

1. Faith That Moves Mountains

Illustrated In the Book of Matthew

There's nothing more important that I could share with you than this material. It has shaped my life and world view. I travel extensively in my role with our org, and again and again, I see a failure to grab ahold of the NT teaching at the heart of much discouragement and disappointment. So I want to talk to you this morning about faith.

Faith means I believe God will do what He has promised to do in the New Covenant. The New Testament is the documents of the New Covenant and in them Jesus makes many amazing promises to us. ***Faith means we believe Him.*** Faith means we're absolutely convinced of the reality of things that we don't see. It means that we're convinced not only that God exists, but that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. These stories from the Book of Matthew illustrate this well.

This study is a series of 9 stories from the Book of Matthew – there are many more. **Now, remember, these stories were written to change, to shape, to mold and transform the worldview of the Church.** They are to shape the way we see and understand God and the world we live in.

1. Matthew 8:5-13

- 5 And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him,
6 and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented."
7 Jesus *said to him, "I will come and heal him."
8 But the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.
9 "For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does *it*."
10 Now when Jesus heard *this*, He marveled and said to those who were following, "***Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.***
11 "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline *at the table* with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven;
12 but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
13 And Jesus said to the centurion, "***Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed.***" And the servant was healed that *very* moment.

What do we learn here about faith?

2. Matthew 8:23–27 (NASB95)

- 23 When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him.
24 And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep.
25 And they came to *Him* and woke Him, saying, “Save *us*, Lord; we are perishing!”
26 He **said* to them, “***Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?***” Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm.
27 The men were amazed, and said, “What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”

Were the disciples in real peril? Was it a dangerous situation? Did fisherman die on the Lake of Galilee?

What do we learn about faith?

3. Matthew 9:19–22 (NASB95)

- 19 Jesus got up and *began* to follow him, and *so did* His disciples.
20 And a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years, came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak;
21 for she was saying to herself, “If I only touch His garment, I will get well.”
22 But Jesus turning and seeing her said, “***Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well.***” At once the woman was made well.

4. Matthew 9:27-29

- 27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”
28 When He entered the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus **said* to them, “***Do you believe that I am able to do this?***” They **said* to Him, “Yes, Lord.”
29 Then He touched their eyes, saying, “***It shall be done to you according to your faith.***”

Was there anything you found difficult about this story?

What do you learn about Jesus?

What do you learn about faith?

5. Matthew 13:53–58 (NASB95) *Jesus Revisits Nazareth*

- 53 When Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there.
54 He came to His hometown and *began* teaching them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, “Where *did* this man *get* this wisdom and *these* miraculous powers?
55 “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?
56 “And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then *did* this man *get* all these things?”
57 And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his *own* household.”
58 ***And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.***

This passage has some great teachings in it; what does it teach about faith?

Do you think unbelief affects what Jesus does in your life and in this country?

6. Matthew 14:22–33 (NASB95) *Jesus Walks on the Water*

- 22 Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of *Him* to the other side, while He sent the crowds away.
23 After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone.
24 But the boat was already a long distance from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary.
25 And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea.
26 When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear.
27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “***Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.***”
28 Peter said to Him, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.”
29 And He said, “Come!” And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus.
30 But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!”
31 Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and *said* to him, “***You of little faith, why did you doubt?***”
32 When they got into the boat, the wind stopped.
33 And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, “You are certainly God’s Son!”

Tell me about Jesus’ attitude towards Peter asking to get out of the boat?

Tell me about Jesus' attitude toward Peter sinking?

What does that teach you about faith?

7. Matthew 15:21–28 (NASB95) *The Syrophenician Woman*

- 21 Jesus went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon.
- 22 And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and *began* to cry out, saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed."
- 23 But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, "Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us."
- 24 But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."
- 25 But she came and *began* to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"
- 26 And He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."
- 27 But she said, "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."
- 28 Then Jesus said to her, "***O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish.***" And her daughter was healed at once.

Do you think God puts our faith to the test?

8. Matthew 17:14–20 (NASB95) *The Demoniac*

- 14 When they came to the crowd, a man came up to Jesus, falling on his knees before Him and saying,
- 15 "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic and is very ill; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water.
- 16 "I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cure him."
- 17 And Jesus answered and said, "***You unbelieving and perverted generation,*** how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me."
- 18 And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once.
- 19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not drive it out?"
- 20 And He *said to them, "***Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.***"

Why couldn't the disciples cast out the demon?

What does Jesus think about that?

Why does Jesus call them “unbelieving and perverted”?

What does this teach you about faith?

9. Matthew 21:18–22 (NASB95) *The Barren Fig Tree*

- 18** Now in the morning, when He was returning to the city, He became hungry.
19 Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He *said to it, “No longer shall there ever be *any* fruit from you.” And at once the fig tree withered.
20 Seeing *this*, the disciples were amazed and asked, “How did the fig tree wither *all* at once?”
21 And Jesus answered and said to them, “***Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ it will happen.***
22 “***And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.***”

What does this teach us about faith?

What does it teach us about prayer?

Conclusion:

Why do you suppose there’s so many of these faith stories in this Gospel?

How should this impact the way you make disciples?

The upward call of God in Christ Jesus:

- To grow in love: “you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
- To grow in compassion: “whatever you did to the least of these, you did for Me.”
- To grow in generosity: “Sell all your possessions and give to the poor.”
- To imitate God: “Be imitators of God.”
- To walk as Jesus did: “Whoever claims to live in Him, must walk as Jesus did.”

Is it inconceivable that He would call us to grow in faith?