything you'll ever need or want in this life. Now of course, there are some other elements that must be understood as well, such as the importance of walking in love, standing in patience, remaining firm in hope, active in praise, and other things as well. But if all of that is in place the way the Bible says it should be, your faith WILL produce miraculous and impossible results for the glory of God. Jesus said so! That's why the devil fights this so much, because it really is the key that unlocks all the blessings and promises of God in the Bible. You need money to pay

bills and finance the Great Commission? Your faith will get the job done for you. You need money for medicine or medical procedures and treatment? Your faith will get that money for you. You want to get your healing and walk in Divine health? Your faith can accomplish that for you. ALL things are possible to those who choose to believe!

I've said this before and I'll say it again. Not every Christian is a believer. Not in this sense at least. Yes, many Christians used faith to accept their salvation, but that's where it stopped. They never progressed in faith beyond that point. Every Christian must accept their salvation by faith, or else they aren't Christian! But what about the rest of our lives? What about all the things we're commissioned to do for Jesus in fulfilling the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-20)? All of that takes faith too. So in the sense of daily living, not every Christian is a believer. Jesus said all things are possible to HIM WHO BELIEVES! Not to him who got saved 20 years ago and never moved an inch beyond that day with their faith. No! Its BELIEVING that opens the doors to Heaven's power and provision, not just being a Christian! And believing is a choice, isn't it? You can choose to believe, or choose to not believe God. He won't force you to accept Him at His word, and the devil can't stop you either. Ultimately, its up to us and us alone. God gives us His word, and faith comes by hearing it (Romans 10:17), but still, you have the choice of believing what God has said, and acting and talking like its true. Only you can do that for yourself. God won't, and the devil can't stop you. So make up your mind today to act in faith, and come into the elite group of Christians who have actually become daily believers! It's a small group within the body of Christ, but the invitation for membership is open to anyone who chooses to BELIEVE!

03/20/08

1 Peter 2:9

#### HOW PECULIAR ARE YOU?

In the King James translation, I like the word the translators chose in this verse today. The New King James version (NKJV) says we're a "special" people, but the original KJV says that God calls us a PECULIAR people, called out of darkness into His marvelous light. Why do I like the usage of the word "peculiar"? Because we're supposed to be DIFFERENT! Yes, we're "special" people, but the word "peculiar" adds a certain element to the meaning that I think we need to grasp. We're not supposed to be like everybody else. In fact, if you want to be a mightily used and anointed child of God, you're going to have to come to a place where being "weird" and "strange" to most people is not something you're afraid of or uncomfortable with. Jesus didn't talk or act like all the other people around Him, especially concerning the religious folks. He was different, and people knew it. So my question to you today is this: HOW DIFFERENT ARE YOU? How PECULIAR and STRANGE do you appear to people in your circle of influence?

Remember when the Pharisees and Sadducees sent temple guards to arrest Jesus (John 7:45,46)? When they came back with our Lord, they were asked why they had come back empty-handed. The answer? NO MAN SPEAKS LIKE THIS MAN! In other words, they were saying Jesus was different, in ways that made Him awesome in their sight! He was different, intimidating, forceful, dominant, in-control, and at the same time, weird! Weird to whom? To those who didn't have understanding concerning the ways of Almighty God. We're not supposed to blend in. We're not supposed to be popular. We're not supposed to be "USER-FRIENDLY", or "SEEKER-FRIENDLY". No, I'm sorry, that's not I see in the New Testament. Jesus certainly wasn't popular with religious leaders in His time, and so what does that tell us about how we're to appear if we act and talk just like He did? He didn't blend-in, and He certainly "user-friendly"! If you doubt that, just read the recorded conversations He had with various Pharisees and leaders along the way in His public ministry. And, the icing on that cake was the scathing sermons He delivered face to face with the religious leaders in the Jerusalem temple (read Matthew 23, 24, 25). Jesus was DIFFERENT. He was peculiar. He was the Son of God! Well, so are

you, so if you're aren't weird enough for your unsaved friends and lukewarm Christian friends, its time to change that! Don't be nervous in weirdness! Rejoice and embrace it! God does, so why shouldn't you? Never mind trying to friends with everyone. Just be God's friend, the rest doesn't matter!

03/21/08

John 7:46

NO MAN!

I love this passage in today's devotional. When the temple guards were sent to arrest Jesus, they came back empty-handed. When their leaders demanded to know why, the answer came back: "NO MAN HAS EVER SPOKEN LIKE THIS MAN". No man! No one! Never! Ever! Past, present and future, no man has spoken like Jesus. The guards knew it that day, and when you immerse yourself in the presence of God like Jesus did, you're going to have people saying the same thing about you that they said back then about Jesus. You see, when you speak in the Name of Jesus, people are supposed to KNOW something is different about you. They're supposed to sense that there's something different, special and wonderful about you, just by the way you speak and carry yourself. Men and women who walk with Jesus have a certain presence that people pick up on right away. They KNOW you're a man or woman of God. You don't have to say it, they just know it. The guards that were sent to arrest Jesus were so awestruck and spellbound, all they could do was listen to Him and marvel! I love it! Not only did they not arrest Him, they ended up buying all His books, CDs and got on His mailing list!

I don't know about you, but that's where I want to be in life. So in touch with God, so in touch with Jesus, so alive in the spirit and in-tune with the Spirit of God, that people just know I've spent time with God and am a man of God. I want people to say about me the same thing they said about Jesus that day! No man speaks like this man! How about you? Is this something you're interested in at all? How do people perceive you when you're speaking, and especially, when you're talking about the things of God? Are they blown away by the power and anointing that flows from your lips? No? Why not? You've got the same Holy Spirit in you as Jesus had in Him while He ministered on earth in ministry. My friend, we're supposed to stand out in a crowd! We're supposed to speak with such weight and power that mere men stand back in awe to listen and take heed. We're to speak with such an absolute confidence that no man dare challenge the things we say about the way of salvation. Yes! Halleluia! That's the way I want it to be in my life, is that the way you want it to be in your life? I challenge you in the Name of Jesus, do something about it if you're not where you can be in Christ! Time is short, so get with it my friend! You can come to the place in your life where when you speak, men listen!