

THE GIFT OF EXPECTANT FAITH

Faith, like all the gifts of the Holy Spirit is a supernatural manifestation of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:9). Hebrew's 11:6 tell us that 'without faith it is impossible to please God'. Our faith is the victory that empowers us to overcome the world (1 John 5:4). It was faith that caused Noah to construct the Ark when people continually ridiculed him because there was no sign of a flood. Faith drove Moses on as he led his people to the edge of the raging sea into what looked like an impossible situation. Jesus talked about Great faith, Strong faith, Weak faith and No Faith at all in the gospels. The biblical faith stories go on and on. Read Hebrews 11 for an impressive list of amazing men and women whose stories stand out to inspire and challenge us in our faith. The Gift of Faith is a confidence that can well up at any time. It's a knowing and a belief that God can and will bring about the impossible. He will remove blockages and hindrances to bring about his greater glory and healing in a person or situation. The bible tells us 37 times that 'Nothing is impossible'.

Faith always takes us beyond our natural understanding. The world says 'See and you will believe'. Biblical faith says 'Believe and you will see.' We believe, even though we don't see. Jesus tells us 'blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.' We believe Jesus died for us, Rose from the Dead, Ascended into Heaven and is seated at the Right Hand of the Father and He will come again in Glory.

For me faith is about trusting God, even in dark and difficult times, and knowing that if he promises something in his word he will bring it to pass. 'Faith is by hearing and hearing by the word of God' (Rom 10:17.) Each of us needs faith to read the word of God and believe it. I pray daily and ask Jesus to continually activate HIS gift of faith within my heart. I find that great faith doesn't come out of great effort; it comes by obedience and surrender. I have learned over the years never to let the limitations of my natural ability stand in the way of what the Lord calls me to do. In faith I know and understand that Gods anointing overrides everything I don't have. I'm forever stepping out in faith. Sometimes I look back on the things the Lord has done through me and I'm bowled over. Many times I think 'I can't do that' and I feel the Lord responding 'that's right you can't, but I can'. I just need you to step out and I will do the rest. I know that in the natural I haven't got what it takes but I also know that supernaturally when I am in Christ Jesus I am without limitations.

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Your faith will be tested

You can be sure that your faith will be tested. From my own experience I have learnt to trust God as the many trials and testing enable me to walk by faith, trust and perseverance, even when I haven't yet received what I am praying for. For many years I prayed for my husband Freddy to come to faith (he was a professing atheist.) I had faith to be assured that God had already answered my prayers, even though there was no change in him. When anyone questioned me on his beliefs I was always positive and would answer in faith 'He is a testimony in the making', and so he was. Suddenly God converted him through a dream 30 years later. His timing was perfect as Freddy, who was in the early stages of Alzheimer's at the time, progressively got worse and would not have been able to make this kind of decision for the Lord.

As Hebrews 11:1 puts it 'Now faith is being sure of what I hope for and certain of what I do not see'. Jesus tells us, in Mark's gospel; "Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark 11:24). It blows me away when I read the words in John 14:12 "Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father".

Faith of the saints

Look at the faith level of our beloved saints whom God used in healing, miracles, signs and wonders – they even raised the dead. I love the many stories of St Patrick. It has been said that he performed a thousand miracles, and God used him to raise around 39 people from the dead! As Catholics we stand on the shoulders of giants when it comes to faith and like them we need to believe without doubting and continually depend on Him: the author and finisher of our faith. Some of my most amazing answers to prayer have involved buildings. Some time ago I was in Belfast, it was a Friday evening and I passed a very packed and noisy pub. I noticed a huge door leading to the inside of the pub, which was covered with lots of sectarian graffiti and swear words. I stopped, and in faith I lifted my hands up and prayed for a few minutes. A few hours later when I walked past the pub again, every bit of graffiti had gone from the door and it was painted white! Three months later the pub closed and is now a very nice wine bar. It's amazing what a prayer said in faith can achieve!

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We live in a 650 year old cottage and one of the bedroom doors would not close due to 'subsidence' (sinking) damage. I felt prompted to lift up my hands and pray in faith here too. A few weeks later I realised my door was "healed" and functioned perfectly!

Once you begin to see things happening there is no going back! Try building up your faith by studying the works of Jesus in the Gospels. Jesus tells us in Mark 5:36 "do not be afraid; just have faith".

Corporate faith

Last summer I spoke at the New Dawn Conference in the Czech Republic. I felt led by the Holy Spirit to build up the corporate faith of the people by reading out of the Gospels before the healing service. Around one in five of the Gospel stories tell of the healing ministry of Jesus and 727 verses (in the four gospels) detail the healings of mental illnesses, physical healings and the raising of the dead. The corporate faith of the people was amazing and many healings and deliverances took place on that day as their faith went to a new level. Many were 'Baptised in the Holy Spirit' and spoke in Tongues.

We (prayer group members & I) visit HMP Oakwood and HMP Norwich on a regular basis. We have faith to believe that not only will the captives be set free but they will be baptised in the Holy Spirit and activated in the gifting's in order to evangelise others in the prison system. By faith we decree and declare into the atmosphere what we will see before we even step into prison. On average we see about 80% of the inmates attending the service give their life to Jesus. We see many set free healed and delivered of the horrors of their pasts.

Faith is knowing who you are in Jesus Christ and the authority Jesus as given to each of us. It's stepping into that realm of expectancy knowing you have the backing of heaven behind you. Teresa of Avila says "You pay God a compliment by asking great things of Him." Jesus said 'Have faith in God' (Mark 11:22). We need to remember that our faith is in God alone and not in faith itself. Faith is an on-going, continual journey of growing in the fruit of faithfulness right to the very day we go home to glory. Then we will see him face to face; He will fill in the blanks and we will stand and say "O yeah, I get it now!"