By Faith, Expect Great Things in



Matthew 17:20, Mark 11:23 & Ephesians 3:20
12/30/2012

Believe the God of the Impossible!

3 Expectations you can look to, by faith in 2013

I. *Expect that* **Forces of Evil will be Dispelled** (Matthew 17:17-20)

II. *Expect that* **Mountains will be Removed** (Mark 11:22-24)

> *Mark 11:23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto* ***this mountain, Be thou removed****, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.*

III. *Expect that* **Closeness with Christ will be Attained** (Ephesians 3:14-21)

> *Ephesians 3:20 Now unto him that is* ***able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think****, according to the power that worketh in us*

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I. *Expect that* **Forces of Evil will be Dispelled** (Matthew 17:17-20)

Verses 14-19

1. A <u>desperate</u> man (v. 14-16)

V. 14

"Kneeling down" - In desperation the man races over to Jesus, falls down on His knees and tells Jesus His plight.

V. 15

***"Mercy"* =** compassionate pity

"My son" - This young boy (perhaps a teen) was the father's ***"<u>only</u>"*** son (Lk. 9:38), and he had this demonic possession ever since he was a *"child"* (Mk. 9:21).

a. His son's condition was critical and apparently helpless

V. 15

"Lunatick" - lit. moonstruck; the boy had wild, out of control epileptic fits, which in ancient days the people thought was somehow

mysteriously influenced by the moon (Vine, p. 37).

Mark and Luke's gospels give more details concerning the frenzied, irrational behavior of this poor young soul.

1) The boy couldn't speak because of a demonic spirit which caused him to be mute and deaf (Mk. 9:17, 25).

2) The boy would suddenly be seized (or grabbed) by the demon, which would take over the boy's "motor skills" and the spirit would tear at him, dashing him to the ground (Mk. 9:18a).

3) The boy would foam at the mouth (sending saliva flowing down the child's face) and would grind his teeth (in pain) (Mk. 9:18b).

4) The boy would stiffen out and become rigid (*"pineth away"* - KJV - Mk. 9:18c).

5) The boy would suddenly and uncontrollably cry out (Lk. 9:39).

6) The demonic spirit would rarely (*"scarcely"*) ever leave the child but would maul him, continually leaving him black and blue with bruises (Lk. 9:39).

"Sore vexed" - really bad off

Often, in an attempt to destroy the boy, the demon would compel him to fall into fire (to burn him to death), or into water (to drawn him).

(Satan, *"the thief cometh. . . to kill and to destroy"* - Jn. 10:10).

b. Others had tried to help but failed

V. 16

"<u>Thy</u> disciples" - This man implicitly connects Jesus to the impotency of his disciples.

"They could not cure him" - And no man can do that which is in the realm of the supernatural. This was a case only God could cure!

2. A <u>doubtful</u> man (v. 17; Mark 9:22, 24)

V. 17

"Then Jesus answered" -

Mark 9:19 - says *"He answered <u>him</u>"* - He directed His comment toward this man as well as the crowd (including the scribes and His own disciples).

SEE: Mark 9:22, 24

"If thou canst do anything. . ." (v. 22) - This father did not say, "If you <u>will</u>" but he questions Christ's <u>ability</u>.

"Faithless" = to be without belief; to be without trust (more and more this seems to describe our generation).

"Perverse" = to be perverted by someone; to be distorted or twisted. The idea here is that this people to whom Jesus is speaking had been turned aside from a strong confidence in Christ.
"How long" - Jesus had been proving Himself for months and months with indisputable miracles, and yet the hardness of men's hearts would not let the truth of who He was sink in.

V. 18

At Jesus rebuke of the demon, the child was released:

1) <u>Completely</u>
2) <u>Permanently</u>
And 3) <u>Instantly</u> (after one last shove - Mk. 9:26)

V. 19

"Apart" - Perhaps with shame and embarrassment, the disciples in privacy ask Jesus why they had failed.

Part of the answer to their question was in their question itself. (***"We")**

It is faith in God not in yourself.

***Three Keys to Power Over the Impossible:**

A. FAITH (v. 20)
(Total confidence in God's power)

***"Unbelief"* =** the problem was not (as the critical text implies) a smallness of faith. Rather, their problem was an absence of faith (for Jesus in this very verse tells what a little faith (in the right Person) could accomplish.

"Mustard seed" - known for its smallness among the plant seeds.

It's not the size of your faith, it's the genuineness, sincerity, and right object of your faith that ***"moves mountains"***!

"Nothing shall be impossible" - That is, nothing outside of the will of God (cp. Paul's thorn remained - II Cor. 12). (You cannot possibly have real faith in an unBiblical request).
See: Hebrews 11:1

"Faith is" - Although many unbelieving men may view faith as an unmeasurable, weak-minded jump into the darkness, here is God's definition of faith. The words God uses to define faith are very strong words.

"Substance" - A sure or solid assurance. The word comes from *hupostasis* (*hupo* = "under"; *stasis* = "a standing"). Hence, the quality of confidence which leads one to stand under, endure, or undertake anything (II Cor. 9:4, 11:17; Heb. 3:14) (Vine, p. 120).

"Evidence" - *elenchos* - conviction; to have sufficient proof or evidence so as to form a certain conviction regarding a matter ("The word was used in the papyri of legal proofs of an accusation" - Rienecker, p. 706).

Faith is not a mere intellectual understanding; nor is it a recognition of certain facts (although faith includes a mental comprehension of truth, it is not limited to such "head knowledge").

Faith is more than a mental awareness of someone; faith is a sure confidence on Someone.

***"The substance of things hoped for"* =** the solid assurance of matters anticipated.

***"The evidence of things not seen"* =** the certain conviction of matters not visible

to the mortal eye.

Hence, this complex verse can be translated: "Now faith is the solid assurance of matters anticipated, the certain conviction of matters invisible to the eyes."

The words ***"hoped for"*** show that faith involves an assurance of a future reality (the tense of faith is primarily future).

The words ***"not seen"*** show that faith involves a confidence in reality that is invisible to the sight (*"We walk by faith, not by sight"* - II Cor. 5:7).
Someone has said, "Faith is to believe what we cannot see; and the reward of faith is to see what we believe."

"Faith" -To trust, rely on, or depend upon God with full confidence; such firm persuasion results in steadfast conviction (II Tim. 1:12) and motivates one's attitude and action.

The Object of Faith:God
(Mk. 11:22 - *"And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God."*)
The Basis of Faith:God's revelation
(Rom. 10:17 - *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*; Gal. 3:2, 5)
The Result of Faith:Salvation
(Rom. 5:1 - *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"*)
The Evidence of Faith:A Changed Life (Love and obedience)
(SEE Ja. 2:14-26; I Jn. 5:1)

We are not only saved by faith, but will live by faith (Rom. 1:17 - *"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."*). Such living faith is a product of the Spirit.

Heb. 11:6 - *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him"*
"Faith honors God and therefore God honors faith."

"Belief" is a major prerequisite to answered prayer.

Mark 11:24 - *"Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire,m when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."*

James 1:6-7 - *"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."*

How dare we question the ability of the One who created the universe!

How could we question the power of the One who has adequately proven Himself able in the past?

We need the "Faith of our Fathers"!

B. <u>PRAYER</u> (v. 21a)
(Total <u>dependence</u> on God's power)

This text, though omitted in the critical text, was nonetheless clearly stated by Christ (SEE: Mark 9:29).

"This kind" - This supernatural kind of Satanic grip on a person's life; this impossible kind; this hard kind; this humanly hopeless kind.

***"Prayer"* =** points to serious, purposeful prayer. Not nonchalant, half-hearted chatter to God, but an intensity of a soul that pours out his request with humility, dependency, fervency, and faith!

Did you know that there is one thing that astonishes (amazes) God?

Isaiah 59:16 - *"And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessors: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him."*

Note: Even in urgent times like these, we have less praying going on than ever!

God was shocked (astonished) at Israel's prayerlessness when the need for prayer was so great (Is. 59:16).

We need to be people of real prayer before a time of crisis in order to be effective pray-ers in a time of crisis.

"The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (accomplishes

much)" (Ja. 5:16).

"Call unto Me and I will answer thee and shew thee <u>great</u> and <u>mighty</u> things, which thou knowest not" (Jer. 33:3).

Prayer unites puny man to the omnipotent God.

Prayer is most essential, the most needed activity, yet often the most neglected.

The most <u>important</u> person in any church is the one who prays the most.
The most <u>influential</u> person in any church is the one who prays the most. (Dr. Bob Jones III)

What was it that brought the Communist wall down in Russia? The sovereign God of Heaven was no doubt moved by the prayers of His praying Russian saints (Prayer unleashes the power of God).

Although God is sovereign and does according to His will, prayer changes things!

Mysteriously, prayer moves God to work on our behalf, to do that which we cannot do by human power and wisdom.
(SEE: II Chron. 20:3-12, 15 - the prayer of Jehoshaphat)

C. FASTING (v. 21b)
(Total desperation for God's power)

"Fasting" - The Greek word translated "fasting" is nesteia (ne = a negative prefix; and esthio = to eat); hence, the word means to "not eat"

"Fasting" was (and is) a voluntary abstinence from eating food so as to spend the time normally spend in preparing and consuming food in prayer.

Note: Food preparation was a process which demanded more time than in our instant-microwave society.

"Fasting" and "Prayer" are constantly tied together (Ezra 8:23; Neh. 1:4; Mt. 17:21; Mk. 9:292; Acts 13:3; I Cor. 7:5)

You can pray without fasting, but you cannot fast Biblically without praying. Fasting is an affirmation of intense prayer, a corollary of deep spiritual struggle before God. It is never an isolated act of a ceremony or ritual that has some inherent efficacy or merit" (MacArthur, p. 404).

"Fasting" is most often practiced when someone is so burdened (upset) with something that food has no appeal. Their heart is focused on an urgent need so the person mourns and cries out to God for help. Ex: David for his son (II Sam. 12:16, 22); Nehemiah for God's city (Neh. 1:4).

"Fasting" is the response of a burdened or broken heart that is so absorbed with the interests of others or the will of God that one sets aside his own needs and desires and humbles himself and cries out to God with a sincere heart for mercy.

"Fasting" is never a command for a N.T. believer. Jesus said men ought "*always to pray"* but not men ought "always to fast." The words ***"When ye fast"*** assume that believers will do so in their life, but does not command it.

"Fasting" - Points to the intensity of the felt need. To be so overwhelmed, so burdened, so distressed with a need for the mighty hand of god that food (or any earthly pleasure) is the farthest thing from your mind.

God never commands us to *"fast"* but He says when you do, do so sincerely (Mt. 6:16-18) and not with ulterior motives (EX: health and dietary reasons).

When was the last time you were so burdened for a ....

- lost relative,
- a wayward teen,
- a deeply hurting person,
- a satanically-deceived backslider,

...That your mind fled the mundane (food, etc.) and was obsessed with the need to grip onto God?

II. *Expect that* **Mountains will be Removed** (Mark 11:22-24)

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III. *Expect that* **Closeness with Christ will be Attained** (Ephesians 3:14-21)

> *Ephesians 3:20 Now unto him that is* ***able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think****, according to the power that worketh in us*

INTRODUCTION: V. 14-15

V. 14

"I bow my knees" - synonym for prayer. This posture in prayer shows:

1)Humility under God
2)Dependence upon God
3)Earnestness before God

Paul completes giving the contents of a prayer that he began in 1:16-19

V. 15

"Of whom" - refers to ***"the Lord Jesus Christ"*** (v. 14)

"the whole family" - refers to the family of God, both those who are in Heaven (the dead in Christ) and on earth (the living believers).

The church is a family! A family reunion will occur one day -- I Thes. 4:13-18

"Is named" - God's family bears the name of His Son. Just as children bear the last name of their father, sow e bear the name "Christian" - because we belong to Christ.

"Too often believers fail to realize all that God provided for them and consequently fail to grow and enjoy their Christian life to the fullest.

***Paul prayed that believers would realize all that God has provided for us!**

Four practical experiences God wants you to have:

A. THE <u>STRENGTH</u> OF CHRIST (V. 16)

Do you sometimes feel weary? Weak? Tired? Fatigued spiritually? Impotent (powerless)?

Do you lack zeal for God?

Go to the powerhouse!

God has enough strength to go around to every child of God. He can grant them strength ***"according to the riches of His glory"*** (v. 16).

Stored up inside of God's brilliant, glowing, bright, blazing glory is a vast wealth of energy (dynamic power).

God is a "powerhouse" that has an enormous amount of power. It is not available to Con Edison! But for His children!

EX: Paul's thorn in the flesh made him rely on God's strength (II Cor. 12:7-10)

"By His Spirit" - The Holy Spirit is the channel or "powerline" through which God's power flows into us.

"In the inner man" - we need to be more concerned about our inner man (our innermost, spiritual being) than we are for the external.

God **encourages us to exercise ourselves unto Godliness.** ***"For bodily exercise profiteth little: but Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come"*** **(I Tim. 4:8)**

Paul said: ***"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man"*** **(Rom. 7:22).**

It is the hidden man of the heart that women are to adorn (I Pet. 3).

The Bible says that *"though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day"* (II Cor. 4:16).

B. THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST (V. 17A)

"Dwell" - (kat-oikeo = kat=down; oikeo=at home) Lit. to be "down at home", to settle down; to be at home.

The Ephesians had Christ in them, and they were "in Christ" (ch. 1 & 2), but now Paul prayed that they would come to experience His intimate presence on a daily basis

SEE John 14:18-23

Too often we treat Christ like a passing visitor or an occasional guest. . . when He wants to move into every room and closet of our lives. He should have access to every area. No place of our lives should be off limits to him (our leisure, eating, recreation, work, pleasure, etc.)

"By faith" - just as the means to Christ's power was the Holy Spirit, the key to Christ's intimate presence is faith.

We come to attain a relationship with Christ by faith, and we enjoy our relationship with Him also by faith. *"The just will live by faith."*

C. THE LOVE OF CHRIST (V. 17B-19A)

V. 17b

"Rooted and grounded" - (passive - it is God who planted us into His love).

We are so rooted and grounded (firmly established) that nothing can separate us from his love. (SEE: Rom. 8:35-39).

Nothing can uproot us. However, many times we lose sight of how much He loves us. We get disgusted with ourselves and are deluded into thinking that God shares the same attitude.

V. 18

"Comprehend" - to lay hold of; to get a handle on; to apprehend for yourself.

Such apprehension is what "*all the saints"* need.

God's love is broad, long, high, and deep.

It is broader than the east is from the west; it is higher than the heavens; it is deeper than the deepest sea.

V. 19

"The love of Christ" - Christ's love. The love that Christ has for His own.

"Which passeth knowledge" - It surpasses our finite ability to mentally understand it all.

This is why Paul prayed for them; because unless God opens our minds to understand how much love Jesus has for us, we will never fully realize it in this life.

"Passeth" - running over; a bubbling over

Our minds do not have the capacity to capture and hold onto the immensity of Christ's love.

D. THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST (V. 19B)

The *"fullness of God"* would definitely refer to the fullness off His Holy Spirit. God has a fullness that will fill every empty, lonely hurting spot of your life. Every cavity, every hold, every crevice of our life He longs to fill (pervade).

Be filled with His Spirit! (Eph. 6:18)

CONCLUSION:

V. 20

Since it is God who strengthens us, indwells us, loves us, and fills us, it is God who should get all of the glory.

"Exceeding abundantly" - God is able to perform superabundantly above and beyond all that we can ask (pray) or think

God's power that is available is already resident and presently actively energizing us.

He wants to do so much more than we are willing to let Him.

V. 21

--The object of glory -- God the Father (*"unto Him"*)

--The manifestation of glory -- *"in the church"*

--The channel (means) of glory -- *"by Jesus Christ"* (without Him we can do nothing)

--The longevity of His glory -- forever!

--The certainty of His glory -- *"Amen"* - truly!