

Eternity Daily Bible Study - No. 399
Series: Solution-Focused Faith
Topic: Faith For The Powers Of The Kingdom
Date: 12th January 2005

Instructions for subscribing and unsubscribing to this newsletter are at the bottom of this email.

If this devotional is a blessing to you, maybe you have a friend or family member that would like to start receiving this daily bible study. You can forward this to them, and they can use the following link to subscribe. <http://www.aibi.ph/eternity/> or they can just send a blank email to: eternity-dbs-subscribe@strategicnetwork.org

In our last study we saw that solution-focused faith endures the difficulties of ministry because it sees and fully believes in a “faith picture” of a wonderful ministry with glorious eternal consequences, which is fully provided for and empowered by God. Solution-focused faith brings a positive attitude to the task, which enables many of the problems to be solved, and it lays hold of God for the answers to prayer that every ministry needs.

In this study we shall see that this involves much more than just a positive mental attitude, indeed solution-focused faith is a positive spiritual power! Jesus did not just teach the Twelve to have positive attitudes or to “be enthusiastic and disciplined” like the motivational speakers do. Jesus actually gave them positive spiritual powers as well – power to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to cleanse the lepers, to cast out demons and to forgive the sins of any. (Luke 10:1,9,19, Mark 16:17,18)

Solution-focused faith is much, much more than a positive mental attitude or a visualization of success. Solution-focused faith believes in the power of God being unleashed according to the character and will of God, in the midst of our daily life, here and now and forever.

Jesus taught His disciples to lay hold of the powers of the Kingdom by faith and to exercise them in servant-like fashion for the benefit of others and the glory of God. They were to freely give – as they had freely received. [The Kingdom Of God is Christ’s perfect rule of over people, places and circumstances.]

The controversial ending to Mark’s gospel lists some of these Kingdom powers: Mark 16:17-18 ISV "These are the signs that will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; (18) they will pick up snakes in their hands; even if they drink any deadly poison it will not hurt them; and they will place their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Even if Mark did not write these words, someone in the early church did, and they can be said to reflect the beliefs of the apostolic age about the powers of the Kingdom of God and in the sovereignty of God, these verses made their way into the Bible. They connect faith “those who believe”, with powers “these signs”.

The apostle Paul connects faith and miracles when he writes to the Galatians:

Galatians 3:2-6 ISV I want to learn only one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? (3) Are you so foolish? Having started out with the Spirit, are you now ending up with the flesh? (4) Did you suffer so much for nothing? (If it really was for nothing!) (5) Does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you because you do the works of the law or because you believe what you heard? (6) In the same way, Abraham "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

In other words spiritual powers such as the reception of the Holy Spirit and God's working of miracles among them, are due to one, and only one thing – true faith - which Paul implies as being akin to the justifying faith of Abraham.

This connection between the powers of the Kingdom and practical, solution-focused faith continues throughout the Bible.

Matthew 17:19-20 ISV Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" (20) He told them, "Because of your lack of faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.

Mark 11:21-24 ISV Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has dried up!" (22) Jesus said to them, "Have faith in God! (23) Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' if he doesn't doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. (24) That is why I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours.

Most Christians react to these and similar verses with skepticism or excuses. They see the problem (many unanswered prayers) not the promise (the powers of the Kingdom). Our minds are strongly and automatically tuned towards cautious skepticism about 'wild promises' as this is a necessary basic social survival instinct for intelligent adults. Our reflexes say "This is wacky, Jesus must mean something else".

What Jesus is saying is that the extraordinary powers of the Kingdom of God, that He has brought into the world, are available only to those who believe.

Faith is what worked miracles for the Galatians, faith got the demon out of the epileptic boy, faith caused the fig-tree to wither and faith can move the mountains in our life.

This faith in the powers of the Kingdom, is released by: "believing that we have received" – and then issuing a command or a statement to that effect.

All healings done by Jesus involve a word of authority issued in faith. These include: “Lazarus come forth!”, “Be stilled!”, “Little girl arise!”, “Receive your sight!”, “Be cleansed!”, “Be made whole!”, “Be healed!” and so on and so forth. When Peter healed the lame man the format was the same – an authoritative word of faith: “in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk”.

Generally we are taught to have faith for a “request from God”, for an answer to something like “Dear Lord, please heal this deaf man.” However the Jesus model is quite different, we have to believe that we have received authority to heal the deaf person and then we have to issue the command “Ears be opened”. The Jesus method is an authoritative commanding word of faith.

First the faith - then the command or word of faith. I saw no healings at all until I adopted this method and started using “command prayers” such as those above. Jesus tells us to use this style of prayer when He says:

Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' (Mark 11:23) AND you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.(Matthew 17:20)

Jesus wants us to use of the authoritative word of faith to unleash the powers of the Kingdom according to the character and will of God. The authoritative word of faith is based in Scripture and in the inner work and filling of the Holy Spirit who teaches us how to apply the word of God to life’s situations in an anointed way. (1 John 2:20,27)

This so counter-intuitive and so outside most church traditions that we resist it, or suspect it of being New Age, or even magical - whereas in fact it is thoroughly biblical. All the miracles I can find in the New Testament involve the authoritative use of the word of faith in this fashion. Dozens of them! And if we want New Testament results we should at least try the method that is amply illustrated in the Scriptures and which Jesus commands us to use (see above).

The powers of the kingdom are not playthings, they are powers God has given us to glorify His name. They were given to the Church in general when Jesus ascended into Heaven and “gave gifts to men” (Ephesians 4:7-12) and placed us with Him in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 2:6) and blessed us with all the spiritual blessings in those heavenly realms. (Ephesians 1:3)

They are His powers to be used by His Church in accordance with His will in the way that He has designated – which is the way of faith.

They are not just the powers of the apostles, James lists them as belonging to ordinary Christians who were the elders of a local church: *James 5:14-15 ISV Is anyone of you sick? He should call for the elders of the church, and they should pray for him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. (15) And the prayer offered in faith will save the person who is sick. The Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven.*

Thus solution-focused faith believes that ordinary Christians can exercise the powers of the Kingdom with authority - in order to bring glory to God. To do this the authoritative word of faith must be based in the will and word of God and come from the inner prompting of the Spirit of God. We cannot just whimsically make these things up or our own gratification. We do so to make the Kingdom of God arrive on earth and to have Gods' will done on earth as it is in Heaven. Thus it is a two-step process: a) Solution-focused faith believes God for a perfect and positive Kingdom solution that is "in the light". b) We believe we have received the authority to bring it into being (and thus we believe that we have already received it) and we command it to happen with an authoritative word of faith. Anxious scrambling and pleading is not the word of faith. The word of faith is tested and rested. It is calm and poised and powerful. This comes from the conviction that God has given you all the spiritual powers necessary to have Christian mastery over life and to bring God's solutions into being.

I do not expect you to totally believe this, but I do ask you to try it. I promise you that you will notice a marked improvement in your level of spiritual power as you exercise solution-focused faith for Kingdom purposes, and do so with authority and conviction.

Blessings,

John Edmiston (johned@aibi.ph)
Eternity DBS web-site: <http://www.aibi.ph/eternity/>

Donations are always appreciated: <http://www.aibi.ph/aibi/donate.htm>

You are receiving this email because you either subscribed on the website, or sent an email to the subscribe address. We do not subscribe people without their consent.

To subscribe - send a blank email to:
eternity-dbs-subscribe@strategicnetwork.org
To unsubscribe - send a blank email to:
eternity-dbs-unsubscribe@strategicnetwork.org