

A Different Perspective
Having Faith That Moves Mountains (2)
09-23-5
Discovering the God who Blesses

Well over the course of this week, if you've been able to join us, we've been looking at a dark hour in Israel's history. A time when their capital city was under siege. People were starving. Women were cannibalising their children. The king, who was supposed to provide leadership, had completely lost the plot.

And even though God spoke His blessing into this dire siege through His prophet Elijah; even though God promised to His people - people who, by the way, profess to believe in this God, people who went through all the religious rituals, all the motions; even though God promised blessing to these people in their siege, none of them listened. None of them believed. None of them could make sense of those dire circumstances on the one hand and the powerful word of God, which promised blessing, on the other.

Deliverance. Not just a bit of blessing, an inconceivable amount of blessing. Not some it'sy bitsy thing but a massive mighty thing. And we can be hard on those people until we realise that, well, in this sieges of our lives, to be perfectly honest, we spend much more of our time focusing on the problems of life than the power of God.

We've talked about that this week but today, today I want to share some of my personal journey with you. Because you should never think that just because some guy happens to be talking about this stuff on the radio, he somehow has it all sorted out. That somehow he's exempt from the trials that stretch his faith. Because, let me tell you, he definitely isn't.

Faith, by definition, is something we need to have when we need something that we can't do for ourselves or provide for ourselves. Some breakthrough. Some provision. Some healing. Some thing. And inevitably there's an urgency or a risk associated with this thing.

The ultimate example is being saved - eternal life. Now, I don't know what you believe but me, I believe that there is a heaven and there is a hell and that you and I, in fact, all of us have fallen so far short of the mark of perfection required by God to be in His favour to get into

heaven. The only solution is Jesus. Whoever believes in Him has eternal life.

Faith. When we receive God's forgiveness by faith we're forgiven. By believing. By basing our life on the promise that God forgives us through Jesus and that He paid the price for us on the cross.

This may not appear that pressing right now for some people but one day, one day there will be a day of reckoning. A day, when you and I, are held to account. And that day could come much sooner than we imagine.

Faith in Jesus gives us eternal life. That's, without doubt, the ultimate example. There are others and truth be known, it's the others that many people struggle with. The things we need in our lives right now. The real estate transaction. A job promotion. A healing of a relationship. Peace in the war that's going on around us. See, the stuff that's going on now compared to eternal life, in a sense it's less important but because it's here and now and so immediate, it seems so much bigger and so much more pressing.

We travel through difficult places in life. You do and so do I. I want to share with you what's happened in my life over these last few years. The biggest thing that I've had to believe for, in my life, has been funding for the ministry that God's got me involved in, in Christianityworks. This ministry where we produce these radio programs. Now don't get me wrong, this isn't some pitch for money or anything like that. I'm just going to share with you the gritty reality of how this whole 'faith' thing is played out in my life. And can I tell you? Some days it's been hard. I mean, let's get real here.

Four years ago I took over the role as Chief Executive Officer of this ministry Christianityworks. You've probably heard me tell this story before. What we do is we produce radio programs. Just like the one that you're listening to right now. But back then we weren't producing any radio programs - none. We had almost no money left in the kitty.

And yet I had this powerful call in my heart to produce fresh new programs. Three different ones. The weekly half hour program, Christianityworks. This daily program that you're listening to now, A Different Perspective. And some short 60 second spots called Just A Minute.

And so off we went and from the very first step, can I tell you? It was nuts. It was crazy. If this were a business and I put together a business plan and went to a venture capitalist and said, 'I've got this great idea, let's do it.' They would have laughed me out of the room.

But God, He does things differently. He has this plan to reach people with the gospel, the good news of His Son. So instead of getting some experienced, eminent, reputable preacher to head up this ministry, He grabs some guy like me from the Information Technology industry and says, 'Here Berni, you do it.'

And it hasn't been easy. Some days the fire of His calling burned brightly in my heart and other days, you realise you're walking on water and you panic and you start to sink. And almost every day has been a serious faith walk. I mean, where do you get the money from to do that with just a handful of people supporting the ministry four years ago?

This is real. This is the way it is and I have to tell you, I think, to this day, if I didn't spend some time each morning alone with Jesus, praying and reading His word, I'd have gone nuts. I couldn't have coped with the pressure. There are bills to pay. There are staff to pay. There is a recording studio. There's printing. Everyone seems to have their hands out to be paid.

Now I felt like that little boy with a few fish and a few loaves of bread who had to feed 5,000. See now, people go 'wow'. 900 radio stations take your programs. Millions of people listen. But they don't see what was involved.

The truth is this. I wouldn't swap what I've been through because it's grown me and so many people have come on board now and they're helping financially but it's still a challenge. Just this morning I was reading the familiar story of Lazarus. You know, the friend of Jesus who died and He brought him back to life. And I noticed how differently Jesus works to the way that perhaps you or I would like Him to work.

"A certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary's the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped His feet with her hair. Her brother Lazarus was ill so the sisters sent a message to Jesus. "Lord, Lazarus is ill." But when Jesus heard (here's what He said) "This illness does not lead to death rather it is for Gods glory so that

the Son may be glorified." Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, He stayed two days longer in the place where He was."

And you know what happened? Lazarus died. And then Jesus went and healed him and raised him from the dead and God got all the glory. You see, this is so different to the way you or I would do it. Jesus hangs back. He delays because He wants them to see His glory. He wants them to experience a major miracle. The more dire the circumstances the bigger the miracle.

And that's how I've felt over these last few years. Man, so often people say, 'haven't you guys done amazingly well?' Can I tell you? I just laugh, seriously. Don't you get it? People can't do what's happened in this ministry. From zero radio stations to 900 taking our program. From an audience of zero to millions each week. This is a major miracle. Only God can pull that off.

And that, that's what I have to keep reminding myself each time we sit down and say, 'Well Lord, what's next? You've called us into this country or that ... How are we going to fund that?' And each time, my God shows up. Each time my God is faithful. And I have to tell you, my mustard seed of faith, well, I guess by now it's just sprouted the odd little green shoot.