

Only by Prayer

Mark 9:14-32

“What shall we do with our faith? We must use it. Weak, trembling, doubting, and feeble as it may be, we must use it. We must not wait until it is great, perfect, and mighty, but like the man before us, turn it to account and hope that one day it will be more strong. ‘Lord,’ he said, ‘I do believe.’

What shall we do with our unbelief? We must resist it and pray against it. We must not allow it to keep us back from Christ. We must take it to Christ as we take all other sins and infirmities and cry to Him for deliverance. Like the man before us, we must cry, ‘Help my unbelief.’

These are experiential truths. Happy are they who know something of them. The world is ignorant of them. Faith and unbelief, doubts and fears are all foolishness to the natural man. But let the true Christian study these things well and thoroughly understand them. It is of the utmost importance to our comfort to know that a true believer may be known by his inward warfare as well as by inward peace.” R.C. Ryle

- I. The spiritual forces of evil that array themselves against mankind are powerful and effective. Satan will use every deceiving means possible to keep believers distracted, confused and defeated in his fight to lead the body of Christ astray from living the truth of God’s Word. He knows the heart of man well. He knows our pride, weaknesses, and fears, and will use them to move the church to adopt his godless ways over God’s righteous ways. The only way to prevent that from happening is to fight to remain true to Him no matter the cost. We are in a fierce battle with the ways of the world, and whether we win or lose depends on the strength of our relationship with our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Mark 9:14-15

Matt 15:1-3, 7-9

Proverbs 29:25 *The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe.*

Matt. 10:16-20 *16 “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. 17 Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. 18 On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. 19 But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, 20 for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.*

- II. Biblically, unbelief is simply having a lack of faith toward the promises of God's Word. It means to doubt that he will be true to us. It shows a lack of trust in his omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, justice, sovereignty, love, grace, and mercy. We are more prone to unbelief than we would like to admit, which gives us more reason to not trust in our own understanding. We have no excuse other than pride to not trust him with all our heart. If he says he will make our path straight, then he will. If he says he will never leave nor forsake us, then he won't. If he says the evil one can not harm us, then he'll make sure he doesn't, and on and on. Faith is a wonderful gift from God given to us so that we don't have to trust in man.

Mark 9:17-27
Prov. 3:5-6
Deut. 31:6
1 Jn. 5:18
1 Jn. 5:4-6
Phil. 2:1-16

Rom. 1:17 *For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."*

- III. Prayer keeps us alert and dependent on the Lord. Our need to be men and women of prayer cannot be emphasized enough. Faith and prayer go hand in hand, with prayer being a strong indicator of what it means to put our complete trust in him. We might not fully understand its power and importance, but what we do know is that our salvation has given us access to the throne room of God. We'd be foolish to not take advantage of the grace and mercy he offers every time we bow our heads before him.

Mark 9:28-32
Matt. 23:34-36
Matt. 17:20
Heb. 4:16

"He who gave us the privilege of prayer knows us very well. He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. That is why He designed prayer is such a way that the most impotent can make use of it. For to pray is to open the door unto Jesus. And that requires no strength. It is only a question of our wills. Will we give Jesus access to our needs? That is one great and fundamental question in connection with prayer." Hallesby

Eph. 6:18 *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.*