

Mountain loads of Faith in Prayer

BY PASTOR BRYAN NEWBERRY



Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, remembering, said to Him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away.” So Jesus answered and said to them, “Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” Mark 11:20-24

Jesus is extreme in this passage—not holding back whatsoever. Our Savior instructs us to ‘go for it’ in prayer and believe in God for great things. Now let’s imagine that I was an apostle 2,000 years ago and Christ said that He was going to teach on faith in prayer as written above in the Gospel of Mark. If Jesus had asked for my reaction, I probably would have encouraged Him to tone it down so as not to set people’s hopes too high. I might have recommended that He refer to a small piece of wood or a little bush—certainly not a mountain! But Jesus teaches us to put great faith in God and anticipate great things from God, expecting Him to do mighty things.

“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”
Jeremiah 33:3

In today’s vernacular, Jesus was essentially saying: have faith in God, believe He can move mountains, don’t doubt in your heart, and believe that those great things will happen.

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. ... If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ... Whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. ... And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. ... Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.”

John 14:12-14; 15:7, 16b; 16:23, 24b

The lesson of the fig tree discourse and these verses in John challenge us not to hold back to avert potential failure—that we believe not for a little, but for a lot. When we abide in Jesus, Who is the Word, we can believe Him to do greater works than ever before. He tells us to ask Him for whatever we desire.

What will be the conclusion of such praying? Jesus said that the Father would be glorified in the Son, that we would bear much fruit, and that our joy may be full.

John qualified this confidence in prayer in 1 John.

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask,

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we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

1 John 5:14-15 (emphasis mine)

Notice that John’s greatest concern, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is for believers not to lose confidence in prayer. Second, John encourages us to continue to ask for anything and everything. Third, the disciple whom Jesus loved also reminds us to pray according to God’s will, and then we can know the Lord hears us. Notice that John doesn’t warn us to be overly obsessed about the consequences of straying over the line of God’s will. The worst-case scenario is one’s prayer goes unanswered.

In my opinion, Jesus’ greatest concern in prayer is that we would come boldly and ask Him for great things without reservation. Don’t let your mind hold you back from believing God for gigantic things that only He can do. Let’s just abide and ask and find out later He didn’t say “yes” because it wasn’t His will. Let’s continue to pray all that is on our hearts and keep pursuing God with total faith.

“Prayer does not equip us for greater works—prayer is the greater work.”
Oswald Chambers

A heart of faith will pray more.
The heart of faith will believe for more.
The heart of faith will receive more. ☞

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