

# **Your Faith Groweth Exceedingly**

## **Chapter 1**

### **II Thessalonians 1:3**

**There are four words in this verse that I would like to look at which will, I hope, help us make some practical progress spiritually. It is the subject of faith. I am afraid that it is a lost teaching. I believe strongly in repentance, and I believe strongly in faith. I think that the definition has been watered down until it has been reduced to a mental assent to a few selected facts- probably mixed with a good dose of fiction. That is called “faith” today.**

**I do not believe in baptismal-regeneration. I do not believe in decisional regeneration. That was a great heresy of the Billy Graham crusades. His compromise was terrible, but his concept of salvation was, “Make a decision.” We are not saved by what we do; we are saved by Jesus. Until Jesus saves you, you can make whatever decisions you want to, but it will not change a thing. We have a**

**generation that are hoping that a decision or an acceptance or a prayer will get them to heaven. But they have never entered into a real relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**II Thessalonians 1:3, “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth.”**

**“Your faith groweth exceedingly” Is your faith growing? At what rate? The people in this verse had heard the Gospel two years or less before. Paul came to Thessalonica, preached three Sabbath days, and was run out of town. The church was under intense persecution from the time of their conversion. In less than two years Paul could say to them, “Your faith groweth exceedingly.” How is our faith growing?**

**That immediately contradicts a lot of concepts in fundamentalism today. They have mostly narrowed down faith to**

**a statement of faith or a doctrinal statement- what we say we believe. We will stand for those things until someone stands against us; then we will see if we can find an area in which to compromise. We knew what we believed in music until the other came along. We knew what we believed in the matter of faithfulness, prayer meeting, commitment, family altar until something else came along to take their place, and those things were no longer conventional. Many people do not have convictions, they have just been convinced. I have convinced many people of things-- until someone else convinced them otherwise. There is a big difference between being convinced and having a conviction. If you have a conviction, you are most likely going to stand for it.**

**Here is faith, not as the mental ability to accept given propositions, not as some innate ability that we were born with or that grew as we grew older. Here is a faith that is developmental; faith that grows. For some people it does not grow**

very fast, if at all. For others it grows rapidly.

I want to deal with some of these aspects from what the Word of God says.

I have seven questions that I want to ask on this matter of faith and its growth.

*What is the nature of Biblical faith?*

*How do we obtain this faith?*

*What are the different levels of faith?*

*What is the rate of growth of your faith?*

*What are the evidences of Biblical faith?*

*What is the necessity of faith?*

*What are the alternatives to Biblical faith?*

Growth is measurable; it is observable. It can be very productive. These people in Thessalonica, not saved two years, suffering under persecution are growing in faith. What evidences would someone looking at you have of

**your faith? Could they see your faith growing? Not shrinking or holding its own, but actually growing? You can grow under apostasy if you are standing right. You do not have to join the crowd. You just walk right.**

**In times of prosperity you can still learn to operate by faith. Wealth is often a hindrance to faith. “Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith?” (James 2:5) “The prosperity of fools shall destroy them.” (Prov. 1:32) God has found some that He could prosper that are great in faith, but they are not common. David and Abraham are two, but we know of another rich man whose riches were of no help to him. Generally, poor people can believe God for more than rich people can. Rich people only have to pull out a check book. Poor people have to pray it in. They have an Almighty Father who is infinitely wealthy.**

**Romans 10:17, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Faith cometh. Faith is not**

naturally inside of you. It is not in your human nature. God did not grant you a dose of faith when you were born for you to decide what you want to do with it. Faith comes from the outside. It comes, and you, to a degree, determine at what rate it comes and how it develops within you. There are Biblical terms and pictures to help you understand the operation of Biblical faith, something that can come by God's appointed means, from God's appointed source. The question is, how much has come into your life? At what level do you operate?

If we want to know if our faith is growing or not, we need to know what are the marks and the terms that God uses to analyze it. If your child is sick and you take him to the doctor you will say, "He does not want to eat. His throat is sore. His fever is high." The doctor will immediately start thinking in technical terms to figure out what precisely it is going to take to make your child better. Do you know why you went to the doctor? You did not know the precise way to

**check the child and obtain what he needed, though you may have had a general idea. In the matter of your faith growing, if all you have is a general concept, you need to come to the Word of God to find out what it says specifically.**

**James 2:17 “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”**

**A faith that does not produce works is a dead faith. This is precisely the kind of faith many people have. No change. No progress. No use for the Kingdom. Little use for the church, other than putting some money in the plate on the days when they do show up. Their faith is a dead faith.**

**(v.18) “Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works and I will shew thee my faith by my works.”**

**Because their faith is dead, they can not show it to anyone. Biblical faith can be seen and measured. Not just by the angels in the record book, but by those around us. George Mueller was a man of**

**faith. How do we know? He fed, housed, clothed, and educated two thousand orphans without asking for a penny. He supported Christian schools for ten thousand students, supported multitudes of missionaries, and printed millions of Scriptures without asking for a penny. He just asked God. How do we know that he was a man of God? Look at his works. You may say, "I believe," but what has it produced? That is faith without works.**

**(v. 19) "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."**

**People say, " I believe in God." Well, so do the demons. And they have sense enough to tremble, but how about you? Until your faith produces greater results than theirs, there is no hope for your soul.**

**(v. 20) "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"**

**We have a faith commonly talked about, held to, and defended that God**



**declares is worthless—useless. This faith is, in some cases, not even as useful as that which the demons have. It is dead.**

**A wonderful chapter for proof against hyper-dispensationalists is Romans 4. It speaks of Abraham and David being saved by faith in Jesus. People who think that there are different ways to be saved at different times need to read this chapter. The first part of the chapter is very clear; it is always by faith in Jesus. What they had was the means God used by which to point them to himself. “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.” (Gal. 3:24)**

**Romans 4:19 “And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara’s womb:”**

**Abraham did not have a weak faith. He did not operate at a weak level. He chose not to be weak. One of the choices that kept his faith from being weak was that when he looked at the facts he set them aside because they were negative to**

**what he wanted. He wanted a son as God had promised. The facts were that neither he nor his wife could expect to produce a son. But that was all right. Those were just facts. Faith triumphs over facts. “We walk by faith, not by sight:” (II Cor. 5:7) He said, “These are facts; lay them aside. They are not to be considered.” Maybe you are giving to Faith Promises and you get to the point that you cannot afford to give any more—that is when you practice faith. You set the facts aside and believe God and watch for Him to supply to meet your needs. You go against the obvious facts and observations. Otherwise, you are weak in faith because you are strong in facts. I am not talking about changing Bible doctrine. True Bible doctrine will lead you to trust God, rather than your own logic and intelligence. We have a sovereign God who is not limited to what we can see.**

**(v. 20) “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;”**

**He could give glory to God because he had a promise. The facts said “No.”**

**The promise said, “Yes.” He said, “ I am not going to stagger at a promise that goes against the facts. I can believe God. I will be strong in faith. I will take the promise over the facts.”**

**How can you go beyond the obvious realities that anybody can see? By faith. If you are weak you will choke up. You will consider the wrong things. Do not stagger at how big the promise is. The promises are as big as God Himself, and our God is great.**

**We may talk about His sovereignty until it comes to believing—then we have a little God that can only be of little help. We have a stingy God that is keeping things from us. No! We have a sovereign, loving God. We can trust Him for what is beyond the realm of sight. The promises allow us to go beyond what could be expected. Where is your faith? Is it dead? Weak? Strong?**

**Romans 12:3 “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to**

**think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”**

**It would seem that different people have had dealt to them different measures of faith. There are reasons for this and if you grow in faith He will give you a bigger and bigger measure. What measure of faith has God dealt into your hands? What are you doing with it? Are you operating according to the amount of faith He has given you or are you neglecting some of it? If you do not think that your measure is big enough, then grow! And if the pressure is on you, then grow faster! Grow exceedingly! God did not just give you a measure and say, “You are stuck with that the rest of your life. That is all you are getting.” He allows for growth. Exercise and diet are important for growth—spiritually as well as physically.**

**Romans 12:6 “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;”**

**There are different gifts that operate by faith rather than by natural ability or learned processes. It is to be by faith as God gives to different ones proportions of faith. Particularly to those of you who teach and preach the Word of God, you are not to teach or preach according to your abilities or the methods you have learned, but according to your proportion of faith that God has granted you. There are times that I have spoken and the preaching was dry because I was dry in faith, and was really not expecting much to come of it.**

**“These are bad days! Nothing happens these days!” That is what I heard sixty years ago, but then I had a vision of one in heaven, the Almighty, who said, “I am the Lord, I change not.” And he said, “I will give you a proportion of faith.” If you mix that in and preach according to the faith you have, what confidence you can have that God is going to do something! If I grow more in faith I could trust Him with the certainty of what He would do. If we do not have any confidence in God and God’s Word to**

**work, then we have just placed them on the human level.**

**When you stand behind the sacred desk to preach, or teach that Sunday School class, or speak at a nursing home, are you doing it according to the proportion of faith that God has given you? If you believe God you can see something happen.**

**I used to speak in different nursing homes each week. I can think of one Activities Director that said I was the best therapist they had in their program. It was not me; it was God. I just trusted Him to do some therapy on their hearts and souls. They brought in a certain lady and introduced her to me. I recognized her because her son was the top news anchor in our area. There she was sprawled out on the tray of the wheel chair, hair every which way. They could not talk to her; she could not talk to them. She was just out.**

**I had a confidence in the God of the Word and the Word of God. We would sing the hymns from church, and her**

head would start to come up a bit. I would open the Word of God and read the text, and her head would come up a bit more. When I was done, she was out again. They brought her because that was when she had the most help she could get.

One day after the service, when I was walking away she heard my voice and raised her head just enough to say, “Can you tell me how to be saved?” They had never heard her say anything sensible before. (I am not sure that they thought that was either.) I talked with her and God opened her eyes to the truth—not because of Paul Reno, but because He had given me a proportion of faith. I gave the Word of God and let God do what He said He would do.

You can preach against things, and I do, but I am preaching for something here. How much faith do you have in the Word of God to work while you are giving it out? What do you anticipate by faith? This is not by intellectual learning or ability. What proportion of faith do you have? Little? Some? Much? If the truth be told it would probably vary with us.

**Do you minister by the faith you have, or by some lesser means? How is it coming with you in the matter of faith?**

**Dead faith, weak faith, strong faith, measure of faith, proportion of faith. Are you beginning to understand the meaning of “faith groweth”? It can make progress so that each year you can have more than you had the year before.**

**II Corinthians 8:7 “Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith...”**

**The context of this verse is speaking of giving, but you are able to give more if you have more faith. Do you have abounding faith, or a shrinking faith, or a stagnant faith, or a weak faith? It was one of the requirements for Stephen when he was selected in Acts 6. He was full of the Holy Ghost and of FAITH.**

**How full of faith are you? How much growing is it going to take for you to be full? As you grow spiritually will your faith keep up with that? What are you going to do to keep your faith growing? Do you feed your faith? Do you**



**know how to draw on the increase of your faith? These are great subjects we need to explore. God has spelled these things out for us.**

**Romans 1:17 “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”**

**As you grow in faith you will move from faith, to faith. It may have been weak; you need to move over to what is strong. You had a measure; you are looking for a greater measure. You had a proportion; you are going to move to a greater proportion. You are making progress.**

**Some people may say that all faith is the same. Then why does this verse say, “from faith, to faith”? It does not mean you go from Baptist to Pentecostal to Lutheran—different statements of faith. This is talking about practical faith. Do you know that if you are saved, God is going to show His righteousness through your faith and you shall live by faith? It is**

**not a choice. “The just SHALL live by faith.”**

**This is said several times in the New Testament and at least once in the Old Testament. God has so ordained that if you do not have to trust Him financially, you may have to trust Him physically. And if you are wealthy and healthy, you may have to trust Him emotionally or socially. Mark it down, God is going to have His children living by faith. Not just saved by faith, but living by faith. God will see that this is so. Some people seem to have everything, but are going through real trials. Were they living by faith? God can put people in the corner to get their attention. You can choose to live by faith or you can live by faith anyway. You may say, “Well, I know a lot of people that don’t live by faith and they are just fine.” That may be true, but I know a lot of people who did not get in by faith either. I am telling you that this is a mark of God on His people. They will live by faith, and not just from time to time. He will move them from faith to faith.**

**Matthew 8:13 “And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.”**

**When you have a need do you have enough faith to carry you through or will you not deal with it? Are you prepared in your faith for what may come in the next month? Have you left that which is weak and gone to that which is strong? Are you considering and not staggering at the promises of God? Do you have enough faith to deal with the issue? You may not even know what your issue is yet, but you must be prepared to face it by faith.**

**Imagine that someone in your family was very sick and I said that according to your faith they could get well or stay sick. Would most people say, “Thank you so much for saying that. What a great encouragement that is!”? Or would most people say, “Are you mocking me?”**

**Luke 7:9 “When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned**

him about, and said unto the people that followed Him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.”

This man was not of the right doctrinal persuasion; he was not Jewish. He was a Gentile. He did not worship in the right place, in the right way; but he had a faith greater than all the people who did. Does that boggle your mind? Sometimes we are tight on the things that we believe (I can fit into that category) and we do not realize that someone else may be able to believe God and get answers who does not identify with us. It would be an awful thing if we were weak in faith, but others who did not know as much were strong in faith.

I found out that after the Civil War, a group of Presbyterians in our town prayed and believed to build a building without borrowing a cent. It upset me that a bunch of baby sprinklers could do that and many of us could not.

Thus, when we needed a building, we started praying and were also able to build a building without borrowing a

**cent. I did not want to be weaker than they were. Are we willing to allow others to be stronger in faith than we are? We can criticize and observe the differences, but can we surpass them? We believe more, we ought to be able to trust God for more. We have a bigger God, we ought to be able to obtain more from Him. Do we want our faith to grow, or are we willing for it to remain the same? Do we want to have the grace of God, the peace of God, the love of God, the power of God, and the presence of God restricted to our level of faith? We need and desire these things, but are we able to believe God for them?**

**In February of 1996 I was laid low with blood clots in my lung. They did not know if I would live or die. My family gathered as quickly as they could. I knew I was in trouble because the nurses acted frightened when they came in the room. My daughter came, and I said, "I may be gone, but I am thankful for what God is doing through you five kids." She said, "What about Mark?" My youngest son was not even saved yet. I said, "I am believing God for Mark's salvation. I may not live to see it, but I believe God for it."**

**I was not just making up words; I had lain long before God to get to a place I could believe Him. I trusted God to bring the repentance, for I had prayed. I could say, even though it were on my deathbed, “God will save Mark and use him.”**

**Do you know anything about that kind of faith? Can you rest in the promises of God and believe that He keeps His promises? Do you have a faith to believe for things that cannot be seen with the human eye? Do you have that kind of faith to be satisfied with what you have? Do you think you have ever believed God for your own personal revival or is it just a vague wish and hope? Are our prayers a wish list or are they a matter of coming to grips with the Almighty and seeing His power loosed? “I am the Lord I change not.”**

**Are you satisfied with the level of faith that you have today and desire to have more for tomorrow? I hope we are all ready to grow in faith until our growth comes to the “exceedingly” level.**

## Chapter 2

**II Thessalonians 1:3 "...Your faith growth exceedingly. "**

**Faith is something that is to grow. You do not get it in final position or quantity at the beginning. You have something that must grow. I have a granddaughter that is in college. This year she got a few tomato seeds and planted them in her room in pots. When she went home, she transplanted them to five-gallon buckets so they had plenty of room to grow. She now has tomatoes coming on each of those plants. She is going to have plenty of seeds for next year too.**

**When you get something to germinate it grows and gets bigger. It gets more obvious. "Your faith groweth." There is a personal quality to your faith. It is not just a generic statement of faith or the faith in general that we hold to. Those things are necessary because your practical faith will be related to what you**

**really believe about God. If you think God is small, distant, not that concerned, and a bit stingy, you will not get much from Him. But if you have a mighty God that loves you, you live with Him and He with you, then you can draw from Him in most marvelous ways. What you believe affects how you can trust Him.**

**I believe that the President of the United States is rich, but that has not put any money in my pocket. I have not met him, he has not met me, and I do not think he knows who I am. He is definitely not concerned about me in particular. But the Almighty God is much closer, much richer, and cares much more. I will not trust the President for money, but I will trust God.**

**"Your faith groweth exceedingly"  
There is a rate to the growth---  
exceedingly. The implication is that some  
people's faith grows slowly, and some  
people's faith does not grow. That is their  
problem, but do not let it become our  
problem.**



***Your* faith means that it does apply to every believer potentially, but in this case it applies to a church. This was a church of people that had not yet been saved for two years. By this time their faith was recognizably growing and thriving. And they were under intense persecution. I hope we do not need intense persecution to begin our faith growing! There are many things that I would rather do by choice; this is one of them.**

**Get your faith growing! Then see if we can increase the rate of growth. In a church there is a combination of various kinds and measures of belief. But together we can go further.**

**In 2000 we had a separation of ways in our church. We had been running 100-110 during January of that year. By February of 2004 we had lost about 120 people. But the church grew and was strong as a result, and it has continued until now. We have the evidence of what God can do. In 2003 one of our best missionary givers was martyred in Kenya.**

**We lost another to a brain tumor. Another member died. A number of people with financial ability departed. We had taken our faith promises, before we started losing key people. We had a business meeting to discuss what we were going to do. We said, "These people made a promise, but they did not live to keep it."**

**The church came to the conclusion that, while we have strained ourselves on what we can give, together we will believe God for the rest of the money. We were trusting not just for ourselves, but for what they would have given if they were there. Together we were able to see that well accomplished.**

**One will chase a thousand, two will put ten thousand to flight. God's math is a little different than what you learned in school. Corporate faith is able to do more than personal faith. That is one of the reasons that God established churches. What I can believe and what you can believe and what our friend can believe can be put together. When we get together**

**there is far more that we can believe God for.**

**Matthew 8:13 “And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed the selfsame hour.”**

**If your faith is not adequate for what you are asking, do not expect to receive it. You may say, "I don't have enough faith. That really puts me in a spot." No. That puts you in a spot to acquire enough. We are not limited by intellect or emotion. We may be hindered by lack of teaching, but you have a Bible. Read it and see what it says.**

**Jesus looks at this man and says, "Whatever level your faith is, that is what will happen." Some of us would hardly have enough faith to get someone better from a cold, much less a desperate illness.**

**Matthew 9:29 "Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you."**

The level of our faith determines what we can expect. Many people are asking for so much in such a general way, that they will not be sure if they ever do receive it. Still it feels good to pray that way. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16) You have to define what the effect is. A goal that can not be measured is not really a goal. A generic request takes no faith. I can tell you how to get your prayers answered-- pray that the sun will come up tomorrow morning. That is fairly safe. We can pray that it will rain in the next three months. It most likely will happen. It is a completely different matter if you are praying for something that most likely would not happen otherwise. Your faith is a governing factor in what you will receive.

Romans 10:17 "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

This is a marvelous text on growing your faith. "*Faith cometh.*" It is not something you work up or educate

**yourself into. It is not something you have always had and just need to access. It is something that is outside of you; something that can come to you to meet your needs. You may think, "If it is according to my faith. I don't have enough faith to believe for that." Well, then do something about it! Get some faith from where faith comes from! Let it grow exceedingly.**

**How many of you would be doing well now if you were operating on the money you had when you were twenty years old? If you had a certain stream coming to you that was not enough, you moved on to a larger stream. If you do not have the faith, you can get more coming to you. I know some people who have their vitamins delivered to them on a regular basis. They know how many they should need and they have it set up to come periodically. It would be nice if faith came that way-- how much you need when you need. "Faith cometh." That "*eth*" on the end means it came, it comes, and it will continue to come. That is why**

**the old English "*eth*" is so important in your Bible.**

**I am not worried what I am going to eat in a month. When it gets here I think the food will be there. I do not need that food today.**

**Set yourself up to see your faith grow exceedingly. The last part of Rom. 10:17 starts to tell us where faith is coming from. Faith comes by hearing. God does not waste words. He did not have to fill pages up with words. He meant what He said, and He said what He meant. The verse could have read, "Faith cometh by hearing the Word of God." I wondered why it did not say that because I had been told that the Bible will give you faith. Then I read Romans 10:17 a little slower. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." It does not say "hearing of the Word of God." You do have to hear the Word of God. You cannot get faith out of illustrations, explanations, or definitions. It will come by means of the Word of God. But the verse leaves a question when you read it.**

**"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." You can ask, "To whom am I listening?" Who is it we are listening to? It is God Almighty! There are many people in our churches today that are very knowledgeable in the Word of God. They have been well-taught, but they have no clue how to hear the God of the Word. They do not come to hear God speak through the Bible; they come to hear what the preacher says about something and analyze it in the light of the other intellectual information that they have gathered. They are not listening for a voice.**

**I have two sons, John and Mark. If I needed to send a message to John, I might send it through Mark. Then Mark could say, "John, do this." But John was nine and a half years older. How much do you think John would do that Mark told him? Mark learned to say, "John, Dad said..."**

**When you hear the Bible are you hearing the voice of the Almighty to your soul, or adding some religious intellectual information to your store? "Faith cometh**

**by hearing." That is the process. And that process is through the Word of God He speaks to your soul.**

**"According to your faith be it unto you" is a nice thought from a human voice, but it is different from a divine voice. Measure your faith in the light of your request. There are things I would like to pray for that I do not have faith enough to believe for yet. So I must pray, "Lord, how can I have the faith? What can I trust you for? What am I incapable of trusting you for?"**

**I have requests for which I have prayed for decades for which I still do not have the answers, and I suspect that it is because I have not come to a place of rest in faith that God will do it. It is not that God cannot. If they are Biblical requests, I do not think the issue is that God will not. God has His timing.**

**Patience goes with faith. My! How I am learning to be patient! What I had hoped to see done by age forty is still undone at age seventy five. But I have**



**seen some things done because I was able to finally come to a place of faith. I heard from God through the Word of God. That is the means by which He speaks to us.**

**You must understand that God is the author of our faith, and "by grace ye are saved through faith; and not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8,9) Faith is a gift from the Almighty. It comes through the Word of God and from the God of the Word. Hear what the Bible says, but hear who is speaking to you. One of the great tragedies of today is that people's view of inspiration is that this is man's words and God just kept us from losing them. No, these are God's words!**

**"Forever O Lord thy Word is settled in heaven. " (Ps. 119:89) Those words were written most of a thousand years before the Gospel of John was a settled issue. John may not have had a chance to write it yet, but the Almighty in heaven knew John, knew the situation, knew everything, and could write it ahead of time. Have you never been able to say,**

**"When \_\_\_\_ hears this I know exactly what they are going to say!"? Sure enough, that is what they say! If our minute intellect can accomplish that, what do you think the intellect of a sovereign God would be? He did not make them puppets; he was just so far ahead of the human mind.**

**Galatians 2:16 "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."**

**The question I have according to this verse is whose faith do we exercise? The faith of Jesus Christ! Twice in verse sixteen and twice more in the book of Galatians we see this truth. It is a gift of God. There is a way by which it will come, and I know who it is coming from. I know the source of the supply. There can be no shortage of faith with Jesus. There is no mixed faith or corrupted faith with**

**Him. Can you imagine that it would be possible for a sin-laden soul to go into the throne room of God with a faith that they have worked up on their own? What could come out of that corruption? That would not be acceptable in the courts of heaven despite what a lot of churches teach. The Lord will give you the faith you need to be saved. The devil will come along and say, "Are you sure you had enough faith? Are you sure it was a pure faith of acceptable quality?" And I can say, "Absolutely! It belongs to Jesus and He gave it to me."**

**Do you need more faith? Go to Jesus; He is willing to give it to you. He is waiting to give it to you. Are you needing a purer faith with selfish motives set aside? Get His faith. There is plenty. It is an adequate supply. It is like the blood; it never loses its effectiveness. It is a marvelous thing. He died, shed His blood, bore our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day so that you may get in on His faith.**

**He has a time and a season: He wants you to be patient. But He will give you the faith that will do the job, His own faith!**

**Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I love by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."**

**We are not only saved by the faith of Christ, we live by the faith of Christ. I Corinthians 15 gives us the definition with some application of the gospel. In essence, when Christ went to the cross and died, you died. When he was buried, you were buried. When He rose, you rose to newness of life. Christ now lives out His life in and through you, and you operate by His faith. Not just saving faith, but living faith. It is His faith. We are co-laborers. We are the priests; He is the High Priest.**

**"I live by the faith of the Son of God." It does not say "faith *in* the Son of**

**God." It is the faith *of* the Son of God. He is within us and we are operating by His faith.**

**I remember when I worked at a family-owned hardware store that my boss asked me to go to the bank and pick up an envelope of money for him. It was not the bank that I used, but it was a small town so the bank teller knew who I was. I went in the bank and said, "Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ from the hardware store sent me to get some money that you were supposed to have ready." They gave me the money, and I left the bank carrying the payroll plus some cash besides. It was not my money: I was there on his business, at his direction with him working out the details. I was the messenger. We are crucified with Christ, but He is in us and His faith is in us. He gives us the means to get what we need.**

**Romans 1:17 "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."**

**That is how we are to live. He lives in us, has the faith for us, and keeps us moving from faith to faith. If you will study this matter of faith you will find that faith and righteousness go together -- they both come from the Almighty. There is a positional righteousness, but position without practice has little value. Practical righteousness comes from believing. The world says that you cannot get along without what they count as necessities. But you can say, "I am going to believe God to help me get along without them!" You cannot accomplish that! It is beyond your abilities.**

**Much as a soldier marches step by step - left foot, right foot, left foot- so we go from faith to faith, growing in faith as we go. We become more and more able to operate by faith.**

**Mark 9:23, 24, "Jesus said unto him. If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."**

**This man was facing a situation and he had questions and doubts. He knew he believed to a point and beyond that point his faith was uncertain. So he made an honest confession, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." I wonder if you have ever made such a confession? "I need help with my faith to get where I need to go. I need to grow a little more in faith."**

**Hudson Taylor prayed to be able to believe God to go to the mission field. Once he was on the mission field he did not stop growing his faith. He prayed many workers to the field because he kept his belief growing and His unbelief shrinking.**

**How is your faith growing? The man in Mark 9 had an immediate need and he realized that if it was only according to his faith, he was in desperate trouble. But he knew Who to ask for more.**

**There have been times that I have been praying for a certain project. I start by praying for something small and God encourages me to believe for a little more.**

**Then He starts reminding of certain Scriptures and He says, "Believe me for a little more." I start believing for a little more, and He urges me to keep believing until I must depend on Him for more and more faith. It is more than reading down a list; this is communicating with the Almighty. Faith is available and can be had by the processes that He, as a sovereign God, has set up.**

**Once when I was a young boy and my family and I were traveling. My dad asked us a question to think about. He said, "There is a large Baptist mission in Cleveland and they have financial needs. Now, do you think that God is capable of putting a ten-pound block of gold in their safe over the weekend so that they will have adequate finances." Well, we pondered that a while. After all, ten pounds is a lot of gold, but we had a big God. Finally we said, "Yes! God could do that." My dad asked again, "Why do you suppose He doesn't do it?"**

**The reason is that God wants to bless His people. He wants them to grow in**



**faith. He wants His people to be committed. Instead of bypassing them He works through His people to see that the money comes in. He is going to work the way He said He would. He is all -wise.**

**Mark 9:29 "And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting. "**

**In this passage there was a boy who had a demon that the disciples were not able to cast out. Jesus said, "It is your unbelief." They had been able to cast others out, but they did not have the faith to cast this one out. Jesus tells them that this kind must be dealt with by prayer and fasting.**

**Talk to God and listen through prayer and, when led, deny yourself by fasting, to be better able to tune in to the Almighty. People that are not willing to deprive themselves of food, may have deprived themselves of needed faith.**

**God has processes that He operates through for our good so that our faith will continue to grow. Our faith will grow**

**according to how much we exercise  
ourselves in these areas.**

## Chapter 3

**II Thessalonians 1:3 "...your faith groweth exceedingly."**

**I want to point out that faith and charity move together. (I Corinthians 13) True love is related to the level of your faith. Even on a human level, what love can be a there when faith and trust are gone? Our faith affects our level of love. The more you trust Jesus, the more you will love Him.**

**You will never run out of the ability to grow in faith. If you lived to be one hundred you could still be growing in faith. Old saints have an advantage over younger saints because they have had more time to grow in faith.**

**A young lady who had not been saved very long was wanting to get a Bible education to be a missionary, but did not have much money. She was invited to dinner by an elderly couple who had served for many years as missionaries in**

**China. During dinner they asked enough questions to find out the needs the young lady had. After talking with the young lady, the couple talked to one another, and decided to tell her that they had been able to save up one thousand dollars. (At the time that this story took place one thousand dollars would be worth more than ten thousand today.) They added that they were going to give it to her. She said, "I can't take that! It's your life savings!" They said, "Yes, but we are further down the road than you are, and we can believe God to replace it more easily than you can." They were not insulting her; they were wise in understanding.**

**Churches need old saints that have gone farther in their faith. There is a mathematical principle that loggers understand. It is this: each year a tree grows, the rate of growth is not the same, except at the trunk. They look at the rings on the trunk and they are fairly consistent. Rainy years are a little larger, dry years a little smaller, but fairly equal**

over all. If a tree is four inches in diameter and it doubles to eight inches, than the amount of wood in the tree will be four times greater. The rate of growth in the radius determines how far across the stump will be.

Our growth ought to be an exceeding amount rather than a minimal amount. We are not trying to see with how little we can operate. Most Americans are trying to see what is the least they can do to get to heaven. What is the least I have to do in praying? How can I efficiently cut my hour of prayer down to five minutes? (If somebody wrote a book on that it would not do anyone any good, but it would sell well!) For most people, it is not a case of their trying to see how much they can be like Jesus or how close they can get to Him, but that is what it should be. We should want to grow exceedingly!

Matthew 17:17, "Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me."

**In this passage Jesus had been on the Mount of Transfiguration. He took three disciples with Him and left nine behind. While He was gone, a man brought his demonized son to the disciples to be cured of a demon. They tried to cast it out, but they were unable. This bothered them. They had cast demons out before during their missionary journeys. Why could they cast other devils out, but not this one? They had become used to having victory in this area, but this time they failed.**

**(v.18-20 ) "And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."**

**The illustration Jesus uses is one that disturbed me for many years-- the concept of the mustard seed and faith. I had seen those cards with a little plastic bubble and a mustard seed inside. I had heard preaching that however small your faith is, it will be more than adequate. Some said that faith is an invisible thing, but if it ever becomes visible it will do great things. I was struggling with what the truth was.**

**I could take you to within a couple of yards of where I started to get help. I was on my way to a nursing home to minister. As I was pondering such things the question came to me, how much faith does a mustard seed have? A mustard seed does not have an intellectual faith. It does not have an emotional faith. You could sing, shout, preach at it, and it will just sit there.**

**What kind of faith does a mustard seed have? Thinking on this, I began to learn some things about faith. Faith without works is dead. What kind of work could a mustard seed see done?**

**Mustard seeds can grow into a mustard plant. How? It grows by responding to what God has designed for it. God created the mustard seed to become a mustard plant. You cannot get tomatoes or potatoes or sunflowers from a mustard seed. It only becomes what God designed it to be as it operates within the laws of God.**

**What about me? What did He design me to be? What was I created for? To operate within the laws of God, not from outside sources. God sends the rain and sunshine, makes the soil, and controls the seasons for the mustard seed to grow. Our growth in faith comes the same way. Faith is the operating under the laws of God, by the design of God. It will always be according to the will of God, the wisdom of God, the strength, might, and power of God. You may be so little, but you can make such a difference by producing many more mustard seeds.**

**When God saved you what did He design you to be? There are specifics in the will of God. For example, God did not**



**save a woman so that she could be the pastor of a church. We know that from the Bible. What is the design of God for a child that is saved? What is His purpose? He put within you the ability to believe by reacting and responding to His will, His power, His way.**

**Biblical faith is not our faith. It is nothing of us. It is the faith of Christ by which we operate. He created you to be a certain thing. Some He created to be an example to others. Some He created to be Bible teachers. Some He created to be evangelists. The Holy Spirit gives according to His will, not ours.**

**Is your faith being like a dandelion when God designed you to be a mustard seed? Are you just being a weed that blows in everyone's garden? It is amazing to see the will of people in contrast to the will of the Almighty. He makes everybody differently because He has an intended purpose for us.**

**Faith is entering into that which God had designed. That does not leave out our**

**responsibilities. God gave you potential; you need to find how to use that potential. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required. " (Luke 12:48) It is based on the giving, not on our nature and abilities. Faith is one of the Kingdom's laws. Lost people cannot see it, and, sadly, saved people often miss seeing it as well. What has God put within you that He wants to produce through you?**

**Where I live there is lots of wild mustard growing. Nobody plants it, and most people pull it out as a weed. But it is there year after year. It is consistent. You can tell the season of the year because you can see the blossoms out in the fields. Most of the year you do not see the mustard plants. Most of your ministry may be in a limited time period. You will exist and operate, but others will only notice your work for a limited time.**

**Elijah had a ministry that was not all obvious. Much of the time he was in hiding for his life. Paul had a public**

**preaching ministry, but then he spent much time in jail.**

**The mustard seed responds to what it was designed for, and that is how we are to live. Respond to what the Almighty has for you to do. You cannot carry the loads of all the world any more than the mustard seed can blossom with its one seed all over the world.**

**Luke 7:6,7, "Then Jesus went with them. And when he was more not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed."**

**We find great humility in this man. He had one hundred soldiers under him. He was a man of authority, power, and influence. But now he had a need; he had a servant whom he loved who was sick and facing death. He was humble when he came to the Savior. He is one of the**

**Roman officers of the occupational army over the Jewish people in an eastern province in the empire, but he comes to Christ like a servant. He said, "I am not worthy!" If we do not have proper humility we will not get far in faith. No matter what position or stature you may have, it is humility that leads to an increase of faith.**

**(v.8) "For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this and he doeth it. "**

**I want to focus on the first part of the verse, "I also..." In other words he is saying, "Jesus, I understand, to a degree, how you operate. And I have something similar in my life. I am under authority. Therefore, I can exercise authority."**

**I learned this principle early, being the pastor of an independent church. I had a need for some authority as a pastor. I recommend that every pastor have a pastor over him; not in a legislative sense,**

**but in a spiritual sense. My authority is increased by being under authority. Jesus operated under authority. He said, "Not my will, but thine be done." (Luke 22:42) "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." (John 14:10) He was under authority in all these areas.**

**Faith has to do not only with your humility, but also with your submission. You must also take on the needed responsibilities. You must be able to exercise authority as well as receive it. There is a statement used in the military that simplifies things a bit. In the military the command is given, the orders are sent, and the task is accomplished. I have a brother who was in the military, and he began by being one that accomplished tasks. As he moved up the ranks, he became one who sent orders given by those in higher command. Jesus said if you love me keep my commands. He not only gave the commands, but He also worked in many ways so that we can get**

the task accomplished. We must know where we are on the ladder.

Where do you fit in God's chain of giving commands and orders for you to send out, and getting the orders accomplished? Some saints spend their last year's doing their greatest work-- on a bed believing God for things to happen, while others get to do the job. I have been told by my doctor to spend less time doing and more time praying. As a saint grows in faith, it may be their greatest work to just exercise faith at the end. Do we know where we fit in God's army?

Understanding authority and our position in it is just as essential as knowing what we were created to be. These are principles of faith.

II Corinthians 5:7, "For we walk by faith, not by sight:"

This chapter, written to the church at Corinth, is full of such words as *we* and *us*. It is not so much a book for evangelism, but a book to help the evangelist. This verse is talking about

those that are saved. Paul includes himself. "We walk by faith, and not by sight."

So many times I have heard people say, "I don't see that. How could that be possible? I can't see my way through on this." What are they saying? They are saying that they are not one of the *we*. They are among the *those*.

My father, a minister, told me when I was still a boy, "Son, if the world can understand or explain a church and how it operates, it is no longer a church." We do not operate on a basis that the world can figure out because we do not operate on what can be seen. We operate on faith. Often when a trouble arises, the first thing we do is look to see what can be done by work and sacrifice. God wants more than sight!

If I need money and I reach into my pocket and pull out a few five dollar bills and a few one dollar bills do I need to believe God for that amount? No. I can see it! I have it! If I am going to believe

**God for something it will have to exceed what can be seen. If I am going to believe for laborers, I must believe beyond what I can see and figure out. It is a terrible thing when Christians say, "If you can't see it, you can't do it." Faith requires more than sight. God has to do something.**

**When you give money for the Lord's work you must trust Him to provide. Each year you should be able to increase your giving if your faith is really growing. And when you give God blesses.**

**So what do you do if you do not have containers to store all that the Lord blesses with? You give that right back to Him! If you do not give, it will not be given unto you. If you do not give tithes *and* offerings the windows of heaven will not open. If you do not lay up treasures in heaven, you will not have access to them when things go bad down here. If you do not give to the poor, lending to the Lord, then you do not have a return coming from past giving. If your faith is going to**



grow, it will be because of the concepts and principles of God.

I heard of a man that went to the preacher and said, "If you'll pray for me to start making more money, I'll start tithing right now! " Well, the preacher started praying, and the man started making so much that he came back and said, "I'm giving too much to the Lord! I want to get out of the tithing end of the bargain." The preacher said, "All right. I'll start praying accordingly." He started praying accordingly and the man went right back to the limited income.

How often we cut ourselves off from the laws of faith because we do not understand the teachings of the Word of God! I know people who started years ago, giving by faith. They have been learning the lessons of giving and receiving, and they now give over half of their income-- pre-tax. You may think that could not happen. I agree. They cannot see how it happens. I cannot see how it happens. Others cannot see how

**that is possible. But we are not operating by sight; we are operating by faith.**

**How much can you believe God for? Not how much would you like to, but how much *will* you believe God for?**

**Hebrews 4:2, "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."**

**Faith has to be mixed in with what you hear of the Word of God. If you doubt the Word of God you will not get much out of it, but if you believe that God knows what He is talking about it will profit you. Just as we saw in Romans chapter twelve, that those that prophecy or preach will be able to do it effectively according their proportion of faith; so the one who hears it needs to mix faith to benefit from what he hears. Many people have memorized enormous numbers of facts and verses of Scripture, but they cannot believe God for their needs. They learn intellectually or academically,**

**maybe emotionally; but it was not mixed with faith. Those facts and Scriptures did not profit them.**

**You must believe you will hear from God, and then listen! Whether it makes sense to us or not is irrelevant. You may not be able to understand everything about it, but you will know that it was God talking. The private does not have to understand the strategy of the General. The mustard seed does not have to be as smart as God to become a mustard plant. Just let it mix with faith. Then walk, not by sight and understanding, but by that great thing called faith and let God work.**

**Ephesians 6:16, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. "**

**God has enabled you to have a shield of faith to block each and every dart the devil throws at you. If they get to you, I would suggest that you pray, "Lord, help Thou mine unbelief!"**

**Some people have a tiny paper shield, and they are satisfied with that. Some people would be satisfied with one made of aluminum foil because it would be easy to carry and would not cost much. It would look good at first, but after the first dart it would be destroyed. How much faith would you like to carry into battle? Your life might depend upon it. How much faith do you want? Do you want to grow exceedingly or get by minimally?**

**I would want the strongest, heaviest, largest shield I could get for battle because the enemy is not just standing still throwing one dart at a time from one direction. He is throwing them from as many angles as he can. I want a shield that will catch three darts in three different places. How about you? Will you be content with a single dart-stopper or do you want your shield of faith large, strong, useful, versatile?**

**The Roman army had shields that they could set on the ground that would create a wall of metal, almost**

**interlocking. Together they could stop the arrows, darts, and stones of the ones that opposed them with their wall of defense. Can you interlock your faith with others of like precious faith and stand together?**

**Can you believe God to block out every argument, every accusation, every lie, and every attack on your soul? Do you have enough faith for that or are you trying to get by with minimal faith? What is easy and light to carry will let you down when the battle gets hot.**

**God is not short on faith to give out; He is short on people willing to receive it. Grow your capacity. Listen to what He has said, and what He has told you and watch God work.**

## Faith Groweth

### Chapter 4

When I was young minister, just recently called into the ministry, a preacher said something to me that I did not like. I knew it was true, but I did not like to be told. I had understood it, but no-one had ever put it so simply. He said, "Don't criticize anything that you aren't ready to do better." Now before I criticize something I have to ask, "Can I do it better? Will I do it better?"

In our city we have some hot-spots of crime-- dens of iniquity. A friend of mine told me of a group that is meeting, mostly young people, who are going back to the old ways and standards. A young lady in her early twenties who was part of the group consulted with the church, prayed about it, and asked her dad about what she wanted to do. She was able to get a house in what she thought was the center of the worst part of town. The only disappointment she had was when she

**found out that she was about a block away from the very worst part. Her father made one requirement- that she have another young lady stay with her and be there when they slept at night.**

**She felt that somebody needed to take some light and shine where it was all dark-- to work with the harlots, drug-addicts, drug pushers, gang members, and all the children that were growing up in such a awful environment. She felt that light affects darkness. She believes that a holy, separated life, a Christ-like life, will have an impact on sin. Why didn't the men go down there? Good question. They are probably afraid.**

**I pray for her. She has a confidence in the Almighty to work through her. I ask you men, why do we flee to the places of safety to stay away from the places of need? This young lady shows great faith in the Lord to provide protection for her.**

**II Thessalonians 1:3, "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth**

**exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;"**

**Do we have a confidence in what the Lord can do? Is our confidence growing? If something is going to be done according to your faith and your faith is a little short of what you need, do you think it is time to grow your faith? Are you going to just say, " Well, Lord, I don't have enough faith so I guess that lets me off the hook."? Who do you think is going have that faith if the Lord laid it on *your* heart?**

**I do not pray for everything I hear about; that is more than I can handle. And besides, I want to leave something for you to pray about! Often, our prayers are so general that we would never know if they were answered, and we need to check if we are really believing in faith. There is a place of faith where you can rest the issue; it is settled. It is only a matter of time and watching God operate. All you have to do is pray with thankfulness; the answer is on the way.**



**Luke 17:3-5, "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him. And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith."**

**They did not say, "Increase our forgiveness." They said, "Increase our faith." The relationship between faith and obedience to Christ is very close. The ability to forgive others and faith are very closely related. Holding a grudge and bitterness are opposites of what faith produces. The solution to an unforgiving heart or a bitter spirit requires an increase of our faith. If we had enough faith we would not have fallen into bitterness. When I start praying and my mind is flooded with all the things people have done to me, what they said, and what they probably imagined... I just about forget what I was praying about. Then I realize that the Holy Ghost is saying, "You have grieved me and there is**

**bitterness that you have to deal with." If it is a struggle to deal with it, then you need to start a new request--"Lord, increase my faith." The growth of faith helps the proper relationships between brothers and sisters. People who hold grudges cannot believe God for much. An increase of faith is needed for right relationships.**

**Ephesians 3:12, "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him."**

**Notice that it is in Christ that we have this. And we have it by faith, but whose faith is it? Christ's faith. It is all right if you do not think you have enough faith, or cannot work up enough faith, because the pure, perfect faith in larger quantities than we need can be drawn on from the Lord Jesus Christ. It will give us the boldness we need, access to heaven, a confidence to go on no matter what others may think or say. We can draw on His faith and have all we need. These are areas of life that go beyond money problems.**

**What can God do beyond what I can do? Is He limited as I am or is He sovereign? What kind of God do you have- the Lord God of the Bible or a Baal god who lets you down?**

**Hebrews 6:12, "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."**

**The promises are in Christ Jesus. The promises of God are not automatic; they are to be attained. If you are saved, you have a right to inherit them. Do not try to write yourself out of the will of God. Most people are not bothered if they are left out of the will of God, but they would be if they were left out of the will of the Rockefellers! Do you not want to inherit what He has for you? Jesus died to put the inheritance into place, and He came back to see that it got distributed properly. Through faith we inherit the promises. Do not be slothful; be active! Pursue! Be like those commended in Hebrews 11. Be prepared to inherit what**

**God has promised. It may take time. We must cultivate patience.**

**I remember hearing a man praying, "Lord, send me patience! I need it soon!" When he got done I said to him, "Do you know how you get patience? Tribulation worketh patience." The next week he was at another prayer meeting, and he said, "Lord, I'm not so eager for patience now. I need help in the tribulations!"**

**George Mueller prayed for some unsaved friends until the time of his death. He had patience with faith that they would be saved, even if after his death. Patience and faith go together. If you really believe, you will be patient until God thinks it is the right time. His timing is always right. Sometimes we are impatient, and we think our impatience is evidence of our faith. Not so, brethren!**

**Romans 14:23, "...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."**

**Good people who live moral lives but are lost, are constantly sinning because they are not living in faith.**

**Churches that operate by sight, not faith—God says that is sin. Faith is going beyond what we can do, but most religious people analyze what they can do, put a margin of safety in, and decide that is the limit of what they will do. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."**

**That does not mean we are to be foolish. We need to find out where our faith is and what we are operating in. I fear that much of what is done today is a stench in the nostrils of God because it is run by human ability rather than faith in the Almighty.**

**James 2:5, "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor in this world rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"**

**There are great things available in the Kingdom of God, but not everybody gets the same inheritance. God has designed things how He wanted them, and He chose the poor of this world, rich in faith.**

**I can remember as I was a teenager in the 1950's, Bible preachers saying that God had started to judge America and the church. God's judgment is prosperity. The goal of the world was the judgment on the church. It used to be that we would believe God for great things to be done, but now we measure according to what we have available. "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them."(Proverbs 1:32) We quit looking to God, and started looking to what we had so that there was no God needed to get the work done. We had the methods, manpower, and money. We prospered. But it was down-hill spiritually. Sometimes God allows a saint to be impoverished so that their faith life can blossom. The poor do not have anything to work with, but they know God does, so they can be dependent upon God.**

**I have heard wealthy people give talks on how some work of God should be done by putting pennies in a box, when they could finance the whole thing without noticing it. They have schemes of**

how the poor can finance it while they keep their wealth. I do not look to them to help me believe for projects.

I am thankful that I am not extremely wealthy, although my Father is. "He owns the cattle on a thousand hills, The wealth in every mine." I have access to all that He has. And my access is greater because my wealth is less. As a child of God you have access to more wealth than Bill Gates, and you can learn to lay hold on some by faith.

When we were building our church, we started our building project with \$1,000 as a down payment on the land we wanted. We built the whole building by faith. As the brick layers came to the end of the day, I would tell them whether they could come back the next day or not by the amount of money that may have been received in the mail or over the phone that day. (It is hard to get a construction company to work by such rules but, we were not going into debt!) We turned down a \$10,000 loan interest-free that was offered to us.

**During this time, I got a phone call from a Brazilian man that I had met at a conference. He wanted to know if we would handle some money for a missionary who had helped him when he was a boy. He said there was someone who wanted to give some gems and get a tax deduction. The man calling had control of them to donate wherever he thought best, and he wanted to give to this missionary. I agreed. We were building so we could do more for missions, and here was something we could do while we built.**

**When the missionary saw the gems he said, "This is too much!" One of them was a museum piece that would get him out of any jail in Brazil and safely to another country. The missionary said he would only take half of the gems, and he donated the rest of the thousands of dollars worth to our building project.**

**Can God have somebody in a desert in Brazil kick a stone that breaks open and is a gem, sell it to the jeweler, the jeweler make a very rare cut in the gems**



that makes them very valuable? They then make their way to the States, and they help us build our building by faith? He can! I did not anticipate that or pray for it, but I was glad for it.

Recently, there was a need in a ministry that I was praying about. I got a phone call from a man whom I had met decades ago, and not very often since. He said, "Paul, this is \_\_\_\_\_. I was going to a basketball game last night. My grandson is a good little player. They were making progress in the State Tournament, and I took along \$500 to give him if he won, so he could take the team out and celebrate. On the way, it was like God spoke to me and said, 'You need to send that \$500 to Paul Reno.' So I'm going to send it; you'll know what to do with it." I did not expect that money, but when you start believing, God starts producing and He can stir anybody, anywhere, anytime, to do anything. That is my God!

**Luke 5:20, "And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man thy sins are forgiven thee."**

**He saw *their* faith, and said to *him*. The faith of several can have an impact on an individual. Consider what it takes for group faith to help individuals. There are great potentials in faith, not just for us, but for others. They will benefit or not based on our faith. What are the possibilities of faith? We have seen some: prayer, provision, opened doors, promises fulfilled.**

**We can pray property into the hands of people in far away places who use it for God's Kingdom. Since I learned this truth, I have seen God do some amazing things. I had not been in the ministry for a year when a preacher asked us if we would pray for revival every day till we saw it? Would we believe for the revival to come, personally and then beyond? We can cry about not seeing it, but can we pray, believing to have it?**

**Hebrews 11 repeats over and over, "By faith... By faith... By faith..." What have we done by faith? Look at the works they accomplished under the conditions they had, and realize that we have as much or more available to us by faith. A good thing to do would be to make a Biblical list of what can be done by faith.**

**II Timothy 1:6, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also. "**

**Since this verse speaks about an unfeigned faith, that means that there is a feigned faith - a "put on" faith. Faith can be play-acted. Hypocrisy. Many people have fake faith. It looks good, sounds good, they have the right terms, but it just is not genuine faith.**

**Once I visited an island in Brazil where some ministry was going on in a tribal group. When I arrived they saw me as a possible customer for baskets and**

similar items that they had made. They met me on the shore as I got out of the boat, and we sat on stumps as they prepared to show me their wares. Well, my stump was not sitting level and soon I was not either. One woman pointed and laughed. She said that she had put a curse on me so I could not sit still. I just laughed at her and we got along after that. Some people see something happen and they want to take the credit for it. How often do we say, "O, I was believing God for that!" when we really were not, but it was a good thing to say at that moment? That woman had not put a curse on me, but she wanted credit. Faking it!

Another danger is what is called presumption. God told the children of Israel at Kadesh-Barnea to go up and take the land. They said, "No!" They had a congregation vote and only two said "Yes." And the majority is always right, you know. Except that God alone is the majority and He said to go. When they found out what was going to happen

**because they had refused to go, they said, "We're going to go!" They presumed to go and had a terrible defeat. They were behind God's timing. They thought they could do it any time they wanted, but it was too late. They had a fake faith. They did not act when they were told, and they could not act later.**

**Ask God, and when He tells you what His schedule is, you better keep up with it. You may become upset when things get behind on your schedule; what do you think He feels when we get behind His schedule? Faith is finding out from God what is to be done, at the time it is to be done.**

**We can also get mechanical. We do things whether God has told us to do them, without believing for them because we are just using the same mechanical actions that have worked in times past. That is not faith.**

**We can base our operation on our wealth. That is not faith. We can be like those in John. There may be something in**

**us that keeps God from being able to operate. There are many people who are like that today. They have a shallow belief. Their motives are wrong; they have not repented and had a changed condition. Their faith is a useless, empty faith.**

**Fear is the enemy of faith. Jesus said, "Fear not, believe only." (Luke 8:50) Fear is almost a counterfeit of faith. Job said, "The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, "(Job 3:25) He believed that something negative would happen to him, and it did. I have heard many people say, "I was afraid this would happen!" The Lord said not to be afraid, but they were, and that is what happened.**

**Fear will produce, but always negatively. We need to cast out fear by looking at Christ and obeying Him. Peter was walking on water by faith, but he started to look at the circumstances around him and began to drown. His took his eyes off Christ and allowed fear to enter. Do not allow exterior circumstances to govern your faith.**

**Doubt is an enemy of faith. An unstable, wavering condition is an enemy. "Let not that man think that He shall receive any thing of the Lord." (James 1:7)**

**I John 5:4, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."**

**People that are in the world are short on faith. Some people are decreasing their faith by no longer fighting the world and treating it like a friend or pattern for life.**

**Are you overcoming the world or becoming comfortable with what you should be overcoming? The answer to this question will help you measure what growth or loss of growth you have had in faith. If we walk, following God, our faith can grow exceedingly.**