

A Different Perspective
Having Faith That Moves Mountains (2)
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Stepping Out is Hard

Hi I'm Berni Dymet – with A Different Perspective.

How are you going? The beginning of another week. So often you know, we get to Monday and we think to ourselves – man is the weekend already over? Here I go again. The same old rut. The same old problems. Work hard, get home dog tired.

On and on. Why am I doing this?

Well this week we're continuing on looking at the whole subject of faith. I've called this series "Having Faith that Moves Mountains" – because my hunch is that God doesn't mean for us to be in a rut. He means for us to push the obstacles out of the road, step out into new things, live a life of challenges and excitement.

Now I can hear the old cogs grinding over..."Surely he doesn't mean my life does he?" Well actually I do. Someone once accused me or complemented me – I'm still not sure which one it was – she said "Berni my hunch is that your comfort zone is living outside your comfort zone."

And my hunch is that she was right. It kind of put things into perspective for me. By definition, it's uncomfortable outside your comfort zone....but actually, that's where I want to be.

And every now and then it gets me down and I feel like grumbling, but then I remember, it's out here – outside the comfort zone – that's the most exciting. That's where the faith journey is.

But stepping out, you know, out there into the unknown – well, stepping out is hard.

The hardest part of any faith journey, is the first step. At least that's what we think, until we've been on the journey for a while and things are going just fine until we discover there's yet another giant in our way. Or another chasm to leap. Or another mountain to...

There are times when stepping out into the unknown can be incredibly difficult. One of the things that we're going to explore later in this series is overcoming fear, because fear has the tendency either to immobilise us completely, or to lead us into making bad choices, or both.

This week on the program though, we're going to look at a story, a vignette if you like of God on the faith journey. Last week we saw the incredible faithfulness of God on Abraham's journey.

And today, we're going to kick off a look, in fact we're going to take a look together at the power of God to do the unexpected through four lepers. Through these social rejects, God brings the most

incredible blessings to His people, right when they were at absolute rock bottom.

And the point of sharing this snapshot in this series *Having Faith that Moves Mountains* is simply this:

1. To expose the reality of the journey – you know it's not some walk in the park outside our comfort zone – it's hard, it's tough, there's a gritty reality to it all, and in the middle of all that

2. To expose the great unseen reality – the faithfulness, power and glory of God amidst each journey.

There's a reason for that. So many of us struggle with the reality of our journey through life. We still harbour this secret belief that it should be easy. At least easier than it is. At least like the other people I know. And when it's not, we conclude that we simply mustn't have enough faith. And so in effect, we resign from any aspiration to live out our lives with a faith that moves mountains. To put it simply – we give up!

And the more you look at things, the more you see that particular reality playing itself in the lives of so many would-be-believers.

The journey that we looked at last week – Abraham's journey – was anything but easy. And this next one, perhaps it's even the harder still. If we're going to have faith that moves mountains, then we need to come to grips with the reality of our journey – you with yours, I with mine – and the great unseen reality. God Himself.

Have you ever noticed how some people, they seem to power on with God? Somehow, they seem to go on with God in just an amazing way, and they use the power that God has given them, wonderfully, for God's glory. But other people, they hear the message, but they just somehow sit in the pews.

I visited a church recently, and as many churches do, they had a whole bunch of banners hanging on the walls. The theme of the banners was celebration. "Celebrate God's Love." "Celebrate God's Mercy." One of them was "Celebrate God's Faithfulness." It struck me when I looked at that banner, that we really only understand, really only come to grips with God's faithfulness, during the difficult times. It's a bitter sweet lesson to learn at the time....but when we look back on that, it's the most wondrous lesson isn't it?

In a sense, it's great to have God around us and to be a part of our lives, and for Him to be our Lord during the good times. But really it's in the tough times on our journey of faith, when dark storm clouds gather around us, that we truly experience God's faithfulness for ourselves. And it's after those times in our lives that we can really celebrate the faithfulness of God.

And strangely, it's so often during those times, that God uses people in power. You see again, if you or I were God we probably wouldn't do it that way. We'd probably build people's lives up and make them strong and *then* use them in power.

He moves us from one place to another in our lives. And through our human eyes, those places often look ordinary. Even grungy. Even inappropriate. In a difficult marriage. In the midst of conflict in the workplace. Surely God isn't in that place with us. Surely we shouldn't be expecting mountains to move while we're there.

Now what God should do is clean that mess up and then when everything is fine and I'm feeling fine and dandy, that's when my faith should be moving mountains.

The book of Psalms in the Old Testament is one that we often think of as the book of praise. It is after all, the Hebrew hymn book. But would it surprise you to know that there are more Psalms of lament than there are of praise? More songs written by people in those dark and fearful places than on the mountain top of faith?!

And in the Psalms, we often see the phrase "from strength to strength." In Paul's second letter to the Corinthian church, we see "from glory to glory." The Bible is full of this stuff; it is full of superior, excellent, extra mile, abound, excel, press on, surpass. God does not call us to mediocrity. God does not call us to a place of standing still, because mediocrity begets mediocrity.

God wants us to be all that we can be. To do all that we can do. To put our roots deeper down into Him. To bear more fruit in Him, but sometimes that's scary. Doesn't matter who we are. Doesn't matter whether we're at the top of the heap, or right at the bottom.

And that's why we're going to take a look at four nobodies in the Bible in this Chapter. These men don't even have a name. They're lepers and God does something exciting and powerful with them. Not because they had any great expectations of God. Not because they even had any great faith. But simply – because they stepped out on the journey.

All we're going to do today though is set the scene – what was going on...have a listen...

Some time later King Ben-hadad of Aram mustered his entire army; he marched against Samaria and laid siege to it. As the siege continued, famine in Samaria became so great that a donkey's head was sold for eighty shekels of silver, and one-fourth of a kab of dove's dung for five shekels of silver.

Now as the king of Israel was walking on the city wall, a woman cried out to him, "Help, my lord king!"

He said, "No! Let the LORD help you. How can I help you? From the threshing floor or from the wine press?"

But then the king asked her, "What is your complaint?" She answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give up your son; we will eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' So we cooked my son and ate him. The next day I said to her, 'Give up your son and we will eat him.' But she has hidden her son."

When the king heard the words of the woman he tore his clothes.