

Do you believe?

Matt. 17: 14-21

There are three kinds of believers:

1. Believers that believe God can do anything but don't believe He will. Their faith is discouraged when they pray and see no change.

2. Believers that believe God can do anything but don't believe they can do anything.

They see God as powerful but don't see that power in them. They assume supernatural things can happen for others but not for them in response to using their faith.

3. Believers that believe God can do anything and that they can do anything.

They believe what Paul said, that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. They also believe what Jesus says here, in verse 20, that nothing shall be impossible for them.

According to Jesus here, there are many things that can happen but don't, not because they are not God's will, but because we are in the wrong category of believing.

In this passage, Jesus makes two things clear. One, that nothing shall be impossible to us, and two, there is a reason some things don't happen. Here Jesus told them why, but we are not always told why. That does not mean that there is not a reason.

It also does not mean we should cease to believe. Instead, our faith must rest not in ourselves, but in Him. We are still to glorify Him, and when we do, we can still experience His power even when we don't see the answer we wanted.

## 2 Cor. 12: 7-10

Here we see another example of prayer that was not answered as expected, but was still answered. Paul had a thorn in the flesh, an infirmity of some kind. He prayed three times and Jesus responded, but not as expected. Jesus told him, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

As a result, Paul boasted in infirmities and even boasted in his other distresses, because the power of Christ rested on him. When Christ's power is present, we can handle anything victoriously. His grace really is sufficient for us.

So what do we do to make sure we're in the right category of believing?

1. We must believe what He says.

We are to stay in faith, not in doubt. Believe his promises. As we saw in Matt. 17: 20, if we have faith, nothing will be impossible for us.

2. We must speak what we believe.

In Mt. 21: 22 Jesus says we are to speak if we have faith, and when we do, mountains move. They may not move by Friday, but they will move. Jesus also said when we believe in prayer, we shall receive. Faith is always expressed in two ways, by what we believe and by what we say.

3. We must seek Him.

We are not to seek Him only because we want something from Him, but because we want Him. He is a rewarder of them that seek Him diligently (Heb. 11:6). Ultimately we should want Him more than anything else. If we really do, we won't lose our faith or passion for Him when we don't receive the things we asked for.

## Phil. 3: 7-14

The secret of Paul's success is in knowing what matters most. It's not our personal accomplishments, but in gaining Christ (v. 8), in being found in Him (v. 9), and in knowing Him (v. 10).

When this is the priority, He is given the place of honor in our lives that He deserves. When Jesus takes the wheel, He takes us where he wants us. It may not be an easy ride, but we'll get there victoriously, and He will be glorified.

In the meantime, we use our faith to press on in our purpose (v. 12), to reach forward and no longer look backwards (v. 13), and to press towards the mark, the upward call, the ultimate prize (v. 14).