

A Different Perspective
Having Faith That Moves Mountains (4)
09-25-3
A Part for God to Play

I was sitting down with a group of businessmen recently for a breakfast that we'd organised and I was about to share a message called "The Battle Belongs to the Lord" with this group. It was interesting to listen to the discussion around the table as people drank their coffee and munched on a muffin.

Being men in business, the discussion was around the economic climate and its impact on their businesses. And as we chatted, it became pretty clear to me how self-reliant this group of men had been programmed to be.

They are after all, businessmen. They have businesses to run. They're meant to succeed. And when the economy turns sour, it's almost as though they are the failures because their businesses are struggling. In fact, during the economic crisis, I sat with a wise, older man and he was sharing with me how much of his time was being taken up counselling other men in the financial sector who were contemplating suicide because they were facing ruin.

Whatever we do, whoever we are, it seems that society is programming us to be self-reliant. We have to rely on our wits and our abilities to succeed and if we don't we're failures. Never mind that some adversity that we could never have controlled swept in like a storm off the ocean. No – we're meant to succeed. But here's the thing – if we're so self-reliant, what happens when the storm is so ferocious, we can't deal with it? What happens when the mountain is so big, we can't budge it? Then what? Well, I'll tell you. It's scary. Really scary.

The hardest thing I think in overcoming fear in life is actually getting to that point where we have a high level of confidence in God. Who God is. What He's done. His might and His power and His sovereignty. It all sounds great in theory. But what about in practice? What about when the rubber hits the road? Then what?

I used to think that it was up to me. And I guess in part it is, but not completely. That's just as well, because you and I, we're human. We can't just conjure up confidence. We can't take this theory about who God is and let the theory wipe away the fear.

Because fear is real. No I need something more than that. I need something more than promises on paper. And fortunately that's exactly what God had planned too. He didn't want to leave it all up to us. He wants us to actually experience His peace – not our strength, but a peace and a strength that come from God. Let's pick up the rest of what He had to say, beginning again at verse 28 of Isaiah Chapter 40:

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. (Isaiah 40:28)

Great, there's the theory again. But watch now for what comes next.

God gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:29-31)

Do you get the point? Where do the power and the strength come from? Do you or I conjure them up. No! They come from God. And we need that, because even youths will faint and be weary and the young and the strong will fall exhausted. BUT – and here's the BUT – the glorious, wondrous, powerful BUT:

but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31)

He gives those things to us when we wait expectantly on Him. And that's literally what that word "wait" means. Not waiting grumbling and complaining. Not waiting with our hearts and our eyes downcast. Not trembling paralysed with fear. No, it means waiting expectantly. Waiting on God with the expectation that He is who He says He is and that He will do what He says He is going to do.

Looking up at Him and just expecting strength and assurance and comfort from Him. Right there in the middle of our fear. With our emotions on a rollercoaster ride, with our enemies around us, with disaster looming – but with an expectation somewhere deep inside that God is going to act.

And that what will happen is exactly what He has planned.

Do you know what we're doing when we're doing that sort of waiting. We're **having faith that moves mountains!** We're living it right then and there. Who knows – will God give us victory over our enemies or not. Don't know. More Christians martyred in the twentieth century than in the two thousand years before that combined.

We all die sometime. Is He going to heal this cancer or let it take its course. Is He going to give me victory over my enemies, or does He have a different plan? Sometimes, we just don't know? But this one thing I do know, that ...

... those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31)

God is saying to us through His Word today – indeed He is commanding us – DO NOT BE AFRAID.

And you know why it is that I am not afraid of death? Because I have eternal life through Jesus Christ. Sometimes He gives me victory over circumstances on this earth. Sometimes, He lets me suffer. But come what may – if I am diagnosed with terminal cancer tomorrow – I am going to put my confidence in the God who has given me a life eternal with Him.

Just before He was crucified and when His disciples were trembling in fear, this is what Jesus said to them:

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. (John 14:27)

So far as we know each one of those disciples (other than Judas) went on to do a mighty work for God ... and then, then they died for their faith. They were martyred. So often we're focussed on the here and now, we're focused on winning this little battle and getting our comfort, getting our way and getting it all happening just the way we want it. But that's not God's view. God has an eternal view, an eternal plan and that's why I put my confidence in Jesus Christ who paid the price in full for my sin on that cross.

God gives us His peace and His strength when we wait expectantly on Him. And that waiting expectantly is the living out of the faith that moves mountains. Doesn't matter how big, bad or ugly the enemy is; doesn't matter how fearful we are; doesn't matter how

immovable the mountain is God will take away our fear when we wait expectantly on Him.

That's the sort of faith that moves mountains. Let me share with you what I shared with those businessmen over breakfast. God means for us not to be afraid. He means for us to rest in Him in the middle of the storm. He means for us to expect Him to show up when we're afraid. When we're faced with a mountain so massive, we can't even begin to contemplate moving it.

I love how the writer of the book of Hebrews in the New Testament puts it. He says – look, this Jesus He gets what we're going through because He Himself walked our dusty road. He himself has been tested in every respect the way we're being tested. Then He says, because of that, therefore we should approach the throne of grace with ***boldness***, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need.

God means for us to rely on His help. Maybe, maybe that's what faith is. Maybe that's what it is to have the sort of faith that moves mountains. What do you think?