

FAITH OMNIPOTENT NO. 474

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 12, 1862,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Jesus said unto him, If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believes.”
Mark 9:23.*

I MUST take your minds back to the scene in the midst of which Christ uttered these memorable words. Christ had been upon the mountaintop, transfigured in the presence of His three disciples. During His absence, the disciples remaining had been put to a nonplus. They found themselves, for want of faith, unable to work a miracle. And the Pharisees triumphed. Christ came down just at the very moment and turned the scale.

We find a parallel case in the story of Moses, when with his servant Joshua he went up to the mountain and beheld the glory of the Lord. While he and Joshua were absent evil lifted up its head, and those who would walk by sight prevailed over the poor weak faith of Aaron, so that he made for them a golden calf, and lo, as Moses returned, he saw the people given up to the worship of this image which they could see with their eyes and handle with their hands. Faith had left the field routed, because the champion was not there, and sinful sight was for the moment triumphant. Moses dashes boldly into the midst of the people, and instantly they are put to confusion, some tremble, and the most brazen of them are made to hang their heads. He lays hold upon their molten calf, grinds it to powder, and makes them drink thereof.

Now, our Lord with his Joshuas—Peter, James, and John, the three elect out of the elect—had been on the mountain of transfiguration. The rest, like Aaron, found themselves attacked by those who would have signs and wonders, and being unable to furnish these signs and wonders for lack of faith, the Pharisees pushed their advantage, and the hosts of God seemed to fly before them. But suddenly, like a great King, Christ stands in their midst, the Pharisees are abashed, a miracle is performed, faith triumphs, and the doubters are shamed. Like some mighty general who, having been absent from the field of battle, finds that his lieutenants have rashly engaged in action and have been defeated, the left wing is broken, the right has fled, and the center begins to fail, he lifts his standard in the midst of his troops, and bids them rally around him, they gather, they dash upon the all but triumphant foemen, and soon they turn the balance of victory, and make the late victors turn their ignominious backs to flight.

Brethren, here is a lesson at the very outset. What we want for conquest is the shout of a king in the midst of us. The presence of Christ is victory to His church, the absence of the Lord Jesus entails disgraceful defeat. O armies of the living God, count not your numbers, rely not upon your strength, reckon not upon the ability of your ministers, vaunt not in human might, nor on the other hand be dismayed because you are few, nor tremble because you are feeble, if He be with you, more are they that are for you than they that are against you. If Christ be in your midst, there are horses of fire and chariots of fire round about you—

*“When He makes bare His arm,
Who can His cause withstand?
When He His people’s cause defends,
Who? who shall stay His hand?”*

Lift up your eyes, then, to the hills, from whence Jesus comes who is your help, and entreat Him never to forsake His people, but to dwell with them, and walk among them forevermore.

The matter about which the dispute had arisen was this, a certain man had a demoniac son, who was afflicted with a mute spirit, which threw him into convulsions and ravings of the most hideous kind. The father, having seen the futility of the endeavors of the disciples, had little or no faith in Christ, and therefore, when he was bidden to bring his son to Him, he said to Jesus, "If You can do anything have compassion on us, and help us."

Now there was an "if" in the question, but the poor trembling father had put the "if" in the wrong place. Jesus Christ, therefore, without telling him to retract the "if," just puts it in its legitimate position. "Nay, verily," He seemed to say, "there should be no 'if' about My power, nor about My willingness, the 'if' lies somewhere else." "If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believes." The man received faith, offering at the same time a humble prayer for an increase of faith, and instantly Christ spoke the word, and the devil was cast out with an injunction never to return.

Brethren, you and I see that there is an "if" somewhere, but we are perpetually blundering by putting it in the wrong place. *If* Christ can convert heathens? No, no, *if* the church can believe He can. *If* Christ can make the ministry successful? Nay, *if* you can believe He can. *If* Christ can give me the pardon of sin, *if* He can give me high enjoyments, *if* He can lift me above doubts and fears? Not so, brethren—not so, you have misplaced your "if." It is if you can believe, for if you can, even as all things are possible to Christ, so shall all things be possible to you. Faith stands in God's power, and in God's majesty, it wears the royal apparel, and rides on the king's horse, for it is the grace which the king delights to honor. Girding itself with the glorious might of the all-working Spirit, it becomes, in the omnipotence of God, mighty to do, to dare, and to suffer. "All things," without limit, "are possible to him that believes."

I shall, this morning, dwell upon *some of the achievements of faith*, and then notice *where faith's great power lies*. God help us to speak on both of these points with divine power.

I. First, SOME OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF FAITH.

Time would fail me if I should attempt to rehearse the record of those who have earned a good report through faith. It is not necessary that my humble tongue should recapitulate what Paul, with inspired lips, has uttered in the ears of the church. Turn to the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews, and see there a mighty triumphal arch which God the Holy Ghost has raised in commemoration of the splendid triumphs which faith has achieved. Behold this tower of David, built for an armory, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. With joy the church recounts her worthies, for the Lord utters His voice before His army, for His camp is very great. But it needs not that I remind you of these ancient things, I will rather speak of some of the things which faith can perform today, even today.

1. First, we will consider faith in *its relationship to guilt*. Here we may say, in your hearing, if you can believe guilt can be removed, perfect pardon and complete justification are possible to the vilest sinner, if he can believe in Christ. Behold, my brethren, faith going forth to conflict with sin. Mark for a moment its determined struggles, but see it coming back, like David, with Goliath's head in his hand—a mighty conqueror through the strength of its God. Faith in dealing with sin *does not forget the greatness of it*. Our sin is tremendous, it is not possible for us to over estimate its guilt. The sinner, under the most awful convictions, never exaggerated the evil of sin, it is a dreadful and a bitter thing, but faith deals thus with it, "What if my sin be great? I have a great Savior, surely He is able to take my sin, even if it were a hundred times as great as it is, and to cast it all into the depths of the sea. I know that I have greatly revolted, and have sinned with many aggravations against my God, but I believe in His great mercy, and I know that He is able to blot out my sins like a cloud, and my transgressions like a thick cloud." Faith does not lessen sin in the estimate of a sinner, but it exalts Christ, so that the sinner firmly and fully believes that if his sin could be multiplied by all the number of the elect, yet He who is mighty to save could roll all the burden away, and make him free. The greatness of sin is no barrier to its removing, if you can believe.

Many, also, are troubled with a consciousness of *the ill desert of sin*. They are made to look into hell, they seem to hear the wailings as they ascend from the place of torment. Such awful passages as these are in their troubled mind: "Tophet is prepared of old; the pile thereof is wood and much smoke."

“These shall go away into everlasting punishment, where their worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched.” But faith says, “Yes, but despite all this, the agonies of Christ were so great that they are a fit and full expiation by which all these torments can be, by God’s mercy, fully removed from those who trust in Jesus, and they can even mount to the upper skies.” To know the desert of sin, and yet believe that Christ can pardon—this is faith work. Not to make out sin to be a peccadillo, a small and trivial offense, but to confess that the full weight of God’s eternal arm can be none too heavy to fall upon the man who has dared to insult his Maker’s laws, and despite all this to believe that the atonement made by blood upon the cross, was enough, and more than enough, to expiate all. This is the victory of faith—to know that the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s dear Son, cleanses us from all sin.

Multitudes, also, I know, are very much vexed by remembering *what guilt has done* in them. “I am,” says such a one, “so hard-hearted, I have so little repentance, I am so prayerless, I have nothing good in me, I am everything that is vile, there is not a commendable thing in me to move the pity of God.” Now, faith comes in and says, “It is even so, but, despite all this, I do believe the naked promise of God, I come to Jesus as I am, having nothing in myself, but possessing all things in Him.” Nor will faith let the hardness of the heart, or the stubbornness of the will, be any argument why the soul should not rest on Christ, but believing all that could be laid to its charge, and sorrowfully repenting of it all, still faith says, “It is written, ‘Him that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out.’ *I come, and Jesus cannot, will not, cast me out.*”

When I feel my soul softened, when I feel the motions of the living fire within, then to believe that Christ can save me is no great faith, but when I feel no spiritual life, when my heart is as hard as a nether millstone, and I see myself as corrupt as a dunghill, then to believe in Him that justifies the ungodly, then to take the mercy which Christ gives to the very chief of sinners, this is a masterpiece of faith, and herein faith makes all things possible to him that believes—

*“In hope against all human hope,
Self desperate, I believe
Thy quickening word shall raise me up,
Thou shalt the Spirit give.*

*The thing surpasses all my thought,
But faithful is my Lord;
Through unbelief I stagger not,
For God hath spoke the word.*

*Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone,
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries ‘It shall be done.’”*

Sinners also are greatly troubled when they are awakened, concerning *the future*. “You will sin again,” says Satan, “just as you have done, all pretenses to a new life will be signal failures, you will go, like the dog to his vomit, and return, like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” The quickened mind clearly perceives that this would inevitably be the result, if the work were to be performed by human strength, but faith denies the slander by looking to the Lord alone. “Though in me, that is in my flesh, there dwells no good thing, yet he is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him,” and faith clutches that promise, “I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand,” And she looks upon the future with the same eye of faith with which she looks back upon the pardoned past, and rests herself upon the faithfulness and power of God to save. At times these old sins will rush in upon the believer’s mind with a terrific force. Gathering dreadful strength from *the justice of God*, our eyes are tormented with the vision of an

angry God, with His sword drawn, ready to smite us for our offenses. Glorious is that faith which can fling itself into the arms of God, even when the sword is in His hand, and will not believe that God can strike the sinner who relies upon the blood of Jesus.

Mighty is that faith which, looking at justice, stern and severe, yet trembles not, but cries, “You are merciful and *just* to forgive me my sins, for I have confessed them. Christ has full atonement made, and you will not twice demand the debt. He paid it once, and you cannot lay anything to my charge.” Triumphant is that faith which marches right up to heaven, and stands before the blazing throne of the great and holy God, and yet can cry, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? God has justified: who is he that condemns? it is Christ that died; yea, rather, that has risen again,” and this even when sin rolls like a black flood, and the remembrance of the past has lashed the soul to tempest.

When we really know the blessed merit of Jesus’ blood, when we fully understand the superlative mercy of God, when we come to know the overflowing love of the Father towards His beloved children—we shall not look upon sin as being less sin than before, but we shall no longer fear its penal consequences, being confidently assured in our soul that none of these sins can destroy us, that not the whole of them together can for a moment shake our standing in Him, nor by any means put us in any danger of eternal wrath, since we are covered with the righteousness of Christ, and washed in His blood.

Brethren, our sins, when pardoned, should increase our delight in God, since they afford us evidences of His exceedingly abundant grace and love. Amalie Sieveking, a notable Christian heroine, one of the most zealous workers of modern times, writes thus: “The sense of my own powerlessness but brings me nearer to Him whose strength is made perfect in weakness. I give myself up to His guidance, in cheerful trust that He will finish the work which He has begun, and help the poor stumbling child again and again to rise, ay, should it stumble a hundred times a day.”—and this is the point I want you to notice—“Sometimes I feel as though I must lay bare to others the whole accumulated amount of my guilt, that they may with me admire the riches of divine long-suffering.”

This is how faith learns to deal with sin—to make it a foil to show the brightness of mercy—the setting in which the diamond of divine love flashes with superlative luster. The faithful heart always remembers its sin with shame, but still it remembers God’s pardoning love with gratitude, and the sorrow helps to increase the thankfulness. The lower we sink by reason of the fall, the higher our love to God rises when we reflect how His strong hand has taken us up “out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay, and set our feet upon a rock, and established our goings.” Oh! I would this morning that some of you who are full of sin would believe that Christ can save you. “All things are possible to him that believes.” What if you are the blackest sinner out of hell, and think the devil himself white compared with yourself, yet if you can trust Christ this morning, “all things are possible to him that believes.” Whiter than the newly fallen snow shall you be in an instant, if you can now rest your soul upon Jesus, who is able to save.

2. Let us now observe faith in the midst of *those constant attacks of which the heir of heaven is the subject*. Here faith again does all things. My brethren, no sooner is a Christian born, than there is a great stir about him, even as concerning Christ Himself, for Herod seeks the young child that he may destroy Him. We all know how constantly *the world* attacks us, more especially if we will be separate from it, and will keep our garments white, and will not indulge in the common pleasures, nor be guided by the ordinary maxims of society. Then the world howls at us like a pack of wolves. What then? Why, faith finds here but an easy task, for it learns to glory in tribulations, delightfully remembering the beatitude of Jesus on the mount—“Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

This is an everyday conquest with the Christian, to laugh at Satan’s threats. “This is the victory which overcomes the world, even our faith.” The world attacks us also with its smiles, and unhappy is the man who has no faith, for soon the blandishments of the world will overcome him, but he that is full of faith, when the world offers him silver, replies, “Nay, I am rich in gold,” and if the world would give

him treasure, he would say, “I have a better portion than you can offer me. Will you tempt a king with farthings, or a prince with beggar’s broken victuals? I am heir of all things in Christ, this world is mine, and heaven is mine too.” So *he* laughs to scorn all the smiles of the wicked, just as he did in the case of their frowns.

Alas, brethren, we are equally attacked by *the flesh*. The lusts within are not dead, they are powerful still, and we know it to our cost. But here, too, faith overcomes, for while faith recognizes the power of the flesh and the lusts thereof, it so lays hold upon Christ that it is lifted up into heavenly places, and is able to tread its corruptions under foot. Faith says to the believer, “Be you assured that notwithstanding all the plague of your own heart, and all the loathsomeness of your nature, yet you shall as surely conquer as Christ has conquered, and you shall one day be as pure and spotless as even Christ Himself before the Father’s throne.”

Up and at your lusts, believer! There is no sin which will not yield to faith. There is no necessity that we should always be sinning as we have been, we *can* overcome our lusts. You *can* drive out these Canaanites, though they dwell in cities walled to heaven, and have chariots of iron, you shall put your feet upon their necks yet, and utterly destroy them. By little and by little you may assuredly drive them out, but only by faith, not by works, not by trust in your own moral resolutions, but by trust in the sprinkled blood of Jesus, can you overcome all temptation, and subdue your sin—

*“With my sling and stone I go,
To fight the Philistine,
God hath said it shall be so,
And I shall conquer sin;
On His promise I rely,
Trust in an Almighty Lord,
Sure to win the victory,
For He hath spoke the word.*

*In the strength of God I rise,
I run to meet the foe,
Faith the word of power applies
And lays the giant low.
Faith in Jesus’ conquering name,
Slings the sin-destroying stone,
Points the word’s unerring aim,
And brings the monster down.”*

So is it with *the devil*. The devil comes out against us, but we are more than a match for him when our faith is firm. Upon the shield of our faith we catch his arrows, and by the sword of our faith we smite him to the very heart. There is no temptation that ever can assail a believer, but faith can certainly supply an antidote. If I believe in Jesus I have His promise that I shall overcome, and I shall overcome, because I believe that promise. Even if I should get beneath the devil’s foot, and he should lift his sword to smite me, if I could say, “Rejoice not over me, O my enemy, for when I fall yet shall I rise again,” I should rise, and victory would be mine. Faith overcomes even hell itself and its crowned monarch, for defense it is a panoply, and for attack it is our battle-axe and weapons of war.

As for the *trials of this life*, it is marvelous what feathers these are to faith, for she perceives that troubles come from God. Chrysostom has a gloss upon that passage in Job, where Job says, “The Lord has taken away.” He did not say the Chaldeans did it, nor the Sabeans, though they certainly were the instruments, but the *Lord* has taken away. The believer seeing God’s hand in everything that happens to him, feels pleased with all alike. As providence is in his Father’s hand, he knows that it is always guided by love, by wisdom, and by grace, and so he thinks his worst days to be as good as his best, his foul days are fair, his dark days are bright, in full confidence he believes that all things work together for his good,

and he leaves the working of them entirely with his God. Oh! beloved, it is only want of faith that makes this world such a place of sorrow to God's people, but when we get faith, faith laughs at every tribulation, come from whatsoever source it may.

Thus I have shown you that "All things are possible to him that believes." Rise up, O hosts of hell, and shoot your arrows! You heavens, prepare your tempests! O earth, cast forth your floods, and you O flesh come forth with all your blasphemy and wickedness—faith walks unharmed amidst all your fury more than conqueror through Him that has loved her.

3. We turn your attention to another point, the *obtaining of eminence in grace*. Many professed Christians are always doubting and fearing, and they think that this is the necessary state of believers. By no means, brother! "All things are possible to him that believes," and it is possible for you to get into a state in which a doubt or a fear shall be but as a bird of passage flitting across your soul, but never lingering there. When you read in biographies of the high and sweet communion enjoyed by favored saints you sigh, "Alas, these are not for me." Oh climber! if you have but faith, you shall stand upon the very pinnacle of the temple yet, for all things are possible to him that believes."

I know you read of what some great men have done for Jesus, what they have enjoyed of Him, how much they have been like Him, how they have been able to endure for His sake, and you say, "Ah! as for me, I am but a worm, I can never attain to this." There is nothing which one saint was that you may not be. There is no height of grace, no attainment of spirituality, no position or assurance, no post of duty, which is not open to you, if you have but the power to believe.

Get you up, get you up from your dunghills, lay aside your sackcloth and your ashes. It is not fit that you should grovel in the dust, oh children of a king. Ascend! The golden throne of assurance is waiting for you! The crown of confidence in Jesus is ready to bedeck your brow. Wrap yourself in scarlet and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day, for, if you believe, you may eat the fat of kidneys of wheat, all your land shall flow with oil, and wine, and milk, and honey, and your soul shall be as a watered garden, and your spirit shall be satiated as with marrow and fatness. "All things are possible to him that believes."

4. And yet a fourth point, the power of faith in reference to *prayer*. Here "all things are possible to him that believes." In prayer we are sometimes staggered by reason of the *great* things we are about to ask, but faith looks at the great promise, the great God, and His great love, and thinks that even a great thing is but a crumb from the Master's table. Then, again, we are often driven back by a sense of unworthiness, but faith looks at *Christ's* worthiness, and believes that His worthiness is quite sufficient to put our unworthiness altogether out of court.

Then we are apt to think of God's delays, but then, faith thinks that God cannot deny though He may delay, so she hangs on till the promise is fulfilled. Though the vision tarry, she waits for it till it come, for sure is she that it *will* come. And, oh! it is a splendid thing to see faith wait upon God in prayer, and forswear all carnal means, depending simply and wholly upon the naked promise, and believing that God can do His own work, and perform His own Word. Brethren, no man ought to doubt in these modern times but what God *will* answer prayer, and that faith with prayer can do anything.

We have often heard of George Muller, of Bristol. There stands, in the form of those magnificent orphan houses, full of orphans, supported without committees, without secretaries, supported only by that man's prayer and faith, there stands, in solid brick and mortar, a testimony to the fact that God hears prayer.

But, do you know that Mr. Muller's case is but one among many. Remember the work of Francke at Halle. Look at the Rough House just out of Hamburg, where Dr. Wichern, commencing with a few reprobate boys of Hamburg, only waiting upon God's help and goodness, has now a whole village full of boys and girls, reclaimed and saved, and is sending out on the right hand and on the left, brethren to occupy posts of usefulness in every land.

Remember Brother Gossner, of Berlin, and how mightily God has helped him to send out not less than two hundred missionaries, throughout the length and breadth of the earth preaching Christ, while he

has for their support nothing but the bare promise of God, and faith which has learned to reach the hand of God, and take from it all it needs.

And need I remind you of a story we told you last Friday night—the story of Pastor Harms, in Hermaunsburg, where, by the power of that man’s faith in preaching the Word, he has seen the barren wilderness made to blossom like the rose, till his church has become a very model of what a church of God ought to be, a living working body, from which he sends out missionaries to the coast of Africa, having nothing for their supply but the offerings of the people, drawn from them by the exercise of prayer and faith.

I was reading a memorable passage in his life, where he says, he was wanting to send his missionaries out to the Gallas tribe in Africa, but could not find any means, and so he says, “Then I knocked diligently on the dear God in prayer, and since the praying man dares not sit with his hands in his lap, I sought among the shipping agents, but came to no speed, and I turned to Bishop Gobat in Jerusalem, but had no answer, and then I wrote to the missionary Krapf in Mornbaz, but the letter was lost. Then one of the sailors who remained said, ‘Why not build a ship, and you can send out as many and as often as you will?’ The proposal was good, but the money! That was a time of great conflict, and I wrestled with God. For no one encouraged me, but the reverse, and even the true friends and brethren hinted that I was not quite in my senses.

When Duke George of Saxony lay on his deathbed, and was yet in doubt to whom he should flee with his soul, whether to the Lord Christ and His dear merits, or to the pope and his good works, there spoke a trusty courtier to him: ‘Your Grace, *straightforward makes the best runner.*’ That word has lain fast in my soul. I had knocked at men’s doors and found them shut, and yet the plan was manifestly good and for the glory of God. What was to be done? *Straightforward makes the best runner.* I prayed fervently to the Lord, laid the matter in His hand, and, as I rose up at midnight from my knees, I said, with a voice that almost startled me in the quiet room: *forward now, in God’s name!* From that moment there never came a thought of doubt into my mind.”

Friends! the churches of Christ have no need of the modern machinery which has supplanted the simplicity of faith. I verily believe, if the Lord swept the committees, secretaries, and missionary societies out of the universe, we should be better without them if our churches would but trust God, send out their own men, raise the money to support them, and believe that God would bless them. I hope the church will soon say, like David in Saul’s clanking armor, “I cannot go with these, for I have not tried them,” and with only her sling and her stone, confident in her God, I trust she will confront her foe. We can do all things, if we can but trust Christ. “All things are possible to him that believes,” but nothing is possible to your schemes, and to your systems. God will sweep them away yet, and happy shall be that man who shall lead the van in their utter destruction. Go you up against her, take away her bulwarks, for they are not the Lord’s, He did not ordain them, nor will He stand by them. Act in faith, O you people of God, and prove the power of prayer, for “All things are possible to him that believes.”

5. There is another point, upon which I have already entrenched, that is, *in the service of God* “all things are possible to him that believes.” I know the devil will say to you, “Why, you have no gift.” And what if you have not? If you have the gift of faith, you may do somewhat, and fulfill your mission. Perhaps you are a minister, you have been laboring in a village with very little success. Brother, may it not be that you did not believe that God would give you success? For if you had believed it you would have had it. You are not straitened in God, but straitened in your own bowels. I know what it is to go to my chamber and feel ashamed of many a sermon I have preached, and moan and groan over it, and I have known what it is to discover, within a month, that the sermon has been far more useful in conversion than those which I thought had something about them which might render them effective. The fact is, God wants not our power, but our weakness, not our greatness, but our nothingness.

Oh, brother, if God has called you to a work that is ten times harder than you have strength to perform, go and do it in *His* strength, and “all things are possible to him that believes.” I would that this age would breed a few extravagant men, we are getting so dull, so cold, so common-place—we all run

in the same cart rut, imitating one another, in the sight of one of the heroes of old, we little men do walk under their huge legs, and peep about to find ourselves dishonorable graves, and all this is because we have left off faith. Let a man believe that God has called him to a mission, let him say, “Forward, in God’s name!” and that man will tell upon his times, and carve his name in the rock of ages, and leave memorials behind him which angels shall gaze upon when the names of emperors and kings have been swept into oblivion.

Men and brethren in this church! many and many a time have I stirred you up to faith, and there are some few of you who begin to know what faith means, but, oh, I fear me there are many of you still that have not come to the fullness of the meaning of faith. To live in a region of miracles, to be called fanatics, to see God’s hand as visibly as you see your own, to recognize Him as greater than second causes, to find Him as one whose arm you can move, whose power you can command, to stand in an extraordinary position, far above the place where reason can put you—to know that you are a distinguished, separated, specially-favored child of God. Oh! this is heaven begun below.

Believe me, I often marvel how people can think that the present attainments of the church are all the church can expect. I look upon decent tradespeople, respectable ministers, and amiable women, and so forth, doing something, but doing very, very little—and I am apt to say, “What! What! Is this all Christ shed His blood for—to make us do this? Is this all the Holy Ghost does, to make a man get through a decent sermon on a Sunday? Is this all? Is this God’s work?”

I see God’s work in nature, and there are towering Alps, and roaring seas, and cataracts lashed to fury, but I look on God’s work in the church—little, little, little everywhere. Littleness is stamped upon the brow of today, we do not do and dare, and I am inclined to think that until we see some great and daring deed attempted, and some great and marvelous thing done for Christ, we shall not see the glory of the Lord revealed, so that all flesh shall see it together.

What are we doing here, all of us cooped up in this little island, all of us living in England? “*The world lies in the wicked one.*” How is it our hearts beat not for the heathen? We must stay at home, we have calls. But is not the call of God louder still, if we had but faith? But we are so carnal—we live so much on “the things that are seen,” that we cannot do a rash, brave, imprudent act for the Master. God help us to do it! Then shall the church arise and put on her beautiful garments, and woe to you, Askelon, when Israel’s God is in the camp! Woe to you, Gaza, for your gates shall be carried on our shoulders, when once we believe we are strong enough to bear them to the top of the hill, posts and bars and all! “All things are possible,” in the service of God, “to him that believes.”

Finally, when we shall come to die, sickness shall cause us no anxiety, the solemn mysteries of the last article shall give us no alarm, the grave shall be no place of gloom, judgment shall know no terrors, eternity shall have no horrors, for to him that believes, all things are possible, and death and death’s shade give way before faith. Heaven yields to faith, hell trembles at it, earth is powerless before it, and lies in the hand of the faithful man, like clay upon the potter’s wheel, to be molded as he wills.

II. I come to my last point, and may God bless it. WHERE LIES, THEN, THE SECRET STRENGTH OF FAITH?

It lies in the food it feeds on, for faith studies *what the promise is*—an emanation of divine grace, an overflowing of the great heart of God, and faith says, “My God could not have given this promise, except from love and grace, therefore it is quite certain that this promise will be fulfilled.” Then faith thinks, “*Who gave this promise?*” It considers not so much its greatness, as “Who is the author of it?” She remembers that it is God that cannot lie—God omnipotent, God immutable, and therefore she concludes that the promise must be fulfilled, and forward she goes in this firm conviction. Then she remembers, also, *why* the promise was given—namely, for God’s glory, and she feels perfectly sure that God’s glory is safe, that He will never stain His own escutcheon, nor mar the luster of His own crown, and therefore she concludes that the promise must and will stand.

Then faith also considers the amazing *work of Christ* as being a clear proof of the Father’s intention to fulfill His word. “He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall

He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Then faith looks back upon *the past*, for her battles have strengthened her, and her victories have given her courage. She remembers that God never has failed her, nay, that He never did once fail any of His children. She recollects times of great peril, when deliverance came—hours of awful need, when as her day her strength was, and she says, “No, I never will be led to think that He can now forswear and change His character, and leave His servant.

Faith, moreover, feels that she cannot believe a hard thing of her dear God. Is it wrong to use that expression? I must use it, for He *is* dear to me! I think this is one of the things I have repented of above all other sins I have committed—the sin of ever doubting Him who loves me so well that He had sooner die than I should perish, and did die that I might live. What! that God so dear to my soul—do I doubt Him? I would not spread a report that my father was a liar, or that my mother would forswear herself. No, blessed parents, you would not be unkind to me, and, my blessed God, my faith knows that You *cannot* be unkind, Your love will *make* You faithful even if Your faithfulness were not enough in itself.

If our God *can* leave us, then indeed am I mistaken in His character. If I can *dare* something for God, and He can leave me, then have I misread Scripture. I do not believe, young warrior, if God shall prompt you to dash into the thick of the battle, that He will leave you, as Joab did Uriah, to fall by the arrows of the enemy. Only dare it, and God will be greater than your daring. But we refuse to be honorable. A little hardship, a little difficulty, a little danger, and we shrink back to our ignoble sloth. Oh that we would rise to the glory of believing!

Dearly beloved, I have tried thus to stir up your souls, but I am very conscious that we cannot have this faith in Christ, except as we have more of His Holy Spirit. But then we have the promise—“If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” Ask for more faith.

This church is enough by itself for the conversion of the whole world, if God will give us faith enough. If the little band at Jerusalem were all that was needed, a band of more than two thousand faithful men and women might be enough, if we had faith. And look at all the churches around, would their success be as little as it is, if they had more faith? All things are possible, and yet we do nothing! Everything within our reach, and yet we are poor! Heaven itself on our side, and yet we are defeated! Shameful unbelief! be you put to death forever! Glorious faith! live you in our souls! I hope that both sinner and saint will believe in the mercy, and goodness, and truth of God, as revealed in Christ, and that we will take this home with us for today’s meal—“All things are possible to him that believes.”—

*“Faith treads on the world and on hell;
It vanquishes death and despair;
And, O! let us wonder to tell,
It overcomes heaven by prayer—*

*Bids sins of a crimson-like dye
Be spotless as snow and as white;
And raises the sinner on high
To dwell with the angels of light.”*

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.