

a word from Pastor Chuck



What Does Faith Accomplish?

“If you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to the mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you” (Matthew 17:20b). People frequently quote these words of Jesus—and with good reason. But it’s important that we put these promises in perspective, remembering whom Jesus was addressing. He revealed faith’s potential to His closest associates—His disciples.

So what constitutes discipleship? Jesus had said earlier, *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me”* (Matthew 16:24b). When Jesus talks about faith’s great potential, He is talking to men who have denied themselves, who have taken up the cross and submitted themselves fully to God’s will. These men and women no longer seek after things only for themselves—they follow Jesus.

God Provides, in His Time

Years ago my wife, Kay, and I rented a house in Corona, CA. Kay, who is very inventive and artistic, can make a house look great, and with my capacity to paint and make general repairs, we made a good team. After seeing how nice the house looked, the landlady decided to move back in. We couldn’t afford more than \$50 a month and knew it would be tough to find another place, but we knew the Lord was in control.

Two weeks before we were to vacate, our landlady called, wondering if we had found another house. We hadn’t but I assured her that we had been checking all the ads in the paper and following every lead. She called again a week before we were to move and every day thereafter, concerned that we had not found a place to live (apparently she assumed that we would take her to court).

Moving day came and we still didn’t have a place, but we had a moving van, a garage to store our things, and an offer to stay with my parents. No sooner had we sat down to dinner than the phone rang—the house next door to the people who had so graciously allowed us to use their garage was

available to rent. The price: \$55 per month. It was ideal.

“Lord, we rest in Thee”—that had been our motto. We knew the Lord would take care of the situation, and He did. It’s wonderful to be able to rest in the Lord even when we don’t know how God will work out the circumstances. I have found that God seems fond of showing up at the eleventh hour. Often He doesn’t come through until you’re right at the deadline—and in some cases, beyond the deadline. But when God answers past the cut-off, He’s probably doing a greater work than you had anticipated.

Faithful, but Suffering

Consider a few of the things that Hebrews 11 says have been accomplished “by faith”: Enoch was taken into heaven without dying (verse 5); Noah escaped God’s judgment upon the earth (7); Jericho’s walls fell (30); kingdoms were subdued and lions’ mouths were stopped (33); three Hebrews survived the fiery furnace, weak were made strong, and foreign armies were put to flight (34); women received their dead back to life (35).

Faith has enormous potential to turn negative situations into triumphs, but true men of faith have also been tortured. They’ve endured cruel mocking, scourgings, imprisonments. They’ve wandered about in sheepskins—destitute, hungry, afflicted and tormented. And they’ve been stoned, sawn in two, slain with the sword—though they were men of genuine faith (Hebrews 11:35-37).

What does this tell you concerning faith? It tells us that it does not always deliver us from adverse circumstances. Faith didn’t deliver Daniel from getting thrown into the lion’s den. It preserved him there, but it did not keep him from it.

When things go badly for us, we tend to say, “Everything is against me.” But you don’t know all things. You know only part of the story and you’re making judgments without complete knowledge. Wait until you get all the facts and then you’ll see it is quite different from what you suspect.

I have apologized to God many times for believing and complaining that all things were against me. When He finished the picture, I could clearly see how wrong I had been. God was working His plan of love in my life the whole time. When my faith wavered, God used even that to accomplish His purposes in my life. And He’ll do exactly the same thing for you.

[Jesus] revealed faith’s potential to His closest associates—His disciples. ... men who have denied themselves, who have taken up the cross and submitted themselves fully to God’s will. These men and women no longer seek after things only for themselves—they follow Jesus.

Your faith may not necessarily keep you out of difficult straits, just as faith did not keep Daniel’s friends from the fiery furnace. I walk in faith but that will not keep me from walking through the valley of the shadow of death. On that day, however, He will sustain me.

We make a great mistake when we think that if we just had enough faith, we wouldn’t have any problems. Not true! Nevertheless, God will be with us and give us the strength to face every problem victoriously. 🙌