

Manifesting Heaven on Earth

God gave me the topic of this sermon six or seven months ago. I knew that the next time I ministered, this would be the topic I would minister on. I think it's interesting how God timed this out. What I'm going to minister ties in well with what Pastor Neil shared last week.

What's the biggest issue you face in your life today? Is it a financial issue, health related problem, bad/difficult relationship, marital problems, job challenges, a sin issue. What's robbing you of your victory in Christ today? Now, imagine for a moment that I were to approach you and tell you that I have something that will empower you to successfully address any problem you face in life and I'm willing to give it to you free of charge. Now there's not anybody who doesn't want that in their life, but if I were to present that to people, most would think it too good to be true and blow me off. Well, here's the reality of the situation, what I want to give you, you already possess, and the truly amazing thing, it doesn't matter if you're the biggest sinner in the world or the most righteous saint, you have it right now where you are. You and I already have the answer to the issues we face in life.

Now here's a painful truth, if what I've said is true, and yet we're not overcoming in this life, then it would mean that we're the one's responsible for our failure. As one thinks this thing through, you begin to realize that we're failing because we lack knowledge about what God has done on our behalf. **(Story of Lady living in poverty)** Folks, much like this lady, there's way too many of us that are living below the standard that God has set for us in His Word and that's happening because we don't understand how to walk in what He's made available to us. As **Hosea 4:6** says, "My people perish for a lack of knowledge".

There are basically three groups of people here listening this morning:

1. Those who don't know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
2. Those who are born again but are living for the world. The riches and pleasures of this world are choking the word in your life. I read a book here recently call "Heaven is So Real" in which the author made a very interesting statement. She said that so many Christians, in reality, are functional atheists.
3. Those who are born again and pressing into God.

What I want to talk about this morning applies to all three groups. I am not here to condemn anyone this morning. My purpose this morning is three fold.

1. If you're here this morning and you don't know Jesus Christ, my prayer is that you'll hunger for him so much that'll you'll make Him lord of your life before you leave this place.

2. If you're here this morning but you find that the world is robbing you of your passion for God, I want you leaving here this morning with a burning desire to renew that intimacy between you and God.
3. Finally, I want you to understand that what you need in your life to walk in victory while on this earth, is already in your possession.

God has called us to be conquerors, over comers, ambassadors representing Him on this earth. There are so many people out there that need a touch from God, Christians and non-Christians. We automatically think of the lost person when we start talking about the power of God and it's ability to change lives but it has application to all of us. Show me a Christian who hasn't needed the power of God to show up in his life providing solutions to the issues he faces. That's what a personal testimony is all about. But the challenge to take the power of God to a lost and hurting world was not given to the unbeliever, but to the believer (**John 14:12**). We're suppose to be the one equipped to take His love and His power and transform the world we live in to His glory. Time is running short and Jesus is coming back for a spotless bride, a bride that's prepared to meet Him. Where are you at today???

Let's identify this gift. Turnover to **Romans 12:3**. **Ephesians 2:8-9** discusses the salvation experience.

The question then becomes, how do I apply faith? How do I unleash it's power to do these great things for the glory of God? Before we move into the rest of this message I want to share one other thought. As I was praying about 2007, I quickly received a phrase "**year of separation**". As I began to think and meditate on this there were two applications that came to mind.

1. There would be a separation in the church between those who are playing church and those who are going to fervently pursue God.
2. A separation of the believer from the things of this world. Their pursuit of God is going to be so strong that the riches and pleasures of this world are going to lose any hold they now have on us.

What can you accomplish through faith?

When the disciples asked Jesus how to pray, He taught them the Lord's prayer (**Matthew 6:9-15**) What Jesus did, He did through faith, and before He left this earth, He said we would do the same things. (**John 14:12, Mark 16:17-18**). These scriptures give us insight into what the standard is for a believer. Let's talk about faith.

Why is it important for us to understand faith?

1. If it's not of faith, it's sin: **Romans 14:23**
2. Salvation comes through faith: **Ephesians 2:8-9**
3. Justification comes by faith: **Galatians 2:16, Galatians 3:11, Galatians 3:24, Romans 1:17, Romans 3:28, Romans 5:1,**

4. You can't please God without faith: Hebrews 11:6
5. The power of God comes through faith: James 5:15
6. You inherit the promises of God through faith: Hebrews 6:12
7. Faith provides a defense: I Peter 5:9, Ephesians 6:16 (Shield of faith)
8. Faith overcomes the world: I John 5:4-5
9. You access grace through faith: Romans 5:2 Pastor Neil talked about grace last week. I'm adding to that this morning.
10. You purify your heart by faith: Acts 15:9
11. Righteousness comes by faith: Philippians 3:9, Romans 4:13, Romans 9:30

Since we have a measure of faith, how do we grow it?

There's a similarity between the physical man and the spiritual man here. In the same manner that your physical body has to have food to remain strong and healthy, faith has to be fed to remain strong and healthy. And just like your physical body can't be fed just anything to operate at peak efficiency, your faith can't be fed just anything to operate at peak efficiency. Scripture tells us that in **Romans 10:17**, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word". The Word of God is faith food. It has to be an integral part of your walk if you want to walk in the fullness of your faith. Ever wonder why there are so many other things that seem to pop up when you decide to set down and read the word, or listen to someone preach the word. That's why some of you had such a hard time coming to church this morning. There were half a dozen reasons the devil gave you to stay home this morning. Why? Because you're going to hear the word this morning. The devil hates the word and he'll do anything he can to keep you out of the word. He knows that word of God is the fuel that creates faith and it's faith that wins the victory.

"You will never defeat the devil without faith, and you'll never activate faith without the word" I remember while I was praying one day the Lord told me that great time spent in the word would produce great faith, little time spent in the word would produce little faith. All I have to do is look back on my life and I instantly recognize how true that is. Jesus gave us a very clear example of how important the word is when He came out of the wilderness after fasting for forty days and was tempted by the devil (**Luke 4:1-13**). Every temptation given by the devil was responded to with the word.

How do you apply faith:

Romans 3:23-27 Faith is a law, which means that faith operates within defined parameters. Let me point out a couple of things about laws.

1. Laws don't just define what you can't do. By defining what you can't do, they automatically define what you can do. Example: Speed limit.
2. When you obey the law, you reap the blessings of the law. If you chose to walk in disobedience, you reap the punishment of the law. (**Deutonomy 28**)
3. Some laws will supersede other laws once they're engaged. For example, God placed different physical laws in the earth that govern how this planet functions. Example: Law of Lift vs. Law of Gravity. The earth is rotating at a speed of approximately 1,000 miles per hour. What keeps you and I firmly rooted on this

earth is the gravity. When the Wright brothers discovered how to fly, what they really did was learn how to engage the Law of Lift. Bernoulli's Principle describes how the law of lift works. An interesting point needs to be made here. The Law of Lift has been in place since God created the earth. It wasn't until someone started pursuing the knowledge of how this law worked that they were able to unlock the power of this law and turn it into the blessing it was designed for from the beginning. One other thing worth noting here, when the Law of Lift stops working, the Law of Gravity automatically starts working. Same thing happens spiritually. There's the law of liberty, law of righteousness, law of faith, law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, law of sin and death. Turnover to **Romans 8:2**. When you stop walking in the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, the law of sin and death automatically takes over. What do you think happens when you stop walking in the Law of Faith?

Faith can be exercised in three different ways.

- Faith can be exercised by you for you (**Matthew 9:28-30 Two blind men healed, Mark 5:25-34 Woman with issue of blood, Matthew 8:5-13 Centurion's servant**) According to your faith, be it done for you.
- Faith can be exercised by you for someone else (**Acts 3:2-8 Peter praying for the lame man healed, Acts 5:15-16 Peter's shadow falling on people and healing them, Acts 19:12 Handkerchiefs from Paul**) We have this idea that when Jesus prayed for people, it was His faith that brought the healing. When you look closely at the different healings recorded you'll see how many times he credits the healing to their faith. This is one reason why praying for each other is so powerful. There are times when you need others in the Body of Christ to grab hold with you to fight the good fight of faith. Do you want an effective prayer life? Get the word in your heart and let everything you pray have it's foundation in the word. **John 15:7, I John 5:14-15. James 5:16** tells us that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.
- Faith can be exercised by others for you (**Mark 2:3-5 Sick man let down through the roof, Acts 9:37-41 Tabitha raised from the dead,**)

We're talking about applying your faith here. Let me give you a very easy benchmark to use when trying to determine where you're at with faith. "The things you truly believe in, you'll act on." We do this all the time in the natural realm. Example: Paychecks. Too many times when someone talks about faith we get glassy eyed and start getting real spiritual. Faith is a spiritual concept but it's application is carried out in the physical realm doing, in some instances, very down to earth physical things. In **James 2:14-22** we see the practicality of faith. Faith is designed to take the things of heaven and bring them into manifestation on the earth. That requires a partnership between the spiritual realm and the physical realm. Remember the Lord's prayer we talked about earlier.

Here's the reality of the situation. Jesus told us in **II Corinthians 13:5** to examine ourselves to see whether we're in the faith. When you start thinking this through you begin to realize that you're talking about a relationships, relationships that have

developed to the point that you'll act on information coming from that individual. You'll never get to that level of trust through a casual acquaintance. That level of trust comes when people spend time together and aggressively pursue the relationship. This principle plays out in the natural realm all the time and it produces good things. How much more does this work in the spiritual realm when we passionately pursue God?

To complete this process I need to address one final step. When you make the decision to walk by faith, the fights on !!! With faith being such a powerful force, you can bet the devil is going to do everything he can do to stop you from understanding how to walk in it. It's not something for us to fear. We've been given the victory in Christ. The devil is a defeated foe. He has to talk you and I out of our faith and he has several ways of doing that. I've labeled these as "faith destroyers".

1. **Sin**: **Romans 5:12, Romans 6:23, James 1:15**
2. **Disobedience**: **Ephesians 5:6, Colossians 3:6, Hebrews 2:2**
3. **Cares of this world** choke out the word. **Mark 4:19**
4. **Lack of knowledge**. **Hosea 4:6** Both **Ephesians 3:14-19** and **2 Peter 1:2-4** talk about the blessings that come through knowledge of Him.
5. **Traditions of man**. **Matthew 15:3-6, Mark 7:1-13** Traditions can have the opposite effect, and be a blessing according to **II Thessalonians 2:15**. How many things do we hold on to that really aren't scriptural at all – "God helps those who help themselves".
6. **Double mindedness** - doubting. **James 1:5-8**
7. **Asking amiss** - consuming it on your pleasures. **James 4:1-6** This speaks to motive of the heart. Why am I praying the way I'm praying? Example: Praying for neighbor's land.
8. **Unbelief**. **Matthew 13:53-58** Points out the danger of pegging somebody based on the past, **Mark 6:1-6, Matthew 17:14-21**.

Make the decision today to be all that God's called you to be. Run the race that's been set before you. Run with patience, run with purpose!!!