
Trusting God in the Face of Impossibilities

By David Wilkerson

January 7, 2008 “Being not weak in faith, (Abraham) considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb” (Romans 4:19).

The essence of true faith is found in this single verse. God had just promised Abraham he would have a son, one who would become the seed of many nations. Remarkably, Abraham didn’t flinch at this promise, even though he was well past the age of siring children. Instead, when Abraham received this word from the Lord, we’re told he “considered not his own body now dead (nor)...the deadness of Sarah’s womb.”

To the natural mind, it was impossible for this promise to be fulfilled. But Abraham didn’t dwell on any such impossibility. According to Paul, the patriarch gave no thought to how God would keep his promise. He didn’t reason with God, “But Lord, I have no seed to plant. And Sarah has no life in her womb to conceive. My wife is past the ability to bear children. So, how will you do it, Lord?” Instead of entertaining such questions, Abraham simply “considered not.”

The fact is, when God is at work producing a faith that is tried and better than gold, *he first puts a sentence of death on all human resources*. He closes the door to all human reasoning, bypassing every means of a rational deliverance.

The faith that pleases God is born in a place of deadness. I’m speaking here of the deadness of all human possibilities. It is a place where man-made plans flourish at first but then die. It is a place where human hopes bring temporary relief but soon crash, adding to a sense of helplessness.

Have you been at this place of deadness? Has it seemed you have no options left? You can’t call someone to advise you. The heavens are like brass when you pray, your requests falling to the ground.

I declare to you, *this is God at work*. His Spirit is working to get you to stop considering the impossibilities — to stop looking to human ways and means — to stop trying to think your way out of your situation. The Holy Ghost is urging you, “Quit hunting for help from some man. And quit focusing on how hopeless you think your situation is. Those are hindrances to your faith.”

Abraham didn’t stagger in his faith. Rather, he was “fully persuaded that, what (God) had promised, he was able also to perform” (Romans 4:21). He recognized that God is able to *work with nothing*. Indeed, our Lord creates out of a void. Consider the Genesis account: out of nothing, God created the world. With just a single word, he creates. And he can create miracles for us, out of nothing.

When all else fails — when your every plan and scheme has been exhausted — that is the time for you to cast everything on God. It is time for you to give up all confidence in finding deliverance anywhere else. Then, once you are ready to believe, you are to see God not as a potter who needs clay, but as a Creator who works from nothing. And, out of nothing that is of this world or its materials, God will work in ways and means you never could have conceived.

How serious is the Lord about our believing him in the face of impossibilities? We find the answer to this question in the story of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. Zacharias was visited by an angel who told him that his wife, Elizabeth, would give birth to a special child. But Zacharias — who was advanced in years, like Abraham — refused to believe it. God’s promise alone was not enough for

him.

Zacharias answered the angel, "Whereby [how] shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years" (Luke 1:18). Simply put, Zacharias considered the impossibilities. He was saying, "This isn't possible. You've got to prove to me how it will happen." It didn't sound reasonable.

Zacharias' doubts displeased the Lord. The angel told him, "Behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season" (1:20).

The message is clear: *God expects us to believe him when he speaks*. Likewise, Peter writes: "Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a *faithful Creator*" (1 Peter 4:19, my italics).

I am convinced that right now the faith of the body of Christ is under fierce satanic attack. All the demonic hordes of hell, Satan's amassed principalities and powers of darkness, are waging an all-out war against the faith of God's saints.

We know that Satan has always brought intense attacks against God's people, causing awful suffering. For centuries, the blood of martyrs has been spilled. Godly saints like Job have been tried severely. But the onslaught against the faithful we see today is Satan's last stand.

Just as wickedness abounds around the world today, so do the afflictions and trials of God's church. We're seeing an unprecedented barrage of sickness, affliction, trouble after trouble, one problem after another — all of which make an overcoming life seem impossible to any believer. Yet, all that we are facing right now is supernatural:

"We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).

In Luke 22, we find Satan attacking Peter's faith. Here was a godly man who was overconfident in his faith. In fact, Peter had just boasted before the other disciples that his faith would endure all trials and tests. He declared, in essence, "Others may waver, Lord, but not me."

It happened at Passover, on the last day of Jesus' ministry on earth. What was Christ's response to Peter's bold declaration of faith? He said to the apostle, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat" (Luke 22:31).

Some scholars translate the meaning here as, "Satan has *demand*ed to have you, to sift you." The word "sift" speaks of a repeated, violent shaking from side to side, then a tossing up and down.

Note that Jesus' words here describe the same demand Satan made concerning Job. The devil had said to the Lord about Job, "Put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face" (Job 1:11). Now, at Passover, Satan wanted to try to destroy Peter's faith in the same way.

Jesus forewarned Peter that the devil would sift him and attack his faith. Yet Christ assured him, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Luke 22:32).

I am convinced Satan has intensified this same demand of sifting the Lord's elect today. Why is the devil so determined to shake God's righteous ones in our time? It is because he knows his time is short. It is because sin abounds and the love of many is growing cold. It is because he failed to bring down Job, he failed to bring down Peter, he failed to bring down generations of martyrs. So now he is determined to bring down the faith of this last generation.

Indeed, Satan's attacks can become so overwhelming that our faith may experience an eclipse. Consider what happens during an eclipse: when the earth moves between the sun and moon, it obscures the light. For a time, the sun's rays are interrupted.

Something similar can happen with the faith of even the godliest believer. Satan can bring trials that are so intense they seem to block the Light that empowers our faith.

Peter suffered a severe eclipse of faith. The once-bold apostle's faith seems to have failed. Yet Peter was warned clearly that an eclipse of his faith was coming. Jesus told him, "The rooster will not crow tomorrow until you have denied me three times."

Just hours later, Peter's faith was in complete shambles. I can only imagine what went through this man's mind to cause him to curse Christ and lie, saying, "I don't know this Jesus you're talking about."

Did Satan flood Peter's mind with doubts about Jesus actually being God in flesh? As I put myself in Peter's place, I imagine him wondering many things during that awful night: "If Jesus were God, how could he allow such humiliation? How could he be God and yet not be able to deliver himself, let alone humankind?"

Peter's faith went into a total eclipse. It seemed as though the shining sun of faith had been totally extinguished.

Yet Peter's eclipse here is recorded for the comfort and encouragement of all believers who are enduring their own eclipses of faith. Have your trials become so intense, you've found yourself in what seem to be impossible situations? Now Satan has planted doubts in your mind: questions about God hearing your cries, doubts about the faithfulness of his promises, questions about the effectiveness of prayer.

A recent poll shows that atheism is spreading rapidly across America and the world. Some 30 percent of Americans now say they no longer believe in the God of the Bible. Their stated reason for this growing unbelief, especially among young people, is simply, "God never answered my prayers."

I tell you, we are in the midst of war! You are facing evil powers, fighting for your faith against the father of all lies. He is the one who has planted all those little thoughts: "Where is your God? Things are going from bad to worse. Your pain, your suffering, your needs keep mounting. God has promised to make a way of escape for you. So, where is the way? Where is your God now, when you need him most?"

You are now being shaken and sifted. And in the midst of it all, your faith seems to have failed. Like Peter, you are in an eclipse. You feel defeated, your faith in shambles.

Beloved, I have good news for you: *God is not mad at you.*

You may ask: “Doesn’t Jesus suffer when we mistrust him? Doesn’t the Lord grieve when we waver and question his Word and his faithfulness?” Yes, yes, he absolutely does. But those who have failed in faith can still keep their eyes on Jesus.

Peter’s faith did not fail. “And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter” (Luke 22:61). When Jesus’ gaze met Peter’s, the apostle broke and wept.

How patient is our Lord, how merciful. He hears all our murmuring and questioning, he sees so many doubtful thoughts in our minds — yet he looks upon us with forgiveness and compassion.

Peter was restored and lived out a great life of faith. Remember, Jesus had given him this word of encouragement at Passover: “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32). This is the Lord’s word for you and for me as well. He tells us just as he told Peter, “Keep your eyes on me. You are going to come through this. And you’re going to help your brothers and sisters in my house.”

Later, in the book of Acts, we find Peter locked up in an inner prison. An angel comes to him, shakes off his chains, and tells him to get up and leave. At that point, Peter never looks at the impossibilities around him: the iron gates he had to go through, the many guards and soldiers he had to pass by at his own peril. Instead, Peter rises in faith at the angel’s instruction, and when he comes to the iron gates, they open of their own accord.

So it will be for you, dear saint, if you are willing to get up and move on in faith.

I have been reading many letters from saints who face seeming impossibilities. A grandmother writes of her grief over the murder of her precious granddaughter. The young woman was killed by her estranged boyfriend, who then killed himself. This grandmother is overwhelmed with grief. She closes her letter with a plea: “Is there a word from God for us? Please help.”

A woman who describes herself as “strong in faith” wrote the following:

“I was married for twenty-five years to a wonderful man who died from diabetes five years ago. I married again later, but during the honeymoon my new husband tripped and fell, resulting in a fractured neck. He was healing, but complications set in, with infection and blood clots. Within a month, he died. I am shaken. I don’t understand how such a thing could happen.”

An eighty-year-old pastor writes that his wife lives in constant pain from many surgeries. Her pain is so intense she can hardly sleep, but doctors say they can’t help her. The pastor closes his letter, “I feel like a battered warrior.”

I do have a special word for all who face impossibilities:

1. A recovery of faith depends on a fuller revelation of the love of our heavenly Father toward us. “The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing” (Zephaniah 3:17). Here is a glorious revelation of the steadfastness of God’s love for his people. Scripture tells us he rests and rejoices in his love for us!

The Hebrew word for “rest” here means God hasn’t a single question concerning his love for us. In other words, he has fixed, or settled, his love for us, and he will never take it away. In fact, we’re told God is so satisfied in his love for us that he *sings about it*.

Can you imagine this? Here is a manifestation in heaven of God's delight over you. John Owen interprets the passage this way: "God leaps, as overcome with joy."

Moreover, Paul tells us, everything that is out of divine order — all that is of unbelief and confusion — is changed by the appearance of God's love. "After that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared" (Titus 3:4).

In the preceding verse, Paul says, "We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived" (3:3). In other words: "Everything was out of order. Our faith was not an overcoming one. But the kindness and love of God appeared, which the Father shed on us abundantly through Christ."

When Paul says the love of God "appeared," he uses a word from a Greek root meaning "superimposed." In short, the Lord looked down on us poor, struggling souls, full of fear and questioning, and he superimposed this revelation: "My love will deliver you. Rest and delight in my love for you."

I thank God for the day his love "appeared" to me. There is no faith that can stand against impossibilities unless everything — every problem, every affliction — is committed into the loving care of our Father. When my situations are at their worst, I must rest in simple faith.

I may not see the evidence, but God is at work. Every moment of the day, every hour I sleep, he is making a way for me. And his plan is right on schedule, at all times. What seems to me a delay is his holy work. He is getting at things deep down in me that must be settled so that he can fulfill his promises.

One day, I will look back at these trying times and say, "Lord, now I see. You were there all the time, working my miracle!"

2. Never, ever quit praying and crying out to the Lord. Those who are in despair may be tempted to shut themselves out of communion with God. Yet doing so can be fatal. In Psalm 88, you may find a description of what you are going through. A godly man named Heman tells of his hopeless situation:

"My soul is full of trouble. I have been brought down to the pit, and I am among the dead. God has laid me in the lowest pit in darkness, and his wrath lies hard on me. My friends have forsaken me; I am shut up, closed in. I mourn because of my affliction" (my paraphrase). Heman then challenges God: "Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee? Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave? Or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?" (Psalm 88:10–12).

Heman is saying, in effect, "I need a miracle *now*, Lord, not at the Resurrection. This is my last hope. Soon it will be too late, because I'll be dead. You face a deadline here, God. Help me, or it's too late. Why are you casting me off? Why do you hide your face from me? Why don't you answer my cries?"

This is hopelessness, despair, an apparently impossible crisis.

What can a godly soul do? How does a righteous soul react? Like Heman, we are to cry night and day: "O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee. Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry. Unto thee have I cried, O Lord; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee" (Psalm 88:1–2, 13).

Here are three things I do in my times of great affliction:

1. I receive and believe in the love and delight of my heavenly Father.
2. I pour out my heart before him, crying to him in silence.
3. I encourage my soul with his promises daily.

Our faith and strength may grow weak. But in our times of weakness, God has given us marvelous promises to renew and strengthen us. Here are some of his promises that sustain me:

- "God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect. He sent from above, he took me; he drew me out of many waters; he delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me. He is a buckler [protector] to all them that trust in him" (2 Samuel 22:33, 17, 18, 31).
- "Thou hast girded me with strength to battle" (2 Samuel 22:40).
- "They that stumbled are girded with strength" (1 Samuel 2:4).
- "The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace" (Psalm 29:11).
- "The God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God" (Psalm 68:35).
- "Forsake me not when my strength faileth.... I will go in the strength of the Lord God" (Psalm 71:9, 16).
- "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee.... They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God" (Psalm 84:5, 7).

Do you believe your God is strong, as the Psalmist declares? If he is, no power can stand before him. Commit everything into his mighty hand of strength. He will make a way. Most of all, believe his word: "In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul" (Psalm 138:3).

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