

Daily Devotional Guide

Monday – Read Mark 11:22-23. This is a familiar saying from Jesus. Jesus' reference to faith moving mountains is also mentioned in Matthew 17:20 and Luke 17:6. Moving mountains is a metaphor for removing obstacles in our lives. Take some time today and think about the obstacles in your life that are preventing you from living the abundant life. Have you taken them to God in prayer and, in faith, asked God to remove them? There is power in prayer that gives us the ability to rise above any problem.

Tuesday – Read Mark 11:24. After reading this verse, you may think of TV preachers and hope hustlers quoting it to manipulate you into sending money. However, we should not allow a few bad apples to spoil the power of Jesus' words. The truth is our expectation and belief plays an important role in prayer. Remarkable things happen when we pray to God expecting an answer. Faith gives God permission to work in our lives. When it is released, the power of God moves and miraculous things occur. The key is understanding that what we are praying for must be in line with God's will and we must be willing to follow God's guidance.

Wednesday – Read Mark 11:25. Have you prayed to God for an answer and received no response? This verse may reveal to you why you have not received an answer. The biggest roadblock to the movement of God in our lives is bitterness, resentment and anger. There must be love in our hearts when we seek an answer from God. If you are harboring resentment in your heart, your first prayer is to ask God to help you release this poison. Someone in my Bible study reminded us that one way to do this is to pray for the person you are angry with. It is very difficult to stay mad at someone you are praying for.

Thursday – Read Hebrews 11:1-3. These verses give us a great definition of faith and they remind us that all the great figures of the Bible used the power of faith to do great things for God (read chapter 11). These verses convict us and ask us, "Do we really believe God can and will work in our lives?" Most people like the idea of God, but we do not worship an idea; we worship a living God who wants us to live life to the fullest.

Friday – Read Hebrews 11:6. This is a strong verse. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Think of it this way – isn't it easier for us to do things for people who believe in us? God is not some distant mechanical entity. God is a personal being that desires to be believed in just as much as a father wants his children to believe in him. Have faith in God today. God will never disappoint you.



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~ Living the Dream ~

The Little Secret that Makes a Big Difference

Sunday, January 23, 2011

Sermon by: Dr. Charley Reeb, Senior Pastor

Scripture Lesson: Mark 11:22-25, Hebrews 11:1-3, 6

Today, I'm going to share a secret with you that will solve any problem, help you rise above defeat, and turn your dreams into reality.

With this secret people have done extraordinary things. Abraham used the secret. Noah used the secret. Moses used the secret. David used the secret. Samuel used the secret. Jesus used the secret, and the Apostle Paul used it. John Wesley used the secret. And Billy Graham uses it. Every extraordinary person you know uses this secret. The only thing that separates you from these extraordinary people is this secret.

The funny thing about the secret is that it is so simple and so obvious that people just overlook it. Yet, the Bible mentions this secret 458 times. Jesus preached about it over 40 times and many just pass over it. However, the wise apply it.

What is the secret? I'm going to let the Bible tell you. First, I'm going to let Jesus tell you. Then I will share another passage that explains the secret. Many of you have heard these words before, but you have never taken them to heart (please read Mark 11:22-25 and Hebrews 11:1-3, 6).

The secret is faith! If more people realized what faith can do for them, more people would be eager to have more of it. Faith has incredible power that can turn an ordinary life into an extraordinary life. Faith is energy that emanates from God and becomes one of the greatest powers in the universe. Dr. Arthur Caliendo likes to say that "Faith power is God power." Faith in God makes people greater than any problem or obstacle. I love what Hebrews 10:29 says: "We are not those who shrink back and are

destroyed but of those who have faith and keep their souls."

Now, many may hear this message and think of hope hustlers and TV preachers who ask you to send money and return to you a prayer cloth. There is no doubt that there are those who use the language of faith to manipulate others for selfish purposes. But don't let the bad apples spoil the fruit of faith and the power of it. Bad theology does not negate the power of faith.

I have discovered that for most of us the problem is not our misuse of faith; our problem is that many of us don't have much faith at all! Faith gives God permission to work within us and sets God loose in our lives. You see, many believe in the idea of God. But we don't worship an idea; we worship a living God who wants to work in our lives. So, the question we must ask ourselves is, "Do I have faith in God? Do I expect God to work in my life?"

Many see God as some mechanical, distant entity that just keeps the universe running. Nothing could be further from the truth. God is a personal being who wants to be believed in. It is like when a child believes in a parent the parent is more motivated to work in the child's life. It is the same way with God. When we put our faith in God, God is charged to work in our lives. This is the power of faith! And Jesus says that all we have to do is have faith that size of a tiny mustard seed and we can move mountains. 1st Corinthians 2:9 says, "Eye has not seen or ear heard, nor has the human heart conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."

This morning I'm going to share with you what the power of faith can do for you and show you how to apply it. Before I begin, let me state two rules about the power of faith. The first rule is that whatever we ask God for in faith must be in line with God's will and God's revelation to us in Jesus Christ. The second rule is that we must be willing to follow God's guidance.

The Power of Faith Helps Us Solve Any Problem

Jesus says the most extraordinary thing in our text for today. Jesus says our faith can move mountains! Obviously, Jesus was using a metaphor. A mountain is an obstacle or problem in our lives. And it does not matter how big the problem is; if we have faith in God the problem can be solved.

Carl Joseph had this kind of faith. Carl was a high school linebacker in Madison County, Florida. Every year he broke records on sacks on the quarterback. He was so good they had to put two and three men on him. When he graduated, they retired his jersey. Well, big deal, right? It is a big deal when you only have one leg! When asked why he did it, Carl replied, "God told me I could when everyone told me I couldn't. God said, 'Carl, just make the one leg you have as strong as two legs.'"

Faith gives us the power to push through any problem. Faith also gives us the creativity to solve problems.

I remember reading a story about a manager of a coat factory in the mid-west. Thieves were breaking into this factory in the middle of the night with a truck and a special machine and stealing expensive coats off the racks. Before the police could respond to the alarm, the thieves would be long gone. The manager was very frustrated. But he decided to put his faith to use. He prayed that God would give him an answer to his problem. The answer came to him in the middle of the night. He woke up his wife and said, "It's the hangars!" He realized that the coats in the factory all hung in the same direction. All he had to do was stagger the coats by hanging every other one in the opposite direction. This would jam up the thieves. This is what he did, and it worked! The thieves broke in and when they tried to pull the coats off the rack, they pulled the enormous metal rack along with them. This jammed us their machine and the coats fell everywhere. They sped off and never came back! The power of the mind and faith!

Faith in God can help solve any problem. Whenever you have a problem, repeat these words to yourself several times a day, "God is with me. God is helping me. God is guiding me." And God will.

The Power of Faith Helps Us Rise Above Defeat

I don't believe in defeat. For those who have faith, failure is never final.

If you don't believe me, listen to this story! A farmer's donkey once fell down into a well. The poor animal just cried and cried. The farmer tried for hours to figure out what to do, but he couldn't. So, the farmer decided that the donkey was old and worn out and he should just bury him. He had friends come over and help him. They all grabbed a shovel and began to dump dirt on this poor donkey. At first, the donkey cried horribly, but, then, amazingly, it quieted down.

A few shovels later, the farmer looked down and was astonished at what he saw. With every shovel of dirt that hit his back, the donkey was doing something amazing. He was shaking it off and taking a step up. As the farmer's neighbors continued to shovel, the donkey kept shaking it off and taking a step up. Pretty soon everyone was amazed as the donkey stepped up over well and trotted off.

Life is going to shovel dirt on you. The secret to getting out of the well is to use the power of faith to shake it off and take a step up. If we have faith in God, God will use our troubles as stepping stones. So, don't give up! Shake it off and in faith take a step upward. Romans 8:28 reminds us of this truth by saying, "All things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose."

These words came from a man who did not believe in defeat – the Apostle Paul. You may recall when Paul and Silas were locked in a dark prison cell together. They had faith beyond their circumstance. So, they held a revival meeting in the prison, sang hymns, preached to each other and converted the guard. God shook the foundations of the prison, tore apart their shackles, and flung wide the prison doors. They were free!

The Apostle Paul would have agreed with the poet Edgar Guest who wrote:

Somebody said that it couldn't be done,
But, he with a chuckle replied
That "maybe it couldn't," but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.

So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.
Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one has done it";
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat,
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.
There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure;
There are thousands to point out to you one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you.
But just buckle it in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start to sing as you tackle the thing
That "couldn't be done," and you'll do it.
-Edgar Guest

I want to give you a powerful verse to repeat to yourself when you feel defeated. It is Philippians 4:13 - "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Repeat that to yourself day and night and you will rise above defeat.

The Power of Faith Makes Our Dreams Come True

I believe in dreams. I believe many of our dreams are a gift from God. God wants us to dream big and wants to help us make our dreams come true.

The irony is that as kids we were told to dream big. But once we become adults we don't dream big anymore. To that, I say, "Bologna!"

Psychologist Gay Hendricks tells of a friend, Jerry, who always had the dream of being a doctor. Well, mountains came into his life and he believed he was not smart enough to be a doctor. Family pressures pushed in on him and he became a lawyer. Jerry was miserable because he really wanted to be a doctor. In his mid-forties, Jerry had a crisis and decided that the only way he would be fulfilled in his life would be by becoming a doctor. So, in faith, he applied to medical schools, and no medical schools in America would take him. He didn't give up. In faith, he applied to schools outside of America and he found one in Holland that had an opening. In fact, they had an opening in six weeks! There was only one problem. All of the lectures were in Dutch!

Jerry did not lose his faith. He pressed on by studying and speaking Dutch eighteen hours a day for six weeks! When he attended his first lecture, he took notes in Dutch! He started his own medical practice in his mid-fifties and became a respected physician in his field into his 80's. Don't tell me the power of faith cannot make dreams come true!

So, how can you use the power of faith to solve any problem, rise above defeat, and make your dreams come true? I hand you the key. It is three powerful words: **Prayerize, Visualize, and Realize.** Pray to God, and make sure what you want is in line with God's will and you are willing to do whatever God wants you to do to make it happen. Once this is settled, have faith that God heard you and will give you whatever you need to make it happen. Next, visualize yourself solving the problem or living the dream. Picture yourself in faith doing what it is you are praying for. Finally, realize, which means to do your part and take appropriate action toward your goal. Faith together with action will set things in motion and bring the answer to your prayer to you.

Carlina White realized her dream. She was in the news this week. 23 years ago she was abducted as a baby by someone posing as nurse. They never found her or her kidnapper. Carlina grew up in her kidnapper's home, always suspicious of her so called family. She just never felt right about who she was living with.

Carlina grew up and had a baby of her own all the while knowing deep inside that she did not belong to the people who raised her. One day she checked a missing children's web-site and came upon a picture that looked just like her own daughter. She called the hot-line and said, "I don't know who I am." The photo connected her to her real mother, Joy White. Carlina said she felt born again when she was reunited with her mother. Carlina's mother, Joy, hugged her daughter and exclaimed, "Praise Jesus, Halleluiah!"

I know a lot of people who have been kidnapped, not literally, but emotionally and spiritually. Has doubt and fear kidnapped you? Has doubt and fear kidnapped your dreams? God wants you back! You won't believe the hugs! Have faith in God. He believes in you.

Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God. And you watch what happens. Amen.