

“Help My Unbelief”

Commentary for July 1, 2010 — “I am believing! Help my unbelief!”

This month’s article “Christian in Name Only” was written as an encouragement. I wrote it to encourage those who believe in Christ’s resurrection to take action and increase their faith, meaning your faith also. Of course you cannot “work up” faith, you must ask God to increase your faith through His Holy Spirit which will give you the motivation to love God and man even more. You must not stagnate. The "[July 2010 Newsletter](#)" gives an introduction to the subject.

“Help My Unbelief!”

These words were spoken by a father who appealed to Jesus for Him to cast out the demon that was tormenting, harming, and taking possession of his child, causing him to hurt himself, foam at the mouth, throwing him onto the ground. Jesus’ disciples were unable to cast out the demon (Mark 9:14–22). Jesus asked the boy’s father:

“How much time is it since this has come to him?’ Now he said, ‘From a little boy. And often it casts him into the fire also, and into waters, that it should be destroying him. But if you are in any way able, help us, having compassion on us!’

Now Jesus said to him, ‘Why the if? You are able to believe. All is possible to him who is believing.’ Straightway, crying, the father of the little boy said, with tears, ‘I am believing! Help my unbelief!’”

• *Mark 9:21–24, Concordant Version*

Jesus did so. He helped his unbelief and healed his son. You are God’s child and He is always willing to give you more faith. He delights in helping your unbelief. He always is eager to help you remove any doubts. If you do not have enough faith, He shall give you what you need. Ask Him for it:

“Be not you therefore like unto them [hypocrites who pray]: for your Father knows what things you have need of, before you ask him.”

• *Matthew 6:8*

Focus on the last phrase **“before you ask him.”** We are supposed to ask! Of course God knows what we need, but He wants us to ask Him for the things we need. Do it — now! Ask for the spiritual things you need now!

Remember Eliza Doolittle’s wastrel and drunken father from Bernard Shaw’s play *Pygmalion* when Professor Higgins asks what he wants? Mr. Doolittle replies: **“... I’m willing to tell you. I’m wanting to tell you. I’m waiting to tell you!”** God wants to give His spiritual gifts to His children, especially including an increased ability to have faith, to have belief, and to have more of His spirit:

- He is willing to give them to you.
- He is wanting to give them to you.
- He is waiting to give them to you.

He wants you to ask. Do so now. The apostle Paul suffered from what he termed **“a thorn in the flesh”** (1 Corinthians 12:7–10). He asked three times to be relieved or healed from whatever that condition was. God told him no, his present situation was to be endured and that God’s **“grace is sufficient”** for Paul. He limited Paul’s physical well being so that grace might abound. God always wants to give you more of His grace:

“Now God is able to lavish all grace on you, that, having all contentment in everything always, you may be superabounding into every good work.”

• 2 Corinthians 9:8, Concordant Version

The Unbelief of Paul?

Before the resurrected Jesus appeared to him the apostle Paul suffered from a condition of unbelief. Oh, he believed in God and strove to fulfill the Law of Moses, but he nonetheless acted in ignorance and unbelief. Paul committed his evil and sinful acts against the *ekklesia* of God when he did not believe in Christ's resurrection. Such belief in Christ's resurrection was necessary for Paul's salvation (and is necessary for everyone's salvation). That belief, that faith, is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8, 3:7). Read Paul's own words, in any translation you like:

“... who formerly was a calumniator and a persecutor and an outrager: but I was shown mercy, seeing that I do it being ignorant, in unbelief.

Yet the grace of our Lord overwhelms, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all welcome, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, foremost of whom am I. But therefore was I shown mercy, that in me, the foremost, Jesus Christ should be displaying all His patience, for a pattern [an example] of those who are about to be believing on Him for life eonian.”

• 1 Timothy 1:13–16, Concordant Version

God is patient with each of us. He will grant us not only grace and belief sufficient to be saved, but He is also willing to increase your faith, to help your unbelief so that you can love God and your neighbor as yourself. Your faith should increase (2 Corinthians 10:15) and not stagnate.

Peter discusses the progression of personal qualities that each Christian should develop:

“And beside this, giving all diligence [persistent and steady effort], add to your faith virtue; and to virtue [add] knowledge; And to knowledge [add] temperance; and to temperance [add] patience; and to patience [add] godliness; And to godliness [add] brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness [add] charity [agape, love].”

• 2 Peter 1:5–7

In this description of spiritual growth Peter says that faith brings forth virtue which creates a desire for more knowledge. It is a spiritual progression. These are things you should want to do as you grow to become a more mature child of God. The strength we need is supplied by God. Our job is to ask, so that God's strength will be given to us. God and Christ are pleased. You grow in grace and in knowledge as Peter commands (2 Peter 3:18). Your fellow man receives your “works” of love. Everyone benefits. (These are **NOT** works for salvation.)

“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever [for the eons of the eons]. Amen.”

• 1 Peter 4:10–11, New American Standard Version

As the apostle Paul encouraged Timothy, so each of you should be encouraged:

“Wherefore I put you in remembrance that you stir up the gift of God, which is in you by the putting on of my hands. For God has not given us the spirit of fear [timidity]; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

• 2 Timothy 1:6–7

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