



# Fatherly Talks

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**Johann Melchizedek Peter**

# Fatherly Talks 4

**Devotional Series**  
**4.01 to 4.24**

Johann Melchizedek Peter

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# PREFACE

This fourth series of Fatherly Talks cover areas of vision and faith. They cover practical areas of exercising faith and summarize much of the doctrine of faith but presented in a devotional reading.

Hebrews 11:6 says that without faith it is impossible to please God. While there has been much teaching coming forth from the word of faith movement on faith, there has not been sufficient balance given in the practical aspects of exercising faith. These series of devotional talks seek to give balance to the message of faith and brings forth the best concise definitions and principles of faith in the Christian walk.

May the Lord increase His faith in each of your lives and cause our walk to be pleasing to Him always.

Johann Melchizedek Peter

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# Fatherly Talk 4.01

## Faith Series:

### The Importance of Dreams and Visions

Dearly Beloved

A person without food just experiences hunger but a person without a dream or a vision is without hope. People lose their will to live when they lose their dreams and visions. People without food or money will still find the way to live so long as their dreams and visions are burning within them but rob them of their dream and vision, they become suicidal. For vision gives purpose and fires up the will to do more than just merely pass time on the earth.

It can be noted that children and young people are always filled with dreams and hopes. For them, it means more than life which is why when a dream or hope is taken from them many of them commit suicide. Young adults start off with fresh dreams and visions but as the reality of life sets in with some broken dreams and visions, they become disoriented; some becoming permanently depressed while others become suicidal. Older people have only two roads, they either allow their disappointments and broken dreams to set in and become grumpy old people or they become more visionary and blaze the way for the next generation to dream more dreams and see more visions.

Dreams and visions arise from hope and hope is the ground and substance from which faith arises; for faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). If you take away hope, faith has nothing from which it can produce spiritual substance. From the Spiritual World, we need to supply our side of the spiritual substance (which, of course, comes from God) for the angels of every heavenly sphere to work together with us to achieve

a completed work on earth. The things that are visible are made of things which are invisible (spiritual substance) (Hebrews 11:3).

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17). Faith is energized by love (Galatians 5:6). Faith is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8). We are the ground upon which God sows His word (Mark 4:1-20). The whole picture is that faith is the result of the sunlight of God's love shining upon the seed of His word, nourished by the water of His Spirit in us; we only need to supply the good ground upon which faith can take root. The way to supply the good ground is to remain true and meditate upon the hopes (dreams and visions) which God has created within each of us.

Dreams and visions are more important than food, clothing and shelter. They are the spiritual resonance, the spiritual temperature in which the seed of God's Word can grow within us.

1. We were all born with a vision and a dream.

Every one of us has a purpose and a will to fulfil (Psalm 139:16). We can even say that God had a dream (a vision, a mission) for each of us when He created us. That dream that God gave us is written in our spiritual DNA. At times when we are subconscious or in creative free mode thinking, that dream or vision rises to the surface of our consciousness. All dreams and visions from God do not consist just of natural temporal things. It is our fleshliness that reduces it to selfish natural things alone (nothing wrong with natural blessings when they are part of a bigger spiritual scheme). All dreams and visions always involve the love of God and love for people and being a blessing to one or too many. The natural things involved are only part of the road to be a better blessing to others. Every one of us was created for good works (Ephesians 2:10).

2. When a dream or vision is broken or unfulfilled, it can mean four things:

a. We tried to fulfil it in the wrong time.

Moses knew within himself that God had chosen him for the special purpose to deliver the Israelites. He lived a privileged life and, though a Jew, had all the upbringing of Egyptian royalty (he was mistaken as an Egyptian – Exodus 2:19). He slew the Egyptian taskmaster thinking that the Israelites would know that by his hand, God would deliver them (Acts 7:25). He was forty years too early and his self-pride and strength had to first be brought to naught. God was not pleased with flesh trying to do His work.

b. We tried to fulfil it in the flesh.

Abraham had waited for a long time for an heir. So did Sarah. Probably at the lowest time in both their lives and seeing the time passing, Sarah suggested that Abraham produce a child through Hagar (Genesis 16:1-4). It only produced more disharmonies within their home until Hagar and Ishmael were sent away. The end never justifies the means. In modern movies, sometimes the hero or heroine wrestles with the problem of killing one innocent person (who might not have done a potential crime yet) to save thousands. The moral correctness is that the act of killing even one, will make the hero or heroine themselves a murderer that will never solve the eternal problem.

Becoming a dog to drive another dog away only causes us to be reduced to a bigger dog (since the bigger dog drives the smaller one away). The problem never goes away. Only overcoming evil by good can that eternal problem of evil go

away. God's Will must be done by God's power. Anything less demeans God.

- c. We tried to fulfil it with the wrong method.

David learned a hard lesson that one cannot improve upon God's method. He tried to make a cart to carry the ark and innocent people die (2 Samuel 6:3). It doesn't matter how new or flashy our methods may be, it will never be good enough. And no matter how angry we get at God for not accepting our sacrifice (the Cain syndrome), God is still God and we His creation will know less than Him (Genesis 4:5; 2 Samuel 6:8). Until we humble our pride and know that God knows more than us, and that He is smarter than us, we will never learn this lesson.

- d. We misinterpret the dream or vision.

Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which God gave him to explain his place in the history of empires (Daniel 2:1-49). After Daniel interpreted it and explained that he was the head of gold, he became proud and built himself a golden idol (Daniel 3:1). He grew in his pride until God had to bring him to nothing (Daniel 4:32). He was like an insane man for seven years and if not for Daniel, he would have lost his entire empire. Paul's vision of going forth to Jerusalem was nearly cut short by people who misinterpreted their spiritual sensation of danger for Paul in Jerusalem (Acts 21:4, 12-14). Wrong interpretation will result in wrong application. Many sincere Christians have misinterpreted their own dreams and visions and have only created their own disappointments and failures.

3. When God speaks and gives His word in a dream or vision, it will always come to pass.

We have to line up with God in order for the dreams and visions that He gave us to come to pass. There is a balance that we need to keep. We must be desirous of the dream and vision coming to pass without becoming anxious and at the same time we must be willing to let go of the dream and vision allowing it to grow and come to pass by the hand of God (with some obedience from our part). Some dreams like Joseph's can never come to pass without extreme circumstances that God alone can permit and allow (Genesis 37:1-11). The road of righteousness is the only way to fulfil God's dream and vision (Genesis 39:21). If we fall into sin and wrongdoing, the dream or vision will be postponed until we return to walk the right path again. The gifts and callings of God are without repentance (Romans 11:29). This means that God never takes away what He has given us. The moment we walk with Him, it would be as if the time lost never occurred and God restores all things through the blood of Jesus Christ.

4. Those who stand against the dreams and visions of the Holy Spirit will be destroyed; those who stand with the dreams and visions of the Holy Spirit will be blessed.

Jesus is the stone which grinds to powder everything which is in its way (Matthew 21:42-44). Everything which is not built upon God will be shaken and removed (Hebrews 12:27-28). When you are doing the work of God and walking in His Will, do not fear men, organizations or demons. For those who reject you, reject Christ and they will account for it in the day of judgment (Matthew 10:40). When the apostle Paul opposed the church and persecuted those who believed in Christ, Jesus

finally warned him that he was persecuting Christ and kicking against the goads (Acts 9:5). The most powerful place anyone on earth can be is to be right in the centre of God's Will. For he who opposes those doing God's Will opposes God. And who can stand against God? If God is for you, who can be against you? (Romans 8:31). Yes, indeed, blessed are those who bless us and cursed are those who curse us for the blessings of Abraham are upon those who walk in the will of Christ. And every tongue that rises against those who walk in the will of God will be condemned (Isaiah 54:17). This is indeed the heritage of those who serve God and walk in His will.

Beloved, what is your dream and vision? When the Holy Spirit comes, dreams and visions are His language (Acts 2:17). For those of young ones, nurture the dream and vision. Let it grow within you and do not let any educational institution, or organization or man or woman steal it from you. For those older ones and experienced in life, who have seen your share of sorrows and laughter, do you still remember your dreams and visions? Don't let the bitterness of life take away the substance of hope that faith can bring into your life. For to dream is to see your life from God's view point and to visualize is to allow the creative work of the Holy Spirit to inspire you and strengthen you. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). And since faith is the substance of things hoped for, it also means that without hope you cannot have the faith that pleases God. And without hope there is no more creative inspiration to bring forth the dreams and visions that God has programmed into your spiritual DNA.

The story of every life which impacts this planet begins in a dream. The power of every life that changes this world is inspired by a vision. Without a vision we will perish. But with a vision, there is nothing in this life that can stop you. All things are possible for those who

believe. Believe in your dreams; believe in your visions. This world was made rich by those who had dreamed great dreams before us. The next generation will be impacted by the dreams that we dream now.

## Fatherly Talk 4.02

### Faith Series: The Invisible Spirit Realm

Dearly Beloved

The most outstanding faith chapter in the whole Bible is Hebrews chapter 11. No sermon of faith should be preached until one has thoroughly studied Hebrews chapter 11 in its entirety. Hebrews 11:1 is the only verse in the bible that defines what faith is. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Last week we talked about the importance of dreams and hopes – the fertile ground for the formation of the substance of faith. This week we focus on faith as “the evidence of things not seen.” The Greek word for the word ‘evidence’ is the word *elenkos* translated as ‘reproof’ in 2 Timothy 3:16 (a sort of proof or evidence used for correction of errors). The verb form of the same word (*elenko*) has been translated as ‘rebuke’ (1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:13; 2:15; Hebrews 12:5; Revelation 3:19 – with the sense of a rebuttal of errors taking place through proof or evidence), as ‘reproved’ (John 3:20; Ephesians 5:13; 2 Timothy 4:2 – with a sense of the correction of errors through evidence provided), as ‘convict or convinced’ (John 8:9, 46; 1 Corinthians 14:24; Titus 1:9; James 2:9 – with a sense of an inner conviction or as in John 16:8 a conviction by the Holy Spirit Himself).

From the above verses, it is clear that faith is the evidence, the proof, the conviction of things not seen. Faith deals with the invisible realm (rather the spiritual realm). According to the Bible, the invisible realm is that which is permanent (2 Corinthians 4:18) for the things which are seen (physically visible) are made of things which are not seen (the invisible spirit realm) (Hebrews 11:3). The first and foremost fact is that anyone who wants to walk in faith must learn to walk in this invisible realm. If one wants to see it and feel it before believing, then

faith is no longer required. It is when the 'physical visibility' of the object or answered prayer is not yet manifested nor visible that faith is required. Since faith is obviously dealing with the invisible realm, it should be obvious that one does not rely on the five natural physical senses to gain evidence of things invisible – one will not find it.

One will have to rely on the inner senses of the heart for therein lies the evidence, proof, and conviction of things not seen. Natural people find it hard to exercise faith because they are too reliant on their physical senses. Yet in their daily lives, many people believe in or use things they do not see – radio and TV waves, UV or infrared light, electrons and sub-atomic particles, air, oxygen, etc. There is within every human heart an ability to discern the invisible realm of the Spirit. Something within the conscience of each person is a sense of right and wrong. Something within the heart of each person is the ability to visualize, to imagine things not yet made. Something within the heart and mind of each person is the ability to form thoughts and ideas which are invisible to another person until they are expressed through words or actions. Faith deals with these invisible senses of conviction, visualisation, imagination, thoughts and ideas. It should be obvious to all that these inner senses take shape and form growing from thoughts, ideas, imaginations, visualisations, convictions, etc.

Indeed, the Bible considers thoughts, ideas and imaginations as real living objects. The flood of Noah was pronounced not just because of the actions of men but also because of the imaginations of men (Genesis 6:5 – Hebrew *yetzer*). The new generation of Israelites before the crossing over to Canaan was warned about the inclination and imagination of their hearts (Deuteronomy 31:21 – Hebrew *yetzer*). Isaiah speaks of the *yetzer* as a 'thing made' (Isaiah 29:16). Jesus said that if one lusts, one has already committed adultery in the heart (Matthew 5:28). And if one is angry, one has already committed

murder in the heart (Matthew 5:22). Paul speaks about the weapons of our warfare as pulling down strongholds and bringing every thought subject to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Thoughts are real and thoughts are concrete things in the Spirit realm. There are many schools in the Spirit World and among the many things taught to those who are freshly new to the Spirit World in heaven is that thoughts are real and concrete in the Spiritual realm. They are the very essence of existence (the physical world is no more; for we will be receiving a spiritual body in Christ – 1 Corinthians 15:44 – one responsive to every lightness of hint of a thought). In the Spiritual World, one can travel from one end of God's creation to the other by mere thoughts. Thoughts are powerfully creative and the very force of the Spiritual World (used for communication, creation, transportation, etc.). It is only in this earth physical plane that thoughts do not seem to be instantly translated into force.

Thoughts take time to be converted into physical forces by means of physical scientific laws or inventions harnessing them. Just because there is a time gap between what is thought and what is created or invented does not mean that it is not important. If you trace the rise of mankind and civilization, it is the ideas and thoughts of mankind that have brought mankind onto a more civilized plane of existence – inventions, concepts, understandings, etc. And it is also the dark human thoughts that have brought mankind to the brink of annihilation of one another. Thoughts are still powerful in this physical earth. An idea can change and revolutionize the whole world. Although the sword can kill, the pen is still mightier than the sword for another life can take on the idea of the man killed, and that idea can grow and grow until it changes all of society. Empires, nations, dictators and tyrants have tried to subjugate fellow humans, but they have never been able to stem the tide of a good idea or a revolutionary principle discovered. Human physical lives can last

only for a defined earthly time, but ideas and thoughts which are powerful live on in the minds and hearts of others after the original thinker has passed on. Even tyrants and opposers of good ideas will die physically and their oppression and suppression overturned by successive generations. Indeed, we can say that this whole world is being transformed and changed by the ideas and thoughts of men and women, albeit at a slower physical pace than the spiritual world.

The force of faith works within our hearts and our minds forming thoughts, ideas, visions, revelations on the canvas of our reasoning and imaginations. Have you ever been consumed by an idea? Well, faith is being consumed by an idea or thought or word that originates from God and the Holy Spirit and from His Word. It can be something to do with natural life, soul life or spiritual life but it always becomes a good transformation factor in human lives. Every good and perfect gift comes from God above (James 1:17). Having been to the Spiritual World experientially, I can truly say that every good human thought, every good human invention, everything that has blessed human kind whether naturally or spiritually, has first originated in the spheres of the Spiritual World and been transmitted (by thoughts, words, ideas by the Holy Spirit and angels) to any human being who is tuned to receive them. Human race is not that smart as to think or invent things by themselves without help from invisible angels and the Holy Spirit.

Many Christians have spiritualized faith so much that they do not realize that it applies to every area of this earthly life, both physical and spiritual. The bible is clear that without faith it is impossible to please God and that what is not of faith is sin (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 14:23). Since every Christian is to please God in whatever profession of their lives (not just ministry life), it should be obvious that every aspect of the Christian life requires the force of faith working

(otherwise we will not be pleasing God). Many have applied faith only to the things prayed for or to spiritual things. The Lord requires that we live each day by the force of faith. That force of faith flows to us every day through the ideas, thoughts and words that God imparts to us each day. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word (*rhema* – spoken word) of God (Romans 10:17). God speaks every day to His children although we might not recognize His voice. His voice flows through the good thoughts that we receive each day. And daily as we meditate on passages from the bible, it helps us tune to this flow of thoughts that He releases from heaven to His creation. As we flow in this stream of thoughts that originate from heaven like a light wave from God's throne, we receive individualized applications of them for our own lives.

This individualized flow of thoughts affects our innermost goals and life principles (life principles are the code and ethics by which each human being lived their lives). It affects our understanding and perception of the world and people around us (Yes, we are blinded by our own thoughts and perceptions – it causes one not to receive or perceive that which is Truth because we have adhered to wrong teaching and lies). It affects our inner convictions and ultimate goals of our lives. It is the very force that directs our desires and even our prayers. This flow of thoughts affects us in the same way that the Word of God affects us (for they are always in synchrony – which is why it is important to read the Bible); it pierces our inward being dividing what is of the soul from what is of the spirit, it discerns and searches our very thoughts and intentions of the heart differentiating it like joints and marrow (Hebrews 4:12). Whenever it strikes a chord, we hear the inner music of love, peace and joy in our hearts. And this inner music of the fruit of the Spirit energizes the true faith which propels our life forward in a mighty way (Galatians 5:6).

Like a plant that just needs sunlight, good soil and water, every human being should just turn on and tune in to this flow of thoughts (like the rays of the sun coming to the earth) that is freely available to all. Like a plant that needs sunshine, the human soul that is down and discouraged merely needs to bask in the warm sunshine of God's love and thoughts. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts and it can cause us to ascend to the highest realm where your vision will be restored like that of an eagle's. If your spiritual eyes are so blind that you cannot see the sun of God's love, then at least open your other senses to feel and accept the warm rays of God's loving thoughts just like the blind man who cannot see the sun but at least can feel the warmth of the sun's rays on his skin. Through time as your inner spirit adjusts to the sunshine of God's thoughts and love, your spiritual eyes will be open, and you will receive direct from God the revelation of His love and care for you.

Open your heart to God's love. Open your mind to God's thoughts. Open your life to His promptings. For we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:16). And the life which we now live, we live by the faith that comes from the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us (Galatians 2:20). He is the Author and the Finisher of your faith (Hebrews 12:2). He is the one who places faith in your heart through the gift of His words that He whispers into your heart. Words which are especially tailored and individualized for you and you alone. Since faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word (Romans 10:17), when we lack faith it is not because we did not have faith, rather we did not receive nor hear the whispers of His word and voice speaking to our inner heart. When you hear Him, you will have faith. And if you find it hard to hear Him, it is because you have not quietened your heart to hear Him. Take your attention away from all the other voices of self and the world; and you will always hear Him. His voice is always the voice of love and not condemnation. For you

are His child whom He loves as much as He loved Jesus (John 17:23).  
Imagine how much He loved Jesus, now imagine that the same love  
is granted to you! Amen.

## Fatherly Talk 4.03

### Faith Series: Understanding the Process of Faith

Dearly Beloved

Union with Christ is the beginning, the middle and the end of all of this Christian life. When we are born again, we begin the walk of union with Christ (He in us). As we grow we begin to see the benefits of the union of life in Christ, and as we mature in later years we begin to see the greater fullness of us being in Him. Although there are many aspects of life, love, wisdom, etc. which we can attribute to this growth in union relationship with Christ, we have just enough time to speak of one aspect of it – growing in faith. Much has been taught about faith in Christendom but we need to understand clearly, in summary, the whole process of faith taking place. This is of vital importance for without faith we cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6). Thus, every Christian must be able to understand and outline the ABCs of faith at all times just like a kindergarten child should be able to recite his ABCs and 123s. To ensure that every one of us has this foundational understanding of faith (nothing to be taken for granted), we outline the process of faith in this fatherly talk.

In teaching people God's kind of faith, we need to emphasize that faith does grow. Jesus speaks of faith as a mustard seed (Matthew 17:20; Luke 17:6). Jesus in His preaching has emphasized that the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, small in its beginning but growing into a mighty tree which can shelter the birds of the air (Matthew 13:31; Mark 4:31; Luke 13:19). It is with this background of understanding what a mighty tree the mustard seed can become that Jesus spoke of faith being like a mustard seed. And even when it is the size of a mustard seed, it still can move mountains. A little one

shall become a thousand and a small one shall become a nation for the Lord shall hasten it in its time (Isaiah 60:22). It is part of the blessing of Abraham that kings shall be part of his seed (Genesis 17:6; Galatians 3:13-14). In Christ we are all kings and priests (Revelation 1:6). Although faith is a gift of the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ to us, the seed of faith needs to grow in quality and in quantity within us until it becomes 'our' faith.

Adjectives are added to faith that shows the quality and quantity of faith:

- |                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Great faith             | Matthew 8:10; 15:28; Luke 7:9 |
| 2. Little faith            | Matthew 6:30; 14:31           |
| 3. No faith                | Mark 4:40                     |
| 4. Full of faith           | Acts 16:18                    |
| 5. Mutual faith            | Romans 1:12                   |
| 6. Not being weak in faith | Romans 4:1                    |
| 7. Strong in faith         | Romans 4:20                   |
| 8. Word of faith           | Romans 10:8                   |
| 9. Same spirit of faith    | 1 Corinthians 4:13            |
| 10. Faith of Jesus Christ  | Galatians 3:22                |
| 11. Unity of the faith     | Ephesians 4:13                |
| 12. Joy of faith           | Philippians 1:25              |
| 13. Work of faith          | 1 Thessalonians 1:3           |
| 14. Breastplate of faith   | 1 Thessalonians 5:8           |
| 15. Faith grow exceedingly | 2 Thessalonians 1:3           |
| 16. Unfeigned faith        | 2 Timothy 1:5                 |
| 17. First faith            | 1 Timothy 5:12                |
| 18. Good fight of faith    | 1 Timothy 6:12                |
| 19. Sound in the faith     | Titus 1:13                    |
| 20. Precious faith         | 2 Peter 1:1                   |
| 21. Most holy faith        | Jude 20                       |

The above sample of Scriptures on faith prove irrevocably that the gift of faith that we receive from the Lord Jesus Christ can produce a myriad of effects upon us and can be nurtured and grown within us. We need to somehow trans-mitigate the gift of the faith of Jesus Christ into our faith. When we physically eat food, our bodies convert the food we eat into a part of our body, similarly when we receive the word and the work of faith from Jesus, we need to digest it spiritually until it becomes a part of our spiritual being. Faith is a spiritual force which needs to be absorbed spiritually (1 Corinthians 4:13). The quality and level of faith we develop depends upon how we respond to the gift of faith that the Holy Spirit quickens within us.

In essence, the first beginning of faith is the discovery of what God has promised in Christ for us; the reception of which produces that same faith within us of what Christ has done for us – Christ in us. Faith goes through its typical cycle of hearing, believing, receiving, seeing, acting and final manifestation of the object of faith. In the process, we are transformed and changed. We need to change within in order to change without (our external circumstances). The proportion in which we change within will be the same equal proportion in which we change the external. This process of internalised change is effected by the growth of the seed of faith within us.

1. Our thoughts change from unbelief to belief in God's promised word.
2. Our inner vision changes from pictures of doom to pictures of hope.
3. Our thinking patterns change from depression to joy (the joy of faith).

4. After some time, our vocabulary and speech become transformed in line with our hope and belief system.
5. A spiritual 'pregnancy period' results where our spirit begins to feel the reception of the conviction and substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1).
6. Spiritual forces begin to work upon the physical external circumstances as we hold on to seeing and confessing of those things which be not as though they were (Romans 4:17).
7. The spiritual rest of faith results and finally, in the fullness of time, the physical manifestation takes place.

Once we have received the word of faith or a prophecy of faith specifically for our lives, we must allow the process of faith to take place within us. What Jesus authored within us through His word of faith needs to be nurtured in the fertile ground of our lives for it to grow. Abraham, who is the father of faith (Romans 4:16), outlines the process (Romans 4:18-25) for us as follows:

1. He spiritually hoped against contrary natural hope. To achieve this process, God had him visualising the sand and the stars as His children (Genesis 13:16; 15:5). God especially asked him to 'walk through the length and breadth of the physical land' especially asking him to 'lift up your eyes and see.' God specially escorted Abraham outside of his tent to look up at the stars and see them as his children. This special emphasis teaches the great importance of visualization in the beginning of faith. As taught in many of my sermons on faith, Abraham came out of the land of Ur at the age of 75 and when he was 99, God changed his name from Abram to Abraham. Giving a few years between the time God spoke to him about visualization after he came out to the time that God changed his name, we could say

that the proportion of visualization to confession is at least in the minimum ratio of 20:1. (at least 20 years of visualisation took place before changing his confessed name). In other words, you would do 95% visualization of the word of faith to 5% confession of the word of faith (200 is to 10 divided by 2). In fact if you average the reception of the command to walk through the land earlier and use a round off figure, the ratio could be 25:1 (assuming that it started when Abraham was 75 and name change took place at 99 inclusive of the actual year count). Visualization is the key to allowing the growth and strengthening of faith within us.

2. Abraham was NOT weak in faith by NOT considering his infertile body nor the deadness of Sarah's womb. There are some things we should do and there are some things which we should not do. The best environment to nurture the growth of faith in our lives is to never, never, ever look nor consider the natural impossibilities. Faith is the key spiritual instrument to work in the impossible realm, if we keep considering the impossibilities of the natural limiting laws, we will never have the faith to move into the realm of the impossible. Jesus specifically says that nothing shall be impossible for us when we have faith even as a mustard seed (Matthew 17:20). The converse would be that all things are possible to him who believes (Mark 9:23).
3. We need to NOT waver at the promise of the word of faith (*rhema*) which we have received from God by being strengthened in faith and giving glory to God. This means the constant thanksgiving and praise and worship of faith being offered up to God. We should by faith continually offer up to God the sacrifice of praise for that which we have received

within but not yet manifested without (Hebrews 13:15). There are, of course, varying levels of conviction and assurances but we are to allow this growth process of visualization and thanksgiving with praise and worship day by day until we reach the full assurance of faith (Hebrews 10:22). This full assurance of faith can only come as all doubts and condemnation of sin is removed by the blood of Jesus and the entrance into the holy of holies (Hebrews 10:19-22). It is a process by itself (a process within a process) and one should not be impatient but allow the word, the blood and the Spirit to work within us for the transformation within which effects the transformation without (outside circumstances).

The phrase 'strengthened in faith' implies the day to day process of the growth in the quality and quantity of faith – like a muscle growing stronger as we daily exercise. No one expects an overnight muscular change to the physical body over just one physical exercise. It is the daily and gradual exercise of the physical body over weeks, months and years that gives the physical body its healthy shape and size. Similarly, our spiritual man is exercised and strengthened in the spiritual muscular aspects of visualization, thought life, spoken word and thanksgiving with praise and worship. Take time each day to visualize and confess the Word of God with thanksgiving and worship to God. (Sorry, no short cuts – it is a walk with God and not a short cut to answered prayers).

4. Finally Abraham was fully convinced that what He had promised, He would also perform (Romans 4:21). From the references in the Scriptures 'that it was accounted to him as righteousness' we know that this took place in Genesis 15 (Romans 4:22; Genesis 15:6). Yet, we do see Abraham falter

when he had Ishmael (Genesis 16) and also when he first laughed in unbelief (Genesis 17:3, 17). Like the man with the possessed son, there exists belief and unbelief within those seeking to have great faith (Mark 9:24). How can this be possible some of you might say? Well, as long as there is a soul part within us and a spirit part within us, there is always a possibility of the spirit part believing while the soul part is still in unbelief and doubt. For that reason, the possibility of double-mindedness is a reality (James 1:6-8). There is a mind of the Spirit and a mind of the soul (and of course, the brain of the physical body). Leaving aside the relationship of the brain of the physical body to the mind of the soul (which is another topic of discussion), we need to know that there is an inner knowing and conviction that arises out of our spirit which is different from the knowing and conviction of the soul mind. Without going into all the details of the mind of the spirit versus the mind of the soul (Romans 8:5-6), all we need to do is to know that the constant and daily process of meditation, visualization, thanksgiving with praise and worship to God causes a strengthening of the spirit man such that the soul mind will begin to be in harmony with the mind of the spirit. In the depths beyond consciousness (sub-conscious and super-conscious), the word of God is separating our soul mind from the spirit mind, purifying, renewing, establishing, discerning, sharpening and strengthening in ways beyond our understanding like the way the marrow in our bones produces life-giving blood cells (Hebrews 4:12).

We don't have to do too much thinking and rationalisation but we do have to allow all the processes of faith to take place within us and in time, the fullness of the assurance and conviction of faith will take place naturally.

The above is a summary of the process of faith that should help each of you know what is taking place from the very first time that the seed of faith comes into your heart through a personal word from the Lord or a word of prophecy to you. Allow Jesus to be the Author and Finisher of faith within you (Hebrews 12:2). As the apostle Paul writing to Timothy exhorted him in his walk, so I paraphrase his instructions to each of you as follows (1 Timothy 4:12-15):

Let no one despise your physical or spiritual youth, but be an example to everyone in word, in deed, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity; give attention to the word of faith and the specific rhema or promises that you have received personally or by prophecy in mediation, in visualization, in confession, in thanksgiving, praise and worship for in doing so you will demonstrate the salvation of the Lord within you and to those who are around you.

# Fatherly Talk 4.04

## Faith Series:

### The Importance of Having Faith Eyes

Dearly Beloved

Last week we saw how important visualising is in the walk of faith with Abraham being told to see the sand and stars as his descendants for at least 20 years before he changed his name to Abraham – father of many nations. In focusing on the visualising aspect of the walk of faith, many who are still substantiating the things hoped for into manifestation by faith still do not have a clear vision or picture of what the end result of faith looks like. We are told to look to our Lord Jesus as the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). The word ‘looking’ unto Jesus is the word *aphorao* which comes from the words *apo* (from) and *horao* (vision). It is used only twice in the New Testament, the other being Philippians 2:23 translated as soon as I ‘see’ how it goes with me. The root meaning of *horao* is ‘see’ or ‘visualize’; *horama* meaning ‘vision.’ It includes more than just physical seeing (Greek word *blepo*) as Hebrews 11:27 uses *horao* to relate to seeing the invisible. Jesus used *horao* when He says that He who has seen Him has seen the Father (John 14:9). Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see (*horao*) God (Matthew 5:8).

As we meditate on the above verses, one wonders why one is told to look (*aphorao*) to Jesus the Author and Finisher and not just to visualize the end product of one’s faith. The above is important because the beginning or authoring of our faith is Jesus and Jesus alone. There is no such thing as one self-authoring one’s faith. Faith comes from Jesus and Jesus alone. Although the Bible uses personal pronouns of ‘my,’ ‘their,’ or ‘your,’ faith, one needs to understand that

it needs to first be authored by Jesus Himself. This is done through the work of the Holy Spirit. It is for this reason that one looks to Jesus both from the beginning of faith to the completion of faith. He is the Source and the Sustainer of our faith.

The word *aphorao* speaks of us looking or visualising 'from' Jesus. This implies that one must look to Him first and be in union with Him first before the visualising of any finished prayer. We bear fruit only as we abide in Him and without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5). Therefore, before anyone launches into the prayer of faith the first thing that must be done is to first be in union with Jesus experientially to receive the specific authoring and initiation of faith for the object of prayer. Without taking this first step, many people try and exercise their own human confidence or presumption in believing, confessing or visualising that which could have been born out of their own flesh and soul. The human soul has an ability to imitate those same areas of the human spirit but to no avail and zero results. Only that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and that which is born of the flesh is flesh.

The best position to be in is to behold Jesus, be in love with Jesus, be enamoured by His love and presence. Behold (Greek *eideo*) what manner of love the Father has loved us (1 John 3:1). *Eideo* type of beholding involves our mind and understanding and experience. We might theologically know that God loves us but we need to experientially know that God loves us. How do we know that we have truly experienced this love to its completeness? When we begin to experientially know that we love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength (1 John 4:10-19)! Today with the teaching of grace, many people can accept the fact that God loves them. However, many only superficially experience that and know it in their heads but not in their hearts. How does one know that one knows it in the heart? When one begins to experientially know that one loves God with all of the heart,

mind, soul and strength! To know that God loves us is one thing, to be able to love God is another thing. The reception of God's love is still not sufficient until that same love of God for us causes us to love Him in the same unconditional manner in which He loves us.

Many people want God to love them unconditionally but they never love God back unconditionally. They will only love God when things go outwardly well or when they have the earthly things that they desire – otherwise, they won't love God. I have even heard some Christians go as far as to say that if God cannot heal, if God cannot provide and if God cannot do all that one needs God to do, then one should serve another God. Such sentiments are childish ways of relating to our God the creator of the Universe. Of course, God will do all those things but God would prefer that we love Him not for those things alone. Why do you think the Bible records such stories of Job? It is because God wanted to know his heart as to whether he loved what God could do for him or that he truly loved God. Even in times of answered prayer and blessing, God tested Abraham's heart to see if he still loved God unconditionally and was willing to give up his son Isaac (Genesis 22). Why do you think God brought the Israelites through the wilderness? It was so that God could prove them and see what was in their heart (Deuteronomy 8:2-3).

*“And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.” – Deuteronomy 8:2-3.*

Even our Lord Jesus was tested and tried in the wilderness (Matthew 4 & Luke 4). Have we never learned nor understood? God wants us

to grow up and not love Him for what He can do but for who He is. For this reason sometimes those non-Charismatics who do not believe in miracles or supernatural provision have a steady walk with God in spite of their unbelief in many of the promises of God because they have chosen to follow Jesus because of the one act that He did for them – His atoning death on the cross – and they ask for nothing more for them to make Him their Saviour for the rest of their lives. In the meantime, Pentecostals and Charismatics go up and down in their faith and love for God like a yo-yo each time they do not see God's benefits or promises upon their lives. What childishness! What a shallow relationship!

Once and for all, if God so chooses that there be no other act that He did then the mere sending of Jesus to redeem us from death and sin eternally, that should be enough to cause us to love Him and be His bond servants and slaves for the rest of eternity! Like one poet says, if the whole world were a sea of broken glass, what Jesus did on the cross for us should cause us to be willing to crawl across the world on our knees to reach the other shore and tell Him how much we love Him! Until we understand that our love for God and Jesus should be unconditional, we will never enter into the sweet, sweet fellowship that is reserved for those who love God without reservation (1 Corinthians 2:9). Of course, God will answer every prayer and keep every promise but even if He does not, will you still love Him? Let us so choose to be in a covenant love relationship with the Lord. Let us choose to love Him unconditionally.

Once we have beheld Jesus in all His love and glory and grace, then we can yield our hearts for Him to author the vision and picture of all that He wants to do in our lives. We then visualize 'from Him' - *aphorao* – as He gives us the correct pictures and images for that which is to come. Cleansed of all flesh and sin, we are able to see clearly the

Will of God in our lives and receive His gift of faith for our individual lives. Faith is thus energised by the love of God (Galatians 5:6). Then we enter into the process of faith. As we daily come into His presence and yield our hearts to Him, the image of the answers to all our desires and prayers become painted and completed in vision form. This is a gradual process and not necessarily an instantaneous process. However, for some things it could be at lightning speed while in others it might take years. It is not so much us trying to visualize as it is more the Holy Spirit painting the detail picture in our hearts and the eyes of our spirit. Our faith eyes in those areas where faith is being exercised becomes sharp like the eagle and we can see the reality of the inner vision before any signs of the physical manifestation takes place. We become those who see the reality of the invisible while others have yet to see. At first we carry the vision but soon the vision carries us; we live and breathe the vision like Noah building the ark each day. We know what God has said and shown and are assured of it coming to pass.

There is a change in John 15:1-7 in the Greek word as one progresses in union with Christ as our vine and we the branches. Jesus said that we are cleansed because of the word (Greek *logos*) which He had spoken to His disciples (John 15:3). But when it came to specific desires and applications of that power of union with Him, He said that if we abide in Him and His words (Greek *rhema*) abide in us, we will ask what we desire and it shall be done for us (John 15:7). Moreover the word 'cleanses' in John 15:3 is the same word translated 'pure' as in pure heart in Matthew 5:8. In Hebrews 4:12, the *logos* is like a sword that works in us while in Ephesians 6:17, the *rhema* is like a sword that works out from us. The word of God has to work in us before it can work out through us. The work of the *logos* word is energising and life giving to us whereas the work of the *rhema* word is mountain moving faith working out through us. Both processes

must be complete for both are part of the process of faith (Romans 10:17 – faith comes by hearing the *rhema* of God – the relationship between *rhema* to *logos* is as to the rays of the sun to the sun itself).

In the exercise of faith, the faith eyes must be developed to that of an eagle's eye. Those with chicken eyes or turkey eyes can never see what only the eagle can see. Like baby eaglets, beloved brethren, never be discouraged but always do the following in your walk of faith:

1. Make a covenant with God that you will love Him unconditionally as much as He has loved you unconditionally. Even if you live and die without seeing one more answer to prayer, you will still love Him with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. Once this consecration of love has taken place in your inner heart, a new strength and steadfastness will be yours for life for you are now established upon the rock of God's love – He loves you and you love Him, both being in the eternally unbroken union of God's love (Ephesians 3:17-21).
2. Yield your life as a living sacrifice willing to do all of His Will for the rest of your life. He will begin to author His desires in you and His hand will begin to write in your heart the works that He has predestined for you to do (Ephesians 2:10). The works that He desires you to walk in will be, through time with Him, written and shown in clarity which you will easily be able to see with the new eyes of faith He gives you. He desires to show great things to those who love Him, things which other eyes have not seen nor ear heard but which you will be able to see and hear (1 Corinthians 2:9).
3. Every day exercise your eyes of faith and see the completed picture of that which God is doing through you. Visualize the invisible realities before they are manifested in the physical

(Hebrews 11:1; 2 Corinthians 4:18). Exercise with patience and allow the invisible to grow through its full pregnancy before it gives birth in the physical realm.

My prayer for you this week is that God would cause the eyes of your understanding to see the hope of His calling, the riches of His inheritance and the greatness of His power (Ephesians 1:17-23).

## Fatherly Talk 4.05

### Faith Series: The Voice of God

Dearly Beloved

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word (*rhema* – spoken word) of God (Romans 10:17). The whole basis of faith is that one hears from God and performs that which God has enabled. It is not just moving mountains or performing feats, it is the accomplishment of God's directed Will. Of course, when we set out lives in line with God's directed will, we receive all the benefits of God's Will in the process. What is the Will of God? It is the living and giving of our lives to God and others in love. When we walk outside of this love into the self-living and self-holding pattern, we become resistant to the flow of God's love that is the spiritual and physical DNA of all His creation – causing pain, sickness, grief and every imagined evil and horror known and unknown to mankind.

In the first place, what is God's voice like and how do we hear it.

God's voice can be heard in all of nature (Romans 1:20).

His voice can be heard in our conscience (Romans 2:15).

His voice is expressed through His Word (Deuteronomy 28:1).

His voice is heard by all His sheep (John 10:27).

His voice is carried by His Holy Spirit of Truth (John 14:26).

If we will choose to hear it, we will hear the voice of the Lord. It need not necessarily be an audible voice but it will always be a spiritual voice (1 Corinthians 2:9-16).

With so many witnesses to the voice of God, surely when God speaks we will know it:

1. It will be in line with His written Word
2. It will be in line with His nature of love
3. It will be in line with His creation's function
4. It will be in line with the pure conscience
5. It will be in line with the inner witness within us.

We need to give place to the Word of God in our lives for it to work faith within us. In order to hear the voice or spoken (*rhema*) word of God, we need to be able to first be tuned by the living (*logos*) word. The living word needs to work in us first before the spoken word can work out from us. In the Bible, the word of God is described as a sword: one is a sword that works in us (Hebrews 4:12) and the other is a sword that works through us (Ephesians 6:17). What has the separation of soul and spirit to do with the hearing of God's voice? When the soul and spirit are not clearly distinguished, we will not be able to tell when a thought, impression, sensing, etc. is from the soul and when it is from the spirit. The voice of God will always arise from and be in line with the spirit man. It is through the *logos* of God that our inner thoughts and intentions of the heart are first discerned.

No one can hear the voice of God until they first understand all that is within them – their inner thoughts, intentions, desires, etc. Only when the inner peace of God is ruling our hearts and our minds are we able to clearly hear the voice of God (Philippians 4:7, 8). Jesus told His disciples that His word (*logos*) had made them clean. The word clean is the word 'purify' (Greek *katharos*) as used in Matthew 5:8). When our hearts are pure, we shall see God and hear God with the eyes and ears of our spirit man.

A part of developing the ability to hear God also resides in the edification of the spirit man. The spirit man is built up when we pray in tongues for when we do so, the spirit prays although the understanding might be unfruitful (1 Corinthians 14:14-15). Prayer in tongues builds the spirit man up (1 Corinthians 14:4). For this reason, Paul says that he prays in tongues more than all the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 14:18). Many people new to prayer in tongues find that their mind goes all over the place when they pray in tongues but when they continue to consistently pray in tongues despite that, there will come a time when the mind (although it still does not understand – unless the gift of interpretation is also given) becomes quiet and they will experience an inner peace. It is when this inner peace is experientially imparted that the hearing of God's voice becomes a reality.

Peace is a very important part of God's guidance system. The direction we walk, our feet, are guided by the way of peace (Luke 1:79). This peace is not a natural peace but a supernatural peace which is given by our Lord Jesus Himself (John 14:27). Knowing that He will no longer be with His disciples physically, Jesus especially speaks about peace, love and joy besides speaking about the coming of the Holy Spirit. One of the first fruit of the Holy Spirit coming into us is the evidence of love, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:1-11). Peace provides the quietness of our spirit by which we can hear God's voice speaking. For this reason the God of peace will crush Satan under our feet (Romans 16:20). We should pray in the Spirit and meditate until every day, the peace of God garrisons our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7-8).

After understanding the above, the next question in many people's mind is what is the voice of God or the spoken word of God like? It can come like an inner thought or impression or an inner sense of knowing. One of the works of the Holy Spirit is to bring to remembrance the things which Jesus has said (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit brings to our minds the word of God. This can be heard as a thought process or an inward impression or knowing. It might feel so natural that one can easily ignore it. Hearing from God should be a natural spiritual process for we are spirit, soul and body. The key to hearing God is not in the development of the more spectacular gifts of visions or signs and wonders, although this can come in God's time by His Will; rather the hearing of God's voice involves the normal thought processes dedicated to God – our mind yielding to the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:12-16). The key, of course, is in our ability to discern God's voice within us.

When God speaks, faith comes. The spoken word of God produces faith in our inner man. The inner conviction and assurance of faith grows as we gain confidence in the hearing of God's voice within us. Ultimately, all faith is the impartation through the words of God to us. All we have to do is to keep on hearing and receiving the voice and spoken word of God to us. Faith is the natural spiritual result when we hear and receive His word. The *logos* or living word needs to become the *rhema* or spoken word for faith to be authored and finished within us. God is speaking all the time but we are not always hearing. Blessed are those who hear God for they will have His faith.

Keep strong in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are the sheep of His pasture and we shall hear His voice.

## Fatherly Talk 4.06

### Faith Series: Fresh Vision of Revival

Dearly Beloved

Abraham was called the friend of God in James 2:23.

Of all the visions of Jesus, there was one where I saw Him with sadness in His eyes for one part of the vision. This was when He spoke about the need for unity in His church and the lack of concern for uniting His church by those ministers whom He has anointed and appointed.

It was made very clear to me that over the next decade many of those who do not have a unity vision for His true church will be put aside. Vessels who build His true kingdom will be honored while vessels who build themselves will be put to the side (2 Timothy 2:19-22). It was also shown that this unity of the church and of the faith (Ephesians 4:13) will be achieved not by the works or the effort of men but by the impartation of the glory of Jesus to the church (John 17:22). Unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain who build it (Psalm 127:1).

As He did in David's time, the Lord is seeking for men and women after His heart (1 Samuel 13:14). Who are those with a heart after God's? They are those who:

1. Are worshippers of God (John 4:23)
2. Are builders of God's house before their own house (2 Samuel 7; Haggai 1:4)
3. Respect and honor the anointing of God on others and on themselves (1 Samuel 24:10)

4. Do not seek to advance themselves but allow God to open the door for them and promote them (Psalm 75:6)
5. Seek to put God first in their lives (2 Samuel 6:1-2)
6. Depend upon the strength of the Lord in their battles and not on their own might (1 Samuel 17; Psalm 20:7).
7. Do not forget that they are nothing but remember and reward those who help them together in the Lord (2 Samuel 7:18-19; 2 Samuel 9:1).

No ministry becomes a mega ministry on their own for everyone stands on the shoulders of others who have gone before them. Moreover, all mega ministries are able to be of that size because of the many faithful men and women who serve to sustain and make up the ministry. Each deserves their reward (1 Samuel 30:23-25). It is sad to the heart of Jesus whenever the influence of a mega ministry is not used to promote healing and unity in the body of Christ. Fame like fortune is a delegated commodity which needs proper stewardship and accountability. We have seen how God can remove the power of wealth from those who do not use it accountably for God.

We will see God remove the power of fame from those who do not use it accountably for God. From time to time, God allows different ministries and churches to take the lead in the body of Christ to promote His agenda (Joshua 3:7). If such ministries or churches become big-headed and cease to promote God's kingdom but instead promote their own, God will remove the baton from them and pass it on to another who has a heart after God.

Without giving up on normal discernment and analytical thinking, we should approach the times of visitation with a childlike attitude without too many preconceived ideas (Luke 10:21-22). As long as a revelation is in line with the written word of God and not contradictory to the Bible, one should have a childlike attitude to learn

from the written word. Like non-charismatics who could not see the doctrine of the baptism in the Spirit in the Scriptures, many people will be held back more by their own tradition than by anything else. When the Pharisees accused the disciples of Jesus of transgressing the tradition of the elders, Jesus rebuked them for transgressing the commandments of God for their own traditions (Matthew 10:1-3). The Pharisees had made the power of God of no effect by their traditions (Matthew 10:6). Change is one of the most difficult things for human beings to negotiate. It is even more difficult for the highly religious. Yet the church needs to continue to grow from glory to glory and as church history has proven, it has progressed both in its understanding and theology leaving behind those who could not undertake the paradigm shift under each move of God's visitation. Throughout all the times of refreshing and visitation, the Bible remains always the instrument and foundation for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).

The ageless principles of prayer (both in the spirit and with the understanding), meditation of God's Word, worship and fellowship continue to be the principles which help to prepare God's people for this coming revival. Christians do need to gather together in small prayer groups or local communities to pray for this coming great awakening. Personally, I would recommend that such times should not be filled with 'shopping list' prayer items but instead remain free times of prayer in the Spirit and times of worship and waiting on the Lord. There is great benefit when one prays in tongues privately (1 Corinthians 14:1-4, 18). It is alright to organise a believers' meeting where all spend time in prayer in tongues letting the Holy Spirit lead. With the element of fasting and worship added, one would be correctly positioned for this coming visitation (Acts 13:1-3).

Prepare your hearts and lives for God is going to visit each of you individually. May His grace and anointing upon this ministry come upon your lives and bring you into a deeper relationship with the Lord.

## Fatherly Talk 4.07

### Faith Series: The Holding Position of Faith

Dearly Beloved

Many times, Christians expect that when they had faith, results would be there immediately. There is such a thing as a holding position of faith until the manifestation comes. Jesus commended the centurion for great faith (Matthew 8:10). The centurion's servant was healed without the physical presence of Jesus. The question was at which point did he have faith? Obviously before the encounter with Jesus, he had faith in what Jesus could do. Right up to the point when Jesus was willing to come and lay hands on his servant, he had faith. When he linked the power of Jesus' authority symbolically to his own authority over his troops, he already had faith but was just expressing what he believed. At some point, his holding position of faith brought forth the results that he was believing for.

While Jesus was preaching in the house in Capernaum, a group of men let down a paralysed man to be healed by Jesus (they could not come through the door because the house was full). Jesus saw their faith and wanted to heal the paralysed man (Matthew 9:2). Their faith had begun even before they came to the house. Their faith was undeterred by the crowds but found a way to bring the paralysed man to Jesus. Faith was there before the results of faith were visible to all in the miracle of healing. There is always a holding position of faith before the results of faith are manifest. The Cannanite woman had faith in coming to Jesus for her daughter. Though she was much discouraged by words and dispensation (being non-Jewish) but her faith prevailed (Matthew 15:28). At which point did her journey of faith begin? Certainly, before she came to Jesus. When her faith was

challenged even by Jesus, she persisted and would not take 'No' for what she had believed for so long. Jesus admired her faith.

The reality of the situation is that one can have faith and yet not see the results. There is such a thing as a position of holding faith. It is when faith is exercised and keeps persisting through every challenge and difficulty. Jairus was one of those who had not just a physical journey of faith but a spiritual journey of faith. Obviously, he had faith when he came to Jesus for the healing of his daughter (Mark 5:22). As he walked with Jesus to his house, he was greeted with bad news about his daughter (who was sick when he left but is now dead). Jesus encouraged his faith by saying to him to 'Only believe' – in other words be in a holding position of faith (Mark 5:36). Jesus warned him to NOT be afraid but only believe. It is very clear that the holding position of faith had to be maintained until the manifestation came.

Jesus had to stop the funeral procession, send the mourners home, taking only Peter, James, John and the father and mother of the girl into the room where the little dead girl was (Mark 5:37, 40). Finally, through the command of Jesus, faith received what it believed for.

The holding position of faith is vitally important. It is here that many battles are lost. What is the holding position of faith and how does one maintain it until the manifestation? The holding position of faith is:

1. The position when one has already fully received the assurance in the heart God's promised word and *rhema* even if the result is not manifest yet (Hebrews 11:1).
2. The position when time or contrary circumstances no longer dissuade one from the position of absolute confidence that what one believes will come to pass (Matthew 15:25-27).

3. The position of faith that requires constant defence against fear until the manifestation comes (Mark 5:36).
4. Such that the longer and harder the holding position, the greater the resultant faith (Matthew 8:10; 15:28).
5. Such that it requires persistence against impossible odds to merely hold on to the position of faith (Luke 18:1-8).

During the holding position of faith, a lot of things are taking place in the Spiritual World. Angels are sent forth to bring about all the physical circumstances and situations into position as an answer to the faith released. Some of the circumstances may involve human beings who take time to obey which explains why some things are delayed. In the worst case scenario where the humans who are part of God's answer to the exercise of faith make a free choice not to be part of their destiny, it affects the blessings of others who are recipients of their obedience in the short term; but in the long term God raises another obedient instrument who will both inherit the lost blessings of the disobedient as well as receive eternal rewards and anointings. The ministry office of Judas Iscariot was taken by another (Acts 1:20, 25). The whole disobedient Israelite nation would have been replaced if not for the intercessions of Moses (Exodus 32:10).

The second cause of delay is the timing of God in fulfilling His plans. God has His agenda and the answers to every prayer must flow with His perfect plan for the ages designed from before the foundation of the world. However, God will reward the man and woman who is totally obedient to the maximum capacity possible within their dispensation. He rewarded Anna the prophetess and Simeon the godly man with the privilege of holding baby Jesus (Luke 2:25-38). Demon powers do not have the same privilege to delay in the New Covenant as they had during the time of Daniel (Daniel 10:13). The only possible delay they can inflict on the righteous is by using earthly

men to hinder God's work or by blinding those destined to be part of God's answer to faith exercised. In the New Covenant, Satan's power has been reduced to zero and all his cohorts totally destroyed at the cross (Hebrews 2:14; Colossians 2:15).

No opposition to God can last forever whether they be men or devils. Men die and demons lose their earthly instruments of flesh. Moreover, there is also a release of extra glory and grace amongst those whose lives or destinies are unjustly delayed in their holding faith pattern through the disobedience of others. Eye has not seen, nor ear heard the things which God has in store for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9). Caleb and Joshua were unjustly delayed by about 40 years because of the disobedience of their generation but God extended their lives such that they went into the promised land with the new generation. God highly exalted Joshua and gave Caleb supernatural strength (Joshua 3:7; 10:14; 14:11). Within this decade of 2006 to 2016, men and women of God in the top rank of God's kingdom on earth who are walking outside the limits of their anointing and office in the permissive will of God will die. Their lives will be shortened because they have become a hindrance to the Spirit of the Lord, being unrepentant to yield to the authority of the Lord Jesus, their supposed Master and Lord.

God will raise up a new generation of fivefold who will hear Him and be receptive to His voice and commands. Of course, God's mercy is great and He would rather His servants repent and become part of the revival than be removed from the scene. Those who humble themselves under the mighty hand of God will be exalted and those who exalt themselves will be brought down (1 Peter 5:5-6). Saul was rejected for moving out of the office of a king and trying to be a priest (1 Samuel 13:8-14). It is a fearful thing to be found outside of one's call and office in the coming revival. It is better to be in a holding pattern

of faith until God declares His time and manifestation than to take things into one's own hand. Samuel's delay of seven days was not just a test of patience, but it was also a test of integrity – whether one remains faithful to one's office and call. When David was told that it was not his place to build the temple, he stayed faithful abiding in God even though naturally he had the power to build the temple. Instead, he made provisions for his son to build it for it was not David's destiny but his son's destiny to do so.

It is important for all of us to learn the holding pattern of faith. For God sometimes tests our patience and our integrity through the delays. At the end of the day when everything is over, we will realize that even the delays were a part of God's perfect plan through His omniscience. We must choose to remain humble under the mighty hand of God when delays occur and the need to exercise the holding pattern of faith. We must also choose to remain humble and remain in one's office, anointing and call without overstepping our original calling. For fame and influence like wealth, can be as easily taken away as Nebuchadnezzar's empire (Daniel 4:23). The call to 'chop down the tree' is not always the 'tall poppy syndrome.' It is many times the decree of the watchers in heaven (Daniel 4:17).

Also note that some delays that occur during the holding pattern of faith are because there is insufficient faith received to bring some things to pass. Some things take not just individual faith but also corporate faith, a subject that we will touch on in these series.

We all came into this life with nothing and we will leave this life with nothing, except with what we have gained through God's love in character and transformation. Let us be faithful when God tells us to wait. Let us learn the art of the holding pattern of faith.

## Fatherly Talk 4.08

### Faith Series: The Energizing of Faith

Dear Beloved

Last week we spoke of the holding position of faith, in which we clearly pointed out that when faith is received and completed there is still a requirement to hold fast to the faith given until the manifestation comes through. Part of the key to understanding how to hold on in the position of faith is to know that faith is basically a relationship of trust with a person and not just a principle. The relationship is with an invisible person – God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith. It is this position of absolute trust and love for God that enables us to stand steadfastly in the position of faith against all odds. This trust of an invisible person and His instructions to us is at the core of our walk of faith.

When Abraham followed God leaving behind his kinsfolk, to the land of Canaan, all he had was this voice or impression that he had of someone talking to him and telling him to leave his country and kindred to go to a strange new land (Genesis 12:1-3). He might have had a vision but many people who do not have visions do not understand that one still needs to exercise faith in the vision or word that one has received. It is natural for the human mind to doubt every voice, vision, impression or encounter that one receives but it is the training of faith to be able to trust and give oneself fully to the supernatural directions given by God. It is so easy for many to question the reception of voices, visions or impressions as, I am sure, the people of her time question the visions of Joan of Arc which she received regarding France. Despite her victory for France, she was burnt as a witch, but history has accorded her a place in the annals of the Catholic saints.

The natural fear of many people is that giving in to impressions, visions and dreams would be giving in to the devil. This is where the written Word of God comes in. Why do you think God gave us the written Word? Not that we will just be legalistic and adopt a religiosity and form of liturgy but that the written word would become the instrument to train us to hear the real dreams, visions and impressions of God! The indictment of Jesus against the Jewish leaders was that they had the Scriptures (and built monumental laws and religious rites around them) but that they did not come to Jesus (John 5:39-40). The Scriptures are only a means by which we would be trained to come to the living, invisible God and not an end in themselves.

1. The Scriptures show a pattern of God's dealings with men and women throughout thousands of years and helps us identify the common pattern in which to judge and discern true encounters with God from false encounters.
2. The Scriptures specifically deal with the nature and quality of all communication with mankind such that any invisible communication that draws mankind away from His established moral laws are suspect and fraud (Deuteronomy 13:1-18). This is even when a prediction comes true (Deuteronomy 13:2-3). The test of a true prophet is thus not in the power of the revelation or the prediction, although it does include this level of accuracy, but rather of his fruit and morality. One should judge a tree by its fruit (Matthew 7:18).
3. The end result of all revelation and communication should always be leading people towards God and not away from God (Deuteronomy 13:5).

4. As God is a God of love and light, all revelation from God would have to be consistent with His nature of love and His holiness (1 John 1:5-7; 4:7-9).
5. No communication from God should be contradictory to His previous revelation in His written Word. The word of God remains the basis for all doctrine and correction (2 Timothy 3:16). Every communication should also be subject to others who have experience in hearing God (1 Corinthians 14:29).

Once a person overcomes their natural fear of the supernatural through the assurance of the Word of God, they should be willing to learn and be open to the direct communication that God has with them (John 10:27). The history of the Bible is a record of men and women who have direct communication with God. It is what sets them apart from others. Since Jesus has paid the price for all mankind, direct communication is now available to all who come to Him (Hebrews 4:16). Jesus encourages us to seek God persistently knowing that God our Father will give good gifts to His children (Luke 10:9-13). No one who seeks God with a pure heart of love towards God need to be afraid that the enemy will come in between. Perfect love casts our fear (1 John 4:18). Love for the Lord and love for His Word are the two forces that prevent the enemy from coming in between us and God; moreover, this love will bring us into the manifestation of Christ and God to us (John 14:15-24).

Having laid the groundwork for the need to utterly trust in our invisible God, we must be willing to relate directly – spirit to Spirit – with our God and Father through Jesus. God is a Spirit and those who come to Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Spirit will always be invisible to the natural eyes and one must be willing to trust in the reception of impressions, words, thoughts and visions that God lays upon our spirits. Although it may seem as if God

is speaking audibly in the physical for those who are yielded in their spirits, the communication is indeed Spirit to spirit. We are spirit, soul and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23). When our spirit or inner man receives something from God's Spirit, our soul will then seek to interpret it and convey it to our minds and understanding. Since spirit communicates in spiritual language and the soul uses human language, there is a margin of error that can take place in this translation of spirit to soul. For this reason, the disciples in Tyre discerned in their spirit some communication of danger for Paul in his journey to Jerusalem but their souls interpreted it as a message to tell Paul not to go – which is completely contradictory to what God had already told Paul (Acts 21:4; 20:22-23). Always when we receive communication from the Holy Spirit, the following will take place:

1. Manifestation or communication in the spirit (Holy Spirit to human spirit)
2. Interpretation of the manifestation or communication from God by our human souls
3. Application of the interpretation into our lives and circumstances.

It is obvious to all that if we get the interpretation incorrectly, we will get the application wrong and possibly even contradictory to what God had intended. And even if the interpretation is correct there are still elements of timing, methodology and discreteness in the application of the word or *rhema* from the Lord. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the voice (word) or *rhema* of God (Romans 10:17). The essence of the walk of faith is the hearing of God's voice and obeying Him. It is as simple as that. Great faith is purely great trust that one has developed in obeying the invisible voice that one hears in one's spirit. No matter how much Scriptural knowledge a person has, it is only when a person is willing to trust their sense of

hearing God that true faith can develop. True faith is trusting in an invisible person – God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. This is the essence and the spirit of faith (2 Corinthians 4:13). Paul constantly looks not to the things that are visible but yields to the forces and power of the invisible God who continues to orchestrate his life (2 Corinthians 4:18). At first it sounds scary to many people new to trusting in the directions of an invisible God. Such people must know that true Christianity is not just reliance on a creed based on written words like the Pharisees but rather reliance on a personal God who still works through the spiritual realm on the behalf of His people. True Christianity is a direct one to one relationship with the living God through our Lord Jesus Christ. A living God speaks, directs and instructs. If Christianity is purely a creed and a set of beliefs it would be no different from any other religion, although it contains the best knowledge and most accurate philosophy of this world and the next. Jesus said that His sheep hear His voice and they know Him (John 10:17). As true Christians we all need to hear the voice of Jesus and learn to recognise His voice.

The most important thing is to know and realize that true faith comes from the energizing of the love of God (Galatians 5:6). We are supposed to be deeply in love with our invisible God revealed through Christ. This love that we have for our invisible God brings us to the point of utter trust and faith in Him as a person. We can know Him although we can't see Him (John 14:17). God through our Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit is constantly speaking to us. Do we hear Him? Having heard, do we obey Him?

Like a toddler learning to walk physically, those who are newly born again must learn to walk in the Spirit, learning to hear God and obey His voice and impressions in their heart. One does not have to attempt to run or jump before one learns to walk. Like a toddler who

sometimes tumbles and falls, those who are learning to walk in the Spirit need to learn from others who do, perhaps sometimes making honest mistakes in their attempts to hear God and obey God. Learn to hear Him in the little things of life before jumping to hear Him in the bigger things of life. One never learns unless one tries. If we see a twenty-year old person who still never learns to walk because he is afraid of falling, we would all be shocked. Imagine seeing Christians who have been in the Lord for many years and yet have not learned to walk in the Spirit. The early church learned to hear God's voice and direction and not just know about His written Word. Philip heard the voice of the Holy Spirit telling him which chariot to join (Acts 8:29). The early church discerned the voice of the Holy Spirit with regards to the Gentile question (Acts 15:28). Paul was sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit as to where to go or where not to go (Acts 16:6-7). Agabus prophesied through hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:28; 21:11). The Holy Spirit has been given to us to replace the physical presence of Jesus (John 14:15-18). Do we hear the voice of the Holy Spirit today? The Spirit still speaks to God's church as He did in the book of Revelation (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

Under the tutelage of the more experienced spiritually, the church is encouraged to prophesy that all may learn and be encouraged (1 Corinthians 14:26-31). Under the guidance of the more spiritually mature, Christians should be encouraged to explore their hearing from God, giving room for correction from the Scriptures and having room to learn through honest mistakes. In a loving and understanding spiritual environment, many should be able to learn to hear God's voice and remain humble and teachable as one exercises their faith in hearing the *rhema* from an invisible God. In the end, true faith is the exercise of complete trust in a loving but invisible God. The more we grow to love the invisible God, the more our faith increases. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed (John 20:29).

We continue to encourage each of you to explore the varying spiritual impressions you receive in your spirit which your soul interprets into thoughts, pictures and words in human language. No doubt some soul areas might infiltrate through and cause some inaccuracy in hearing the spirit man but there is no gain if there is no venture. The advantage always is to those who are bold and don't mind being corrected if they make mistakes. We have only one life to live on earth, we need to live it vigorously and boldly to do God's Will. Faith comes when God speaks. Love God, hear God and trust God.

## Fatherly Talk 4.09

### Faith Series: Exercising Faith in Various Areas

Dearly Beloved

Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). There is no doubt that everyone needs faith as they relate to the invisible God. What many do not realize is that the exercise of faith in different areas requires an understanding of the specific areas particular to each area. The exercise of faith for provision, for healing, for intercessory prayers, for unsaved loved ones, etc. requires us to understand the various particular spiritual laws which are in operation in each area. Of course, all faith comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith. When we have received the faith from God, we need to understand how it is successfully applied to each area or more accurately, discern how God is already answering in each area. Many people do not understand nor know that God is already answering because their spiritual antennas are not set to receive the frequency in which His answers are already coming in. A knowledge of the spiritual laws particular to each area helps us to recognise the answer when it comes. God is answering prayers and hearing our requests, but many are not receiving them because His answers are coming in a way or form in which they do not recognise.

In the natural world, it is possible to live a simple happy life using a car without knowing how it works, using a computer without knowing how it works, using electricity without knowing how it works, etc. However, when one of the abovementioned items breaks down, it takes an expert in those areas to repair them. A general knowledge of each of those areas would have given some DIY (Do It Yourself) capability and also the ability to maintain those items better. And unlike in the natural realm, there are very few real 'experts' who

understand the various laws of the spirit in different areas to effect a 'repair' of those areas. It is in this light that we seek to understand at least some of the basic laws that govern each area of which one exercises faith. There are, of course, basic principles of faith that apply to all of them but there are specific spiritual laws that are particular to each specific area.

## 1. Faith for God's provision

- a. Visualise and know that God is the Source of ALL your provision (Matthew 5:45)

God is in control of the whole world and delegates the handling of wealth on earth to men and allows them some liberty of free choice in those areas but when a person starts to take pride and not acknowledge Him, the forces of heaven begin working against that person. God resists the proud and exalts the humble (1 Peter 5:5). King Nebuchadnezzar had to be brought to his knees to acknowledge God as the true ruler over the world (Daniel 4:1-37). King Herod was struck down suddenly because he exalted himself above God (Acts 12:23). When Pilate tried to declare his power over Jesus, Jesus said that he could have no power over Him unless it had been given to him from above (John 19:10-11). All power, all fame, all authority come from God and although it might seem naturally that God is not in control, God and His angels are carefully monitoring every single president and king on earth, every single person of wealth and power on earth and every single person of fame and influence. His angels will step in and enforce the humbling of every man and woman who takes self-pride and pass on the same position, power, wealth or influence easily to another. Such events might take time in human history because of God's patience and

longsuffering but always, good will triumph over evil eventually. No matter where you get your pay check or salary from, God is always the source. Promotion comes not from the east, west or south but it comes from the Lord (Psalms 75:6).

- b. God supplies your need according to the riches of His glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

The riches of His glory in Christ Jesus is the riches of His storehouse of wisdom now made available in Christ (Ephesians 1:17-18). In Christ is hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3). It is wisdom and knowledge that leads to prosperity and provision (Proverbs 3:16). When Solomon received wisdom, he became the richest person in his time (2 Chronicles 9:27). Many people who pray for God's provision do not obey His wisdom and His leading. Elijah had to go to brook Cherith and later to the poor widow to be sustained during the famine (1 Kings 17:5-16). Many people who exercise faith for provision expect God to send a truck of money to their front door. Now, that may happen in some circumstances (if God so determines) but generally, when one prays for provision, the Spirit of God would start imparting wisdom and knowledge as to what to do, where to go and how to receive it. God answers the faith exercised for provision by giving wisdom, ability and opportunity to possess the land. If one's eyes are looking for the money truck, one might not hear nor perceive that God had already answered by giving wisdom and opening the right doors to go in and possess one's land of Canaan. Also, many times God does not answer in the way one expects or through the people God one expects, God has a million and

one way to bring about the answer. All one needs to do is to be faithfully holding fast to the position of faith and then obeying the wisdom and knowledge that God provides to one's spirit.

- c. When all care and anxiety has been released and surrendered to God, and the peace of God comes, the manifestation is close (Philippians 4:6-7).

Anxiety and worry are symptoms of one still in the process of faith completing its work within one's heart. When the process of faith has been completely received, the peace of God always manifests and one becomes incapable of worrying about that particular matter. When thoughts arise on those areas, only the peace of God is brought forth. There will always be a holding position of faith until the manifestation, but the peace of God is given to fill the gap between faith completed and answers manifest. What then does one do about the anxiety and worry of some still in the process of faith? Each time it occurs, prayer in the spirit and in tongues should be made and another bout of surrender made to God. This needs to be done each time the old thought habit of unbelief arises until the spirit and soul are trained in operating the muscle of faith which results in peace and rest in God. When you are no longer worried about the results but are perfectly at peace with God (in fact, you don't seem to care about the answer any more), then you have successfully surrendered it to God. Spiritually, it is in God's hands and no more in your hands, which explains the release you experience. Hannah was a tormented woman and was filled with sadness for many years but one day she

knew that God had answered her, and she was no longer sad (1 Samuel 1:7, 18).

## 2. Faith for healing

- a. All healing is based on the atonement of Christ the Lamb of God (Matthew 8:17).

This means that healing is not something you earn but a gift you receive from God through Christ Jesus. It is not so much your spiritual efforts or prayers that will bring about the healing but rather your union with Christ the Healer. He IS Healing personified and being linked in union with Him is what drives sicknesses away from your body. We are without spot or wrinkle because we are the body of Christ (Ephesians 5:27). If the head is healthy, of course the body will be healthy. His blood and life flows through us. All spiritual efforts and prayers are purely to gain perception of this union that we have with Christ. As we meditate on this union every day, we will be in health and life. Christ in us is the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). Visualise Christ as our source of life and health and healing. Visualise Christ as within us and all around us. He is the vine and we are the branches (John 15:5). Like any tree and master source, He takes the poison out of our lives and breathes in His life. He takes the CO<sub>2</sub> and gives us the spiritual oxygen of life that rejuvenates every cell in our physical body through the spirit and soul.

- b. Healing has to flow through the spirit, then soul and then finally the body (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Romans 8:10-11).

This also means that there is a measure of renewal of the mind (soul) that takes place as the Spirit is healing the body.

Directly proportional to the renewal of the mind, the body becomes the perfect living and healthy sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1-2). With every healing, there is a requirement to hold fast to a new or fresh healing thought or frame of mind. The woman with the issue of blood finally came to the frame of mind where she knew that touching Jesus was all she needed to be healed (Mark 5:25-26). She could have had a defeatist attitude after all that she had suffered of financial loss and health loss, but her hope was still on Jesus despite it all. It not only took spiritual courage, but she had the mental fortitude to hold fast to press through the crowds to receive her healing. Behind every sickness is a soul condition (sometimes inherited and not through personal choice – remembering that physical causes can also cause soul conditions and not always caused through the spirit). Sometimes it is conscious but many times it is sub-conscious. It is through strongholds of thoughts, habits of mind, and wrong teaching that Satan succeeds in putting bondages and sicknesses (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). This does not mean that all healing can be easily done through mental therapy. Many times, it is locked up way deep in the subconscious that is inaccessible to all humans. For this reason, the meditation Scriptures that we advocate helps because in God's own way, the word of God can reach into those areas and operate surgically bringing healing from the inside out (Hebrews 4:12). One should never give up the reading of the Scriptures if one pursues to be whole and healed. The word of God is life and health to our body (Proverbs 3:1, 8).

- c. Physically acting on the faith given for healing is part of the healing process (Acts 3:7).

In the healing of the lame man, it was AS the man was being lifted up that the healing physically manifested (Acts 3:7). Of course, faith needs to be present and operating already. In Lystra, there was a man who heard Paul's preaching and HAD faith to be healed but he was not healed until he acted on the healing (Acts 14:9-10). This does not mean that one should be forced to act foolishly or in presumption when faith is not there yet or is not yet fully received. The best is to act directly proportional to the faith one receives. In other words, one should do 'little steps of faith' in proportion to one's reception of the gift of faith within one's spirit. Kenneth Hagin took small steps of faith around his sick bed before he walked all the way downstairs at breakfast one morning. The first time he acted in faith in his room, he was very dizzy and had to hold on to the bed post. But every day he would walk around a little until he grew strong over a period of time to walk all the way downstairs. It is very important to emphasize here that the individual receiving the healing MUST FIRST receive the revelation of the healing Scriptures BEFORE any acting on faith is done. Also, one should not throw away any medicine until all the symptoms of the disease are gone, and only the medical practitioner is qualified to diagnose any healing (or what he might call remission) that exempts one from taking medicine. You will know in your own heart when the revelation of healing takes place through the word of God because there will be a witness in your spirit. Whatever the road of healing, there is always an area where the one receiving will be required to exercise through an act (slowly and steadily through the growth in faith) the deposit of faith in the spirit man.

There are many more areas of specific faith application to different areas, but time only permits us to write about two of these. For this reason, sometimes people develop faith in one area but not another because they have understood the way faith works in that particular area but not necessarily another. It is good to grow proportionally in all areas of faith so that one is balanced in one's spiritual walk. At all times, one must always have a steady and bold love relationship with God. The atmosphere of God's love is the environment where faith in all areas can blossom and grow.

May God grant the grace to each of you to learn to grow in faith in all areas of your spiritual life.

# Fatherly Talk 4.10

## Faith Series:

### Areas Where Faith Works with Free Will

Dearly Beloved

Even though the Bible speaks about faith as the core essential in pleasing God (Hebrews 11:6), without which one would be in sin (Romans 14:22-23), there is a difference between exercising faith for oneself and exercising faith for another or for a whole community or country. Obviously from the Romans 14 example of the debate over eating vegetables versus meat, individual faith, conscience and understanding is respected and one cannot exercise faith for another person who does not have the same knowledge or revelation. Everyone is to walk at their own faith level. There are principles and laws governing these areas with respect to faith and individual free will.

#### 1. Exercising faith within the family unit

Within the family unit, the father is the spiritual head of the home and can exercise spiritual covering over the whole family (Ephesians 5:22-25). This includes the taking of authority over demonic forces or sicknesses within the home. Jesus required that the father of the demon possessed boy exercise faith for the deliverance of his child (Mark 9:23-25). Where the father is not spiritually in line with the authority of Jesus (from which he received his original headship), the mother who is a believer can take that place in absentia. The spouse with the relationship with Jesus exercises spiritual authority and covering over the home (1 Corinthians 7:14). Note that just one believing spouse is enough to sanctify the children. Even after the children have

grown into adults, the spiritual influence and level of impartation from the head of the household – the patriarch – is still very powerful (Genesis Chapters 27 & 48). Understanding this dimension of spiritual power and authority, one can extend one's faith and covering over the whole family unit, including all children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren up to thousands of generations with a spiritual force field of both protection and blessings. Although individual members within the family unit have free will, they will find the environment of their free will less polluted and well filtered by the constant faith and prayers of their patriarch (or matriarch, where the patriarch is dysfunctional). We see in the natural children riding upon the natural favours and endowments of their parents, how much more and greater is the spiritual impartation and endowment. Paul speaks of three generations of faith unfeigned that has brought Timothy into the ministry of the Lord (2 Timothy 1:5). The power of blessing is millions of times more powerful than the power of generational curses. One blessing from a patriarch can dislodge millions of curses – of course, all through the atonement of Jesus Christ. The blessing that came through the line of Ruth, who formerly came from an idolatrous background, continued right through the lineage of David.

## 2. Exercising faith with the church community

Many people do not realise that being part of a local church is an important aspect of being part of a spiritual family with all its benefits. In the Spiritual World, people work through communities of like-minded and like-spirit redeemed saints. While on earth, people should seek out like-minded and like-spirit communities to foster their own spiritual growth and development. Of course, this also means that the key leader or

leaders of the local church (whether it be a small church or a mega church with multiple branches) will set the spiritual climate and tone for the entire 'church family.' This spiritual tone is beyond creeds, denominations and doctrines, it is the very spiritual character of the 'spiritual father' of the church. If the key leader is insecure, all the members of that body will suffer insecurity. If the key leader is immoral all the members will tend towards immorality. If the key leader is in disobedience to God, the judgment of the Lord will be both upon the key leader and all its members. However, innocent they may be – they took personal responsibility by being part of a church, no one forced them to be part of a local church, but it is the free will choice whether conscious or subconscious. There is a level of spiritual covering protection under a good local church and for this reason Paul advises the Corinthian church to expel the immoral member out of their church to face the consequences of their sin; they have been protected from Satan by the spiritual covering of the church (1 Corinthians 5:5).

Under the leadership and anointing of David, many people who had neither future nor hope found their high calling in God (1 Samuel 22:2). Many people are called to various giftings and callings but until they come under the right anointing and leadership, they will never find their own calling. They might live and die without even entering the first phase of their ministry. For Christians in general, they would live and die without growing spiritually to the fullest possible level while on earth. Their lives on earth designed for spiritual growth would have gone to waste, lost in natural pursuits. On the other hand, it is the responsibility of the spiritual patriarch to watch over the spiritual community under his charge with prayers and intercessions in the Spirit (1 Samuel 12:23). Satan could not get

directly to Peter without going through Jesus during His time on earth (Luke 22:31-33). Even before Peter fell, Jesus had foreseen his fall and prayed him back to safety, commanding him to lead the rest after his restoration. A spiritual patriarch can easily foresee spiritual activities within his spiritual flock and works with God and His angels to guide the sheep and under-shepherds to safety, sometimes forewarning them. The faith of the key leader can be exercised protectively over all of the flock of sheep and under-shepherds. It can extend over them like a force field. Just like Moses' uplifted hands wrought great victory for Joshua on the battle field, the uplifted faith and hands of the spiritual patriarch can release mighty angels on behalf of his spiritual community (Exodus 17:8-16). The rod of Moses represented the anointing upon his life that he could extend to cover all of Israel which was his spiritual call and responsibility. It is for this reason that we should always highly respect those whom God has anointed for various callings because a rejection of their calling by us could mean that we automatically exclude ourselves from the covering, protection and blessing that have afforded us by the same anointing. We might not always like or agree with God on whom He chooses or anoints but like David, we should always respect the anointing upon their lives. Rejecting them is equivalent to rejecting God if they are sent by God to us (Matthew 10:40-42; Luke 10:13-16).

### 3. Exercising faith within the city and nation

Not everyone is called to exercise faith over a city or nation and I would advise Christians not hastily rush into this ministry without preparing their own lives for this level of ministry. It is God who gives the gift of faith over a city or nation and

Christians can partake of the anointing or ministry that has been given this gift (rather than by themselves). The usual wilderness qualification takes place for those who are called to such ministries and they are tested in the same areas as Jesus was (Matthew 4; Luke 4). It is for this reason that many ministers fail in their three tests as their ministry grows (the tests of flesh, world, and pride). It is not because of a witch or Satanic conspiracy that ministers fall, rather it is because God wants many of these ministers to rise higher to receive faith for entire cities or nations (even groups of nations) that ministers are allowed to be tested (Yes, sent by the Spirit of God into their personal wilderness like Jesus) to qualify them, if they are successful, to receive faith for entire cities or nations.

Many fail because of the love of the flesh, the love of money or pride of fame and ministry. It is they who have stopped their own spiritual progress. Of course, God is merciful and gives many chances for ministers to keep at it until they succeed. Though many die in the wilderness and never see the light of the new level of faith destined for them. Like Caleb and Joshua, only a very few of the generation that saw the previous wave of revival make it into the next wave. Many are disqualified and taken home before their time, and many more will be taken home before the fullness of the next wave comes. Some ministers at first succeed in the wilderness test but pride or the love of other things distracts them from their original destiny to turn their entire cities or nations around for Jesus. God is more patient with these but they, too, will be shaken and given a chance to conform or be removed from the scene (or be sidelined like a vessel put on the shelf). Thankfully, God does not need many such to turn cities or nations around. Abraham's faith was able to almost secure the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah for ten

righteous souls (Genesis 18:16-33). The sad fact is that there were not even ten righteous souls in the entire cities. Today God is preserving many wicked cities because there are still many righteous souls within those cities although their souls are tried like that of Lot living amongst them. Lest anyone think that receiving such faith for cities or nations is an easy spiritual thing, let me remind you that even the faith to have twice the anointing of Elijah was considered a hard thing (2 Kings 2:10). Elijah spent much time in prayer before he had the faith to move the entire nation of Israel (James 5:17). There are no shortcuts to this level of spiritual power and authority; and even if we think ourselves qualified, it is God who qualifies us by His grace and predestination. Such authorities and powers are already determined from the Spiritual World perspective before we came to earth (Mark 10:40). For those who discerned such callings in their lives, it will explain why you are so tested so that your voice will carry the authority of God to the nations. Others who have such desires, it could mean that you are to work alongside those with such destinies to help them along. In the end it is not by works but by the foreordination of God that His plans are carried out to the glory of His grace. It is the gift of faith given according to the works which God has predestined for everyone to walk in (Ephesians 2:8-10).

In all the above areas, primarily because free will of individuals is involved, we work together with God, the Holy Spirit and His angels in the name of Christ. The principles of working together with angels apply are:

- a. Living a prayerful life (Daniel 9:21-23; Revelation 8:4)
- b. Being careful with the power of the spoken word (Daniel 10:12; Luke 1:20)

- c. A life of praise and worship (Isaiah 6:1-3; John 4:23-24)
- d. A life of charity, giving and sacrifice (Acts 10:4; Philippians 4:18).

May God increase His gift of faith in your lives.

## Fatherly Talk 4.11

### Faith Series: Faith and Fasting

Dearly Beloved

The two principles of faith and fasting seem diametrically opposed as sometimes people cannot comprehend how the prayer of faith necessitates fasting – since faith believes in completion and cannot see the reason for fasting which seems to be counter-productive to the position of faith. This is caused by a misunderstanding of the purposes or the reasons for fasting. When Jesus spoke of the disciples' inability to cast out a particular demon, He spoke of their unbelief, advocated faith and then recommended fasting as part of the process to ensure success (Matthew 17:20-21). The basic premise was not that the disciples lacked faith but that they had unbelief and it was hindering whatever level of faith that they had. Is it possible for faith and unbelief to exist at the same time in a person? The answer seems to be Yes in the answer given by the father of the child (same incident of disciples' trying to cast out the demon from that child), who told Jesus that he believed and needed help in his unbelief (Mark 9:24). Faith is a spiritual force and unbelief is a soul phenomenon. When the spirit and soul are diametrically opposed, faith in the spirit can be wrestling with unbelief in the soul within the same person. As Jesus approached the time to go to the cross, His struggles were with the human soul which He took upon Himself when He came to earth (John 12:27; Matthew 26:38).

When Jesus spoke about having the faith of God and moving mountains, He also spoke of areas of the soul like 'not doubting in the heart' and practicing 'forgiveness towards others' (Mark 11:25-26). Understanding that faith is a gift from God is wonderful but knowing how to preserve the energy of the gift of faith from being discharged

is as vitally important. There is no point to top up the fuel tank when it is leaking. We have seen three levels of scientific development of electricity into light: electricity passing into a high resistant element like tungsten to produce light (lots of energy wasted in heat), electricity passing through a 'photon-producing' gas like fluorescent lighting, and today light produced by LED (Light Emitting Diode) which is the most efficient method saving vast amounts of wasted energy. As we understand the power of faith and how to preserve it and release it, even faith like a mustard seed is sufficient to move a mountain (Matthew 17:20). The success of faith in the Christian life is not just the quantity of the gift of faith received but the quantity that is successfully applied to its purposes without waste in overcoming other areas of soul life. For example, if a lot of spiritual energy received is just to get a person's soul to live right in the Christian life, there is very little energy left to do mighty works through the Spirit of God. The more renewed the soul is in God the less wasted energy there is as the Will of God is easily being accomplished (Romans 12:1-2). Some Christians can do more with 10 volts of spiritual energy while other Christians find that even 100 volts are insufficient to get them through the day. The problem is in the amount of baggage that each Christian is carrying in their soul. It would have been easier to make a submarine fly than to get them into the spiritual heavens each day. Other Christians have aligned themselves structurally in their souls such that they are already internally like a light weight plane which takes off the ground easily on a single stroke engine.

Thus, in terms of the relationship between faith and fasting, it is like the relationship between the spirit and the soul. Faith indeed comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Fasting on the other hand humbles the soul and can work indirectly with the faith process in two ways: by clearing the path for the spirit man to hear the Word of God and thus receive faith and secondly, by aligning

the soul to its best 'spiritual positioning' so that it works easily in harmony with the spirit rather than resisting and dragging down the spirit man (Psalms 35:13). Fasting might not seem like having anything directly to do with faith but it does work directly upon the soul, which in turn affects the spirit directly. For this reason, the *logos* word helps the separation of the spirit from the soul so that each section of our being can be dealt with by its own set of principles (Hebrews 4:12). Fasting does not change God but it sure changes and affects our soul and our body directly.

Jesus practiced fasting and advocated it (Luke 4:2-3; Matthew 17:21). There is a time to fast and a time to feast (Matthew 14:14-15). The feasts of the Old Testament included both feasting and fasting (Leviticus 16 & 23). The New Testament church practiced fasting (Acts 13:1-3; 14:23; 1 Corinthians 7:5). The apostle Paul practiced fasting (2 Corinthians 11:27). Fasting is as much a part of the church as is laying on of hands and the breaking of bread and prayers. It is foolish of the modern Christian to dare think that they are better than the church in Acts or the apostle Paul – especially when the modern church has not reached to the same level of manifested presence as they did in the book of Acts. I do believe that the latter glory of the church will be greater than the former but let us not despise the methodology and principles of the former glorious early church. We should not just be improving and inventing new methodologies as the Spirit give us wisdom, we should also be increasing in the principles and methodologies that have succeeded for the early church. It is not less fasting and prayers that we should do, rather we should be doing more.

How then should one seek the Lord in fasting and prayer? As shown in the book of Acts 13:1-2, one does not need to have a shopping list to seek God with fasting and prayer, we can seek God and minister to

God with fastings and prayers (Luke 2:37). Is not seeking God Himself and His face the ultimate of any believer's desire? Shouldn't we seek the giver Himself and not just His gifts?

As Christmas passes and the New Year dawns, we encourage those who can to seek God in fasting and prayer on 31<sup>st</sup> December as we humble ourselves to prepare for the New Year. We also proclaim a 40-day fast in the beginning of each year to seek the Lord together.

As to the physical manner of the fast, for those who are new and not used to fasting or have medical conditions that prevent them from doing so, you may just do a non-meat fast (eating anything but meat during the forty days). For those who wish to go further, keep to liquids (fruit juices, hot nutritious drinks, honey drinks, soya bean, etc.). For those who wish to press further, do a water fast with alternate days on nutritious drinks, etc.

And as to the spiritual elements of the fast, spend as much free time as possible reading and studying the Bible, meditating on the Word of God, prayer in tongues, etc. – quantity and quality time in spiritual things. There will be a corporate anointing that will strengthen each of you as we do this together and seek God as one spiritual body together.

What can we expect year to year in the Lord? The Lord has told me that He will be visiting His people and bringing the pockets of revival to those who love Him. Eye has not seen, nor ear heard of all that which God has in store for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9). This verse is a quotation taken from Isaiah 64:4. Two Hebrew words have been deepened in meaning in its translation into the New Testament, the word 'act' replaced by 'prepared' and the word 'wait' replaced by 'love.' Placing the two Scriptures side by side, brings the fullest meaning to the fact that our 'waiting on God' is done in

spending time 'expressing our love and adoration to Him' and that we can expect not just God to prepare things for us but that there will be an acceleration of the acts of God on our behalf. Revival has already begun in the hearts of God's people. God is bringing together those of like-spirits and the fires in the hearts are burning brighter as these gather together and seek God in prayer or as a team. As these fires burn brightly, more and more people will gather together, and the flames will burn bigger and bigger until they reach a saturation and critical mass. The flames will reach critical mass and the impact will then be felt by others who have been waiting for that 'tangible revival' that they have been looking for. Unknown to them, this same fire and flame is already burning and Jesus Himself is visiting His people and fanning the flames of revival in the individual and corporate hearts of His teams of people.

It is vitally important that each person seek to be doing the right thing and being with the right people (fellowship wise) to allow the Spirit of His visitation to come upon them. Find those who have the same spiritual hunger as you and spend time praying together. Many of God's people who have been waiting on the Lord for some areas of breakthroughs (which have been long in coming), will find the breakthroughs coming in ways and means which they do not expect. In fact, like Zacharias, many of these would have forgotten their prayers for those areas of breakthrough because they have resigned themselves to a life of just contentedly serving God in their own way (Luke 1:13). We have sometimes forgotten our prayers to the Lord, but the Lord never forgets them especially when they have in the past been released in faith and sincerity. In time many of these 'forgotten prayers' are answered supernaturally. The spiritual wave that is flowing forth from the Spiritual World has increased in quantity and in quality. Those who tap upon the spiritual realm will feel and know the quickening pace that will take place. Where before they had to

seemingly put a lot of effort to keep doing what they know is right in positioning themselves for God's best. It would seem to be effortless because of the increased flow that will directly be coming forth from the Spiritual World (via God's throne, of course). For those who have been faithful in the past two years, it seems the Holy Spirit is blowing upon your sails and you are literally carried along by the powerful wind of the Spirit. This same wind that will be a powerful blessing to those whose sails are set up will also be a fierce wind of judgment to those who resist the Spirit, such that some of their boats and ships (speaking figuratively) will be damaged irreparably and some whose lives will end suddenly.

For these reasons, we encourage each of you beloved to seek the Lord with fasting and prayer as we enter into another fresh New Year for the Lord. The Lord will grace you with His strength as you seek His face and take time to just love Him and be with Him. Let each of us seek Him in accordance and proportional to the strength and grace He gives.

The Lord is with your spirit and is the Author and Finisher of your faith.

## Fatherly Talk 4.12

### Faith Series: Faith and the Prophetic Word

Dearly Beloved

Prophecies, visions, dreams, impressions and many other forms of supernatural communication from God directly or indirectly would have taken place sometime in the average Christian life if they have been keeping themselves within the functional and spiritual local church community. The question in many Christians' minds is what to do about them and where to go from there. Firstly, we need to make note of the fact that generally the gift of prophecy does not have any 'revealing' qualities but serves primarily to comfort, exhort and edify (1 Corinthians 14:3 – prophecy is classified amongst the vocal gifts). The main revelation gifts are the word of wisdom (revelation of things to come), the word of knowledge (revelation of things present or past) and discerning of spirits (revelation of things of the spiritual realm) (1 Corinthians 12:8-11). The usage of the word 'prophecy' or 'prophesy' in the Bible many times includes the function of the gift of prophecy with the revelation gifts; as is prominent in Old Testament prophets (1 Samuel 9:6; 2 Kings 3:11). When they covered the eyes of Jesus and beat Him, they expected Him to be able to tell who was beating Him by them asking Him to prophesy (Luke 22:64). The practice of the word of prophecy by Agabus was always accompanied by the revelation gift of the word of wisdom (Acts 11:28; 21:10-11). As the word of prophecy delivered by prophets and apostles are many times given with the operation of the revelation gifts, prophecy has since been always lumped together with the revelation gifts although for analysis one can divide prophecy and the revelation gifts into their various components. In this Fatherly Talk, we use the word

'prophecy' as being inclusive of the gift of prophecy and the revelation gifts.

Prophetic words can come in dreams, visions, impressions received directly in prayer or indirectly through a vessel of God. Many prophetic words contain revelation of things to come. This is common because it is promised by Jesus that when His Holy Spirit comes, we will know things to come (John 16:13). The question can be asked, "Why does God show us things to come?" What is the reason and purpose behind God showing us things to come? Can we change things shown to us? Do we have a part to play to bring it to pass? Can free will forfeit that which has been shown? Our logic can flow as follows:

1. If we can't change things, why does God show it to us?
2. If we can change things, then what must we do to bring it about?
3. If we can change things, then can it NOT come to pass even if God has shown it to us?

The above questions must first address the fact that there are many types of prophetic word. The method of delivery or reception can be different, i.e. vision, dream, word given by others, etc. All prophetic words can be conditional, for example the word of Jonah on the destruction of Nineveh did not come to pass because Nineveh repented (and it upset Jonah who would have liked to see them destroyed) (Jonah 3:10-4:1). All prophetic words can be postponed to another person or generation by the disobedience of the present person or generation (Exodus 33:10; Numbers 14:12, 23, 26-34). The Israelites by their free will rejected the vision of the promised land and died in the wilderness but their children fulfilled the vision.

There is dynamism in the prophetic word which many Christians do not realize. King Saul was promised the kingship but through his own wilful disobedience forfeited the right of continuity on the throne (1 Samuel 13:13). Samuel said that God would have established his throne perpetually if he had been obedient. It fell upon David to fulfil the prophetic promise of God. Judas Iscariot lost his apostleship and another had to replace him (Acts 1:20). The apostles understanding that the prophetic word can be altered by free choice (in other words serve as a warning only) is demonstrated by the fact that they tried to prevent a prophetic word from coming to pass by persuading Paul not to go to Jerusalem (Acts 21:12). If it couldn't be prevented, then why did they try to persuade Paul? Of course, Paul himself was willing to let it come to pass because he knew that was the direction that the Lord wanted him to take (Acts 20:22-23; 21:13). Paul's willingness to be a martyr, if need be, helped bring about the fulfilment of the prophecy. So, on the positive prophecy scenario where the Israelites were promised the land of Canaan, it failed to come to pass because of disobedience; and in the suffering prophecy scenario, it came to pass because Paul was willing to accept the consequences of death or martyrdom. Free will is directly involved in the fulfilment (or non-fulfilment) of a prophetic word. In the end every word of God will be fulfilled, the question is when and by whom.

Knowing that free will is involved in all prophetic words, we can better understand why God reveals it to us in advance (showing us things to come). The prophecy received must be mixed with faith for it to have powerful fulfilment (Hebrews 4:2)! The main reason God shows us things to come is so that we can begin to allow the authorship of faith in our hearts by the Lord Jesus (Hebrews 12:2). Like the four types of ground in the parable of the sower and the seed, there was nothing wrong with the seed but everything wrong in three

of the types of ground (Mark 4:1-20). The problem was in the reception of the seed – there was enough power in the seed to grow a hundredfold in all the types of ground. When God shows things to come through words of prophecy we need to allow the process of faith to begin in our lives. With the word of things to come, the process for the gift of faith has begun. Initially at the beginning stage there is not much consciousness of faith. One might even be doubtful and in bewilderment. But the first process of faith has begun – the ability to see it the way God wants it to be (if it is a positive promise) or repentance with humility (inclusive of tears) to avert a disastrous future outcome.

This means that when it is a positive promise, we need to constantly meditate on that which God has shown us, holding it close to our heart and allowing the picture to be seared into our mind and heart. This is the process by which God is writing His will and laws into our hearts and minds (Hebrews 8:10). If it is a vision or dream, we need to constantly play it back in our mind's eye (*dianoia*) like Abraham daily seeing the dust by day and the stars by night to be his children (Genesis 13:16; 15:5). If it is a word or impression, we need to meditate over them constantly in our daily lives. Through time, these 'prophetic words' will produce the faith required to bring them to pass. Our hearts and minds are in a sense like the womb through which God's Spirit can bring forth and birth all that is in His Will for this planet earth.

Timothy was advised by the apostle Paul to wage a good warfare with the prophetic word that he had received having faith and a good conscience (1 Timothy 1:18). He was also told not to neglect the gift which was in him given to him by prophecy with the laying on of hands of the presbytery (1 Timothy 4:14). The skill of hearing the prophetic word and mixing it with faith is through allowing the

'revealed word' to erase all doubts from our minds and then grow in the fertile ground of our loving, peaceful and humble hearts. For some, this might be an instantaneous process but for the majority it would take a process of time for faith to grow and build within oneself. The following laws of the Spirit work in this process of faith being added to the word that is heard:

1. The greater the intensity and consummation of the revealed word of prophecy in us, the faster it will accelerate the word coming to pass in our lives. We must be consumed by the passion for that which God has revealed to us. Paul was one of the most passionate men in his generation (Galatians 1:14).
2. The exercise of patience is important to this process as it serves as the cooling water that creates the steel blade of swords. Through faith and patience, there is sufficient toughness on the outside to resist the enemy who attacks the seed of the word delivered to us and yet find a softness and tenderness within us to love God and our neighbour (Hebrews 6:12).
3. Let the prophetic word fulfil itself rather than to try to self-fulfil it. We need to learn what it is to be nothing before we learn that we can do all things through Christ (John 15:5).
4. There is always a fullness of time for a prophetic word to come to pass. The fullness of time is both God's predestined timetable and the fullness of time as of women who have nurtured the child in their womb until the fullness of time for the birth. We become so pregnant with the word of prophecy that it literally is birthed forth in the fullness of faith. Stephen was a man full of faith (Acts 6:5). Jesus used the illustration of a woman giving birth in the fullness of time to His ministry on earth (John 16:16, 20-21).

5. Meditation on the prophetic word (including visualisation) is part of the process. It is easy when God gives it in the form of a vision or dream; one merely has to re-call it to memory frequently. Timothy was told to meditate on areas related to the prophecy that he had received regarding his gifting (1 Timothy 4:15).

Not everything that is prophesied to us is a prophetic word that we need to meditate upon. We have to test all things including prophecy (1 Thessalonians 5:20-21). But those things that really speak to your heart and especially if God has shown it to you by dreams or visions kindling a fire within you, those things are the prophetic words which one needs to meditate upon constantly for the gift of faith received through the prophetic word to grow within oneself.

Meditate on those things that you know that God has spoken about your life and destiny. By doing so you will be mixing faith with the prophetic word that you have received with regards to things to come.

The Lord bless you and keep you and make His face to shine upon you.

## Fatherly Talk 4.13

### Faith Series: Faith and Holiness

Dearly Beloved

The Israelites were told to be holy for the Lord is holy (Leviticus 19:2). Note that holiness proceeds from God to us and not us to Him. Moses was told that the place he stood on at the burning bush was holy (Exodus 3:5). When the sin offering was offered, it was considered a holy offering (most holy) and the priest who ate of it needed to also be in the right place to eat it (a holy place), and everyone who touched the flesh of the sin offering became holy; and where the blood was sprinkled on any garment it was considered holy and needed to be washed only in a holy place (Leviticus 6:25-27). Even the earthen pot which touched the vessel must be broken and a bronze vessel scoured and rinsed with water (Leviticus 6:28-30). The earthen vessel is a symbol of the flesh and the bronze vessel is a symbol of the soul; the flesh needs to be broken and the mind needs to be cleansed and renewed. The Old Testament sin sacrifice was a shadow representation of Jesus who became sin for us on the cross of Calvary (2 Corinthians 5:21). No one in the Old Covenant could be holy without the sin offering and no one in the New Covenant can be holy without the atonement of Jesus. Holiness is a gift imparted by God – from Him to us and not from us (trying to be holy) to God. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:10-23). Based upon the atonement of Jesus at the cross (2 Corinthians 5:17-21), and having the promises of God, we are exhorted to cleanse ourselves perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Corinthians 7:1). We are reminded that God's chastening enables us to be partakers of His holiness (Hebrews 12:10). Although in the book of Hebrews, it looks as if it is the circumstances that is chastening them, they were

reminded to have endurance in the promises of God that they might receive the promises of God (Hebrews 10:35-36). It is not circumstances that chasten, it is the word that chastens. The word of God cuts and cleanses and corrects (Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16). Circumstances are only challenges to the seed of the word that has already been received (the parable of the sower and the word – Mark 4:3-20). Holiness has to be received as a gift (through the sin offering) in the Old Covenant and as a gift of the life of Jesus (the gift of the righteousness of God) in the New Covenant.

If holiness is a gift, then all exhortations to be holy are outgrowths of the reception of the gift of holiness to be worked out (or grown out). This is supported by the reference by Paul both to the working out of the gift of righteousness and the fruit of righteousness (I am using the words 'righteousness' and 'holiness' interchangeably here as they are both two related dimensions) (Romans 5:17; 6:13; Philippians 1:11). Thus, all attempts at holiness from the outward form to achieve inward holiness are futile. Holiness can only be successful when it grows from the inward gifting and impartation to the outward life. And this is the part where faith comes into play. Since holiness is a gift, it then is also dependent on our faith level to appropriate it. As always faith to appropriate holiness is different from faith to appropriate other areas of spiritual and natural life (Fatherly Talk 4.09 and 4.10). We need to understand how to exercise faith for holiness as much as in all other areas of life.

Since holiness is a gift to be appropriated by faith, it brings forth the basic faith principles applied to the specific area of holiness:

1. We need to behold His holiness to be holy AS He is holy.

We are transformed into His glory as we behold His glory (2 Corinthians 3:18). Peter speaks about the girding up of the loins

of our minds so that we rest our hope FULLY upon the grace that is to be brought to us at the revelation of Christ so that we live our lives to be holy as He is holy (1 Peter 1:13-16). The word mind here comes from the word *dianoia* which speaks more about the imagination than of the mental thinking process (Luke 1:51; Ephesians 1:18); the words that express more of the thinking process would be *nous* and *dialogismos*. They imply that we must see His holiness in order to be transformed into the same equal holiness. We also need to see His great love in imparting His holiness into us; for He knows that we cannot be holy by our own strength. Like Abraham looking to the stars and imagining them as his children, we need to look into the brightness of God's holiness and see that same holiness reflected and imparted into us.

2. We need to understand how imparted holiness affects our spirit, soul and body.

Sin affects the spirit, soul and body. It affects the spirit by causing it to be separated from God, the mind by wrong reasoning and imaginations, and the body by death and decay. Through imparted righteousness and holiness, the spirit receives new life and is re-connected back to God (Romans 8:10). The mind needs to be renewed to new spiritual perceptions (Romans 8:5-6). Sin, which still dwells in the flesh, is neutralised (mortified) through the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 7:17-18; 8:1-13). The transformation is through the spirit first, then through the mind and thereafter in the body. The transformation is also proportional to that which is received in the spirit, then in the mind and thereafter in the body. Faith draws from the spirit continually and allows it to flow through the soul followed by the body. This process of drawing takes

place through reflection (mirroring – 2 Corinthians 3:18), refraction (process of meditation – Psalms 1:2-3) and yielding (prayer, worship – John 4:23-24). The mind must remain in consciousness of the union of our spirit to the Spirit of Christ within us and the body needs to be pummelled to be led by the spirit in holiness (1 Corinthians 9:27).

3. To the pure all things are pure (Titus 1:15).

The transformation of the mind by holiness and righteousness causes one to see things through the beauty of holiness (1 Chronicles 16:29; 2 Chronicles 20:21; Psalms 29:2; 96:9). Note that the difference between a sinful mind and a holy mind is that to the sinful mind sin is beautiful but to a holy mind, sin is ugly and holiness is beautiful. Faith holds on to the perception of the transformed mind (the spiritual mind). It takes faith to see that sin is ugly. It takes faith to see that holiness is beautiful. The devil's deception is to cause sin to look beautiful and make holiness seem awful. The Holy Spirit renews our mind to see beauty in holiness and find true spiritual beauty in everything. Beauty is not just in the physical realm, there is moral beauty, character beauty, beauty of well-spoken words, beauty of kindness, beauty in goodness, etc. Faith eyes see the possibility of the right kind of beauty in everything. They find purity in every impurity.

4. Holiness is a fruit which grows incrementally (Romans 6:22).

Sanctification is past tense (when we accept Christ), present continuous tense (our souls being renewed) and future tense (when we receive new resurrected bodies). Although we received holiness as a gift (which continues to grow) in our spirits, we need it to flow through our souls and our bodies.

Thus, the need to perfect holiness in the fear of God (2 Corinthians 7:1). Our consciousness of the gift of holiness through meditation would progress from our inner mind (*dianoia* – 1 Peter 1:13) to the outer mind (Ephesians 4:23 – *nous*).

5. By faith we must learn to put on the new man which is created in righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:24).

This new man is that which was created when Christ came into our hearts (2 Corinthians 5:17). By faith we need to learn to put off the old man and put on the new man (Colossians 3:9-10). Note that the new man is already renewed in knowledge whereas the mind is still in the process of being renewed (Colossians 3:10; Romans 12:2). We must reckon our old man as crucified with Christ (past tense – Romans 6:6). The act of putting off the old man and putting on the new man is an internal mechanism in our spirit which is triggered by the will in yielding to the spirit of faith. Whenever we move from the mode of resting in the gift of holiness into the mode of trying to be holy, we will sink lower into sin like a drowning swimmer whose struggles increase his sinking capacity. When we feel ourselves sinking by the weight of sin around us trying to draw us, we need to expand our spirit consciousness within us of the gift of holiness (like a submarine increasing its buoyancy) which will cause us to rise higher into holiness consciousness thus freeing us from the gravitational force of sin.

Let us be strong in the grace of the Lord and not in ourselves (2 Timothy 2:1). For in ourselves we can do nothing but through Christ we can do all things (John 15:5; Philippians 4:13). In trusting the outworking of holiness to Christ within us, we learn that when we are weak, then are we strong for then our reliance would be 100% on the Lord and not on ourselves (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). When we have

truly lived our lives totally dependent on Christ within us, we can say like Paul that it is not us but the grace of God within us that enables us (1 Corinthians 15:10).

May the revelation of the gift of righteousness and holiness enable you to reign in your life.

## Fatherly Talk 4.14

### Faith Series: Faith and Worship

Dearly Beloved

One of the most fascinating verses in the Bible is John 4:23-24 which presents God the Father as the seeker of those who worship Him in spirit and in truth. Many questions arise here. What does it mean by God seeking and what does it mean by worshipping in spirit and in truth? Of course, since without faith we cannot please God, it implies that faith must be involved in some way in our worship (Hebrews 11:6).

Firstly, we need to examine what worship entails. The Hebrew word for worship *shachah* implies a prostration, kneeling, bowing down, obeisance and reverence. The main Greek word for worship *proskuneo* also implies a prostration in homage or adoration, a kiss given to the master's hand (Matthew 2:11).

Together with other Greek words and shades of translation, there is an overall picture of what worship implies:

1. The yielding of authority (like the devil attempting to get Jesus to yield to him – *proskuneo* Matthew 4:10; Luke 4:7).
2. Adoration (the Pharisees attempting to produce worship through their vain doctrines and commandments – *sebomai* Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:7; implied of Paul by Jews – *sebomai* Acts 18:13).
3. Honour and glory (recognition and honour, mistranslated as worship in the KJV – *doxa* Luke 14:10).

4. Different levels of knowing what we worship (contrasting Jews and Samaritans – *proskuneo* John 4:22).
5. To serve (God giving up the Israelites to serve false gods – *latreuo* Acts 7:42; Paul confessing to serving our God – *latreuo* Acts 24:14; we are of the circumcision who truly serve or worship God *latreuo* Philippians 3:3).
6. Bowing down (Israelites bowing down to idols – *proskuneo* Acts 7:43; the enemies of God caused to bow down before the people of God - *proskuneo* Revelation 3:9).
7. To be respectful (as to parents) (the Greeks ignorantly worshipping the unknown God – *eusebeuo* Acts 17:23).
8. A recognition of God as God (falling down separately mentioned with the acknowledgment of God being in the midst – *proskuneo* 1 Corinthians 14:25; the twenty-four elders bowing down before God and then worshipping – *proskuneo* Revelation 4:10).
9. A show of piety and devotion (an outward show of humility and devotion not necessarily correct– *ethelothreskeia* Colossians 2:23).
10. Paying homage (the anti-Christ succeeding in getting the world to worship him – *proskuneo* Revelation 13:8).

With so many variations of understanding what worship is and implies, we need to keep our focus on the fact that the main root word for worship both in Hebrew and Greek points to a humbling of oneself in obeisance both in heart, attitude and soul. Its roots imply a bending of the heart and life to another. It is in worship that we can fully understand the paradox of what it means to be both weak and yet strong! (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). Our internal being and self has been

truly bent and yielded to God (as completely melted and weak) but simultaneously Jesus becomes the steel in our lives. Following from our last Fatherly Talk (4:13 – I suggest that it be re-read as a pre-empt to this talk) which speaks of holiness as a gift and our need to exercise faith in the gift of holiness, we thus continue on this theme and point to the fact that whenever holiness is mentioned in worship, the beauty of holiness is also mentioned (1 Chronicles 16:29; 2 Chronicles 20:21; Psalms 29:2; 96:9). We need to worship in the beauty of holiness. The outworking or growth of the gift of holiness is that we will experience the worship in the beauty of holiness. **What we find beautiful and what we find pleasurable is that which we TRULY worship**. Thus, true worship is when we TRULY find beauty in the Lord Jesus and our Father God and TRULY enjoy the pleasure of His beauty and holiness. True worship is thus the finding of beauty and pleasure in the Lord and not just songs, music, posture, outward forms, etc. If you sing a song of praise or worship without finding pleasure and beauty in the Lord deep within your heart, it would NOT be true worship – it would just be some song and music. If you serve the Lord out of duty WITHOUT pleasure and WITHOUT finding Him to be the most beautiful and excellent in ALL creation, then our service is NOT worship.

If you find that physical beauty is your main consciousness and pleasure, then you are guilty of worshipping the physical body. If you only find pleasure and beauty in cars, houses or things, then you are worshipping such. If you only find pleasure and beauty in things, then you are guilty of worshipping those things. This does not mean that we do not take pleasure in all of God's creation and gifts to us in His blessings of spirit, soul and body pleasures. Rather it just means that God is our Supreme Pleasure and the MOST beautiful and lovely in our eyes and heart. In a sense, the Most Holy is simultaneously the Most Beautiful to us who worship Him. How else do you think we

can keep beholding Him and allowing Him to transform us? (2 Corinthians 3:18). We need to be enraptured and captivated by God the Most beautiful and Most lovely in His revelation of Himself in Christ Jesus.

In His introduction to worshipping God in spirit and in truth, Jesus made mention of the fact that God is Spirit (John 4:24). Just like we have exercised faith in the gift of holiness, we need to exercise faith and see with the eyes of faith that God is TRULY the MOST beautiful, the MOST lovely and the MOST pleasurable. By faith, everything that we see beautiful of people, of things, of creation we see that it really proceeds from Him and is but a tiny reflection of God's true beauty that we are deeply in love with. By faith as we take pleasure in all His creation through the sensations that He gave us, we see that it all proceeds from Him and are but a tiny reflection of the great unfathomed pleasures of His joy and love. The pleasures of the spirit are much, much greater than the pleasures of the flesh and body. By faith we rise into the realms beyond the flesh with the spirit and begin to experience the pleasures of the spirit because God is a Spirit. Just as the flesh experiences physical sensations of pleasure, the spirit contacts God and experiences the greater pleasures of the spiritual dimension. It is joy unspeakable, love without comprehension and peace beyond understanding. Our faith senses need to grow and be trained to experience such.

Having noted the above, we can thus have some understanding of the Father seeking those who can worship in spirit and in truth. To God, all of us are like His little children. Just as we, parents, enjoy carrying and holding our children, God enjoys embracing us within His arms of love. We take pleasure in seeing our children enjoying our warmth and touch, so does God our Father enjoy our joy that we experience in Him spiritually. He is a Spirit and by faith we need to experience

Him with our spirits. God seeks us to allow us to enjoy the pleasure of His company. The hands of faith can transfer the physical pleasures of touch to the pleasures of touch in the spirit. The eyes of faith can transfer all the physical beauty we see to the pleasures of beholding the lily of the valley, the fairest of ten thousand, the Lord Jesus Christ, the revelation of the Father. The ears of faith can transfer the sweet sounds of music and voice to hear and identify the voice and sounds of the Father God embedded in all the sweetness of His creation. Why does God seek those who worship Him? It is because He also takes pleasure in those who take pleasure in Him. It is a divine mutual joy of spirit to Spirit. It is not the picture of a demanding God seeking and requiring obeisance but the picture of a Father seeking and wanting to take His little children and showering them with kisses and hugs.

In summary, by faith we recognise that all that we see of physical beauty is but a reflection of God bouncing off all those physical people or things that we find beautiful. And all those things that we find pleasurable are but a reflection of all the enjoyable pleasures from God in shadow form in the physical. In the sweetness of every fruit, we find worship in the God of beauty and pleasure. In the loveliness of human companionship and physical things, we find worship towards our true God who gives us both the senses to experience and the creation of all people and all things. Through time, we also find that some of the things we thought unlovely, and some of the people we thought unlovely are indeed beautiful and lovely because they reflect the glory and beauty of the Lord. Through time, we find beauty in the most unlikely places and loveliness even in unsightly places. We find God in everything, in Him we live and move and have our being. We find shades of loveliness and beauty in all His laws that are given to maintain and purify our sense of what is truly lovely from that which is ugly. Holiness becomes ever more beautiful and sin becomes exposed in all its ugliness, yet we can see how it should be

and can be beautiful. Ugliness is purely disharmony with the image of God. Through the eyes of faith, we can also discern how to make ugliness beautiful again. It can even see to the day when there will be no crying, no sorrow nor death – for all things will then become truly beautiful both inside and outside.

Jesus went to the cross, endured the cross, despised the shame because of the joy that was set before Him (Hebrews 12:1). Through the eyes of faith, He could see beauty in the cross and taste the pleasure of God's joy despite the sorrows and sin which He had to bear for us in the atonement. He saw the glory of the resurrection and kept His eyes on the beauty of the glory of the resurrection. Does Jesus see beauty in each of us? Yes, He does. He can see the image of God within each of us and through the cross allowed us to become partakers of this transformation process when He can bring us all to be conformed to His image. Worshipping God in spirit and in truth is worshipping God with the eyes of our spirit turned on to see as He sees, and worshipping is seeing all things as they are seen through the eyes of God in their true reality – in Truth or in Trueness. It means to worship Him with all the pleasure senses of our spirit and seeing the beauty of the Lord and the reflections of His beauty in everything. Blessed are those who are pure in heart for they shall see God (Matthew 5:8). To the pure, all things are pure (Titus 1:15).

Beloved ones, you are each beautiful and lovely in God's eyes. See yourself as God TRULY sees you and not as you see yourself. And see God as the Most Holy, the Most Beautiful and the Most lovely. And may all your pleasures in life be derived from your love and pleasure in the Lord. And may all that you enjoy in this life be recognised as shadows of the true pleasure that can only come from God and God alone – the source of all is pleasurable.

## Fatherly Talk 4.15

### Faith Series: Victory before the Event (Faith for Trials and Temptation)

Dearly Beloved

There is a phenomenon in the Spiritual World which I will try to describe to help in the understanding of how the Spirit of faith works. For example, it is possible from the Spiritual World perspective to know when two teams or two players are playing a sports game to tell who will be the winner, even before the event. Such knowledge and ability of course would be easily misused by carnal humans on earth and as such not many on earth are nurtured by the Spiritual World to have such gifting and abilities. The interesting thing about this ability is that it depends not just on the overall impact of various events nor just a predetermination by God, for many such events have no value or impact on the spiritual world except for the growth in the character of the individuals concerned. The reason why the higher perception from the spiritual world can 'predict' such events is based on the comparative flow of 'energies' (running out of human vocabulary here) or 'light' that is present in the potential winner in comparison to their opponent. There is a 'victory quality' present (spiritually speaking) on the winner even before the event. This intangible and indescribable quality in the natural is spiritually present and spiritually tangible such that the course of an event can be 'easily seen' from the higher realms of the Spiritual World even before it has taken place in the natural world.

From the Bible perspective, such qualities can be imparted as a gift or given as a reward or acquired through a life of faith:

1. Peter was told by the Lord that he would be tested by the devil and that he would deny the Lord three times but because the Lord Jesus had prayed for him, his faith would not fail and when he returned he was to strengthen his brethren (Luke 22:31-34). Isn't it amazing that even before the event (Peter's denial of the Lord), the Lord had predicted it and spoken confidently of the victory that Peter would have and when he come out of it, that he was to strengthen his brethren? The victory of Peter was already guaranteed by the Lord's praying him through even before the event had occurred.
2. After Abraham passed the test of God (the Isaac test), God added a special blessing on him beyond his other blessings in Genesis chapters, 12, 15 and 17. For the first time God spoke of Abraham's descendants possessing the gate of their enemies (Genesis 22:17). There was a 'victory quality' given to all of Abraham's descendants. Abraham's descendants had not even been born yet (except his immediate family) and they had already been given victory over events that did not exist yet.
3. King David learnt this secret and each time before his battles, he would always seek the confirmed 'victory quality' even before he went out into battle. For example, David enquired of the Lord regarding the Philistines before his battle with them and when the Lord gave him the assurance of victory, he went forth with his victory already spiritually in hand (2 Samuel 5:19).
4. The reason why King Jehoshaphat and his men praised the Lord by sending the singers and musicians before the soldiers is because the 'victory quality' had already been imparted to them through the word of the Lord (2 Chronicles 20:14-30).

5. Sometimes when the people of God do not understand the importance of receiving this 'victory quality' before a battle, temptation or trial, they fail miserably in those testing events. A prime example is given at the end of the book of Judges when Israel was in civil war. The eleven tribes of Israelites were in battle with the tribe of Benjamin. When they asked the Lord the first time who should lead in battle, they were told that it should be Judah (Judges 20:18). They went into battle but were defeated even though they were numbered 400,000 Israelites versus 26,700 Benjamites (Judges 20:15-17). 22,000 Israelites died in the first battle. Numerical superiority did not help at all. The second time, they asked the Lord whether they should go out in battle and of course the Lord said that they should. Another 18,000 Israelites died unnecessarily because the 'victory quality' was not imparted yet. Finally, the Israelites repented, they wept, they fasted, they sought the Lord and offered offerings but most importantly, they received the 'victory quality' imparted upon them when the Lord said that He was delivering the Benjamites into their hands (Judges 20:28).

This 'victory quality' needs to be received through faith before a trial or temptation or test even begins or exists. Jesus told His disciples to pray that they may not enter into temptation (Luke 22:40). There are some temptations which we should not enter into (Matthew 6:13). But there are some which are part of the testing and wilderness experience to produce quality of character within us (Matthew 4:1; Romans 5:3-4). The demonstration of one who has received the 'victory quality' in their lives before the event is that when the event occurs there is supernatural joy and peace even though the circumstances do not seem to be so (John 14:27; 15:11). Thus, one can 'leap for joy' in persecution and 'count it all joy' in temptations (Luke 6:23; James 1:2). Before going to the cross of Calvary for us, Jesus had already received

the victory and thus He could endure the cross, despising the shame for the joy that was set before Him (Hebrews 12:2).

It is this 'victory quality' which Hebrews chapter 11 tries to describe when it says that faith is the 'substance' of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). The word 'substance' (Greek word *hupostasis*) has been translated both as substance and confidence in the New Testament (2 Corinthians 9:4; 11:17; Hebrews 1:3; 3:14; 11:1). How can something be both a substance and confidence at the same time? By the spiritual impartation of 'victory quality'! It is the very quality of the substance of the person of God (Hebrews 1:3 – *hupostasis* translated person). God calls those things which are not as though they were because He already sees the completed picture even before it begins.

The word *hupostasis* comes from a combination of two Greek words – *hupo* (meaning by or under) and *istemi* (meaning standing under). While *hupomone* (Greek word for patience) speaks of abiding under (*hupo + meno*), *hupostasis* speaks of one firmly entrenched, cemented and established as one within a structure (*hupo + istemi*). The fact that it is translated as both a substance (Hebrews 11:1) and as person (in reference to Christ being the substance-person of God – Hebrews 1:3), we can say that the relationship between patience (*hupomone* – from the root word *meno* which means to abide) and *hupostasis* is that patience is the beginning of the abiding process of union and *hupostasis* is the completed event of union (structured into Christ). Something like wet cement to dried cement. We are also told to hold fast to the beginning of our *hupostasis* (Hebrews 3:14). This implies that it is a process for where there is a beginning of *hupostasis* there is an ending and a completion. The key then is to wait on God until the *hupostasis* – the 'victory quality' – is completed. Thus, the promise that those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength and will soar

like eagles (Isaiah 40:31). Thus, the promise of receiving the things which God has prepared for those who love and wait on God (1 Corinthians 2:9).

One should stay in prayer and worship in union with God such that BEFORE any trial, test, temptation, tribulation or any other event, one should receive the 'victory quality' even BEFORE the existence or occurrence of such. All failures are caused by the lack of receiving this 'victory quality.' Of course, there are some tests and temptations which are not supposed to be entered at all but for those that are along the path of the perfect Will of God in our lives, we should receive before the event. Nevertheless, the way out of ALL such is the reception of this 'victory quality' regardless of whether it was in the permissive will or perfect will. The key is to understand that the way out is through this 'victory quality.' If one has not received it prior to the event, then one should seek God even if such events have already occurred for it would be the only victorious way out.

One can wait on God and be receiving tons and tons of *hupostasis* (just an expression, you can't really measure *hupostasis*). Spiritual substances and impartations of grace and strength for events which are not even in existence yet; but it is possible to receive the 'victory qualities' even now in the present in our hearts and spirits. Victory before the event - what a wonderful concept of grace and faith. Remember that the key to your future victory is the reception of the victory in the present. Our minds and understanding do not have to know the details of the events nor even of their existence, but we do need to receive the substance of the energy of God and become partakers of Christ (Hebrews 3:14).

May grace and strength, peace and joy be established in each of you as your internal spiritual root system grows even deeper into the love of God (Ephesians 3:17). And being planted in the river of Christ in

God, may we all in God's fullness of time become trees bearing fruit in our season whose leaves do not wither for we have come out in triumph through the famine and the hardship of the wilderness into the abundant flow of God (Psalm 1).

## Fatherly Talk 4.16

### Faith Series: The Shield of Faith

Dearly Beloved

In spiritual warfare against the forces of darkness, Paul speaks about taking the shield of faith whereby we can quench all the fiery darts of the enemy (Ephesians 6:16). The shield of faith practically cancels all the capabilities of the enemy rendering the enemy harmless. Such authority is expected since Jesus said that He gave us the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; adding the phrase that nothing shall by any means hurt us (Luke 10:19). The apostle John adds that whoever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory (remember the 'victory quality' in Fatherly Talk 4.15) that overcomes the world – our faith (1 John 5:4). This shield of faith or force field is in the spiritual realm since faith is a spiritual quality (2 Corinthians 4:13).

What is this 'force-field' of faith like? It is like an invisible covering or shield or hedge or bubble around those who have it. In the Old Testament, the devil acknowledged that there was a hedge around Job, around his household and around all that he had on every side (Job 1:10). So long as the hedge was there he could not get through against Job. This spiritual hedge is like a wall of fire around the object of God's grace and love (Zechariah 2:5). I have seen in the Spiritual World, how this force-field of power can literally hurt those evil spirits when they try to touch it – it is like them experiencing a burning agony. When the Lord sent the ten plagues upon Egypt, Israel was protected because there was a protective shield around the land of Goshen (Exodus 8:22; 9:26, besides the protection of the blood covenant Exodus 12:13).

The nature of this force-field of faith and power:

1. This force-field of faith can extend over nations and over entire cities (Exodus 8:22, 14:19-20; Zechariah 2:5).
2. It can be over an individual, his family and his entire works and assets (Job 1:10).
3. It is the presence of the Lord Himself and His angels (Zechariah 2:5; Exodus 14:19-20; Acts 27:23-24).
4. It can protect from all destructive spiritual and natural forces (Psalm 91:4-7; Daniel 3:25).
5. It can be exercised by the delegated head of authority (whether it be over people, church, organizations, family, small groups) over those under their protective authority (Luke 22:31-32; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5; 1 Timothy 1:20; Acts 16:31; Genesis 7:1).
6. It is activated by setting one's love upon the Lord and dwelling in Him (Psalm 91:9, 14; 1 John 4:17-19).
7. It is equivalent to being in Christ and in the power of His might and atonement (His blood) (Ephesians 6:10; Revelation 12:11).

This marvellous force-field of faith and power extends beyond geographical boundaries and is the expansive boundary line where God's manifest presence begins. Obed-Edom experienced the blessings of being within the sphere (force-field) of God's manifest presence (1 Chronicles 13:14). Sometimes when others welcome into their lives those with the sphere of God's favour and presence, they also benefit like Potiphar did of Joseph (Genesis 39:3-6). God blessed the Egyptian house because of (for the sake of) Joseph (Genesis 39:5). God protected all the humans on board the ship because of the apostle Paul (Acts 27:23-24). No one could harm or touch Jesus when it was

not time to lay down His life for us. When they wanted to throw Jesus down a cliff, Jesus just passed through the midst of them (Luke 4:29). It was only when Jesus laid down His life and allowed the shield of protection about Him to be dropped that they could arrest Him (John 7:30). Jesus said that no one could take His life away from Him; He had power to lay it down and He had power to take it again (John 10:17-18). He did not even need the disciples to defend Him for He had more than twelve legions of angels at His call (Matthew 26:51-53). The force-field of faith given by Jesus to us will be so strong that not one hair of our head shall perish if it is not God's Will for us to be martyrs (Luke 21:18). In the Old Testament Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did not even have the smell of smoke upon them nor was their hair singed or their garments affected (Daniel 3:27). The fire had completely no power over them for the shield that God covered them with was smoke-proofed, fire-proofed, smell-proofed, etc. – nothing, absolutely nothing could get through the force-field of God's protection. In the New Testament, the protective shield extended upon the shipmates because of the protection upon Paul's life was such that they would not even loose one hair in the shipwreck (Acts 27:34). Jesus was keenly aware of the shield-force power over Him such that when Pilate dared to claim power over Him, He replied that he had no power over Him except that which was from above (that which God allowed him to have temporarily) (John 19:10-11). That must have stunned Pilate for from that moment onwards he sought to release Jesus (John 19:12).

Having seen the greatness of this force-field power of faith, we can move on to consider how this force is exercised. As we see how the Lord Jesus exercised His power and authority, it is clear that Jesus had full knowledge and an inner knowing of who He was and what authority He exercised. We need to know our position in Christ and be strong in the specific area of grace in which He has bestowed to us

individually. The Ephesians were told to 'be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might' (Ephesians 6:10). The word 'be strong' is the Greek word *endunamo* which literally means 'to be strengthened from within'. This same expression is used when Paul told Timothy to 'be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus' (2 Timothy 2:1). This ability 'to be strong' is directly derived from an inner knowing and union with our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not our ability but the tangible power of His grace within us. Paul speaks of this internal grace as a separate energy force from himself operating within him (1 Corinthians 15:10). The apostle John ties the power of this force-field of faith to our being born again (1 John 5:4). He goes on to say that he who is born again keeps himself and the wicked one touches him not (1 John 5:18). The reason for the power of the new birth, according to John, is the seed (nature, life) of God which is now within us (1 John 5:9). Based on all these Scriptures, we can say that this force-field of faith is flowing from within us. It is already in us and we just need to learn to allow it to flow through us and from us.

From Ephesians 6:11-18, there are verbs that Paul used that outlines the methodology of releasing this force-field of faith: put on (*enduo* – be clothed, Ephesians 6:10); take up (*analambano* – take, receive, Ephesians 6:13); having put on (*enduo* – be clothed, Ephesians 6:14); taking (*analambano* – take, receive, Ephesians 6:16); take (*dechomai* – accept, receive, take, Ephesians 6:17). Note how it flows from BEING to RECEIVING (internally) to ACCEPTING. We need to KNOW that this force-field of faith is flowing internally through us and not just from an external source. Reading this passage in the Greek gives the picture of the flow of energy from within us (*endunamo* – Ephesians 6:10) to the outside world around us (*dunamo* – you shall BE able to quench the fiery darts of the enemy Ephesians 6:16). It is NOT our energy but the energy of God flowing from our spirits deep within us. It is not so much us trying to do something as it is us RECEIVING

something (the energy force-field from God expanding from within us). Two Greek words are used here – *analambao* and *dechomai* – which both emphasize a receiving and accepting factor rather than an area of effort. We need to receive the impartations of His grace from within, but we need to also accept that it is so. There is a lot of emphasis in Ephesians 6 on standing. Note how Ephesians moves from us sitting in heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 2:6) to a position of internal receiving of His grace and power, and then standing against all that the enemy would throw against us (Ephesians 6:11, 13-14). The simple way to handle these transitions is to see ourselves clothed (*enduo*) with His presence and His force-field of faith. The act of putting on the armour is the word *enduo*. In simple terms, it is the releasing or expansion of this force-field spiritual energy power from within us to the outside world. Paul certainly was not expecting a process in this but just telling us to ‘be clothed’ with this power. Besides inner knowing and acknowledgment of this grace within us, the quickest way to put on something in the spiritual realm is to merely believe and accept. This can be accomplished by knowing and seeing that it is done through the eyes of faith. If you can see it, it is yours and it is done.

Having understood the above, we should extend the force-field shield of faith and power over ourselves and our loved ones and family by ‘seeing’ it extends from within ourselves, to all that is within our sphere of influence and our loved ones and family. One does not even have to be in the same geographical spot to extend the spiritual force-field within us, one just needs to accept and believe.

The key to building this force-field hedge around us and our loved ones and family is through the love of God. Perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). Be filled with the love of God and broadcast this love through your heart and thoughts (love thinks no evil – 1 Corinthians

13) to yourself, to your loved ones, family and as far afield as the strength of God's love can take you. Let your thoughts and feelings of God's love be a clothing in your life and be the invisible embrace that you provide to those within your sphere of influence – which now becomes your sphere of the force-field of faith shared and flowing from your life. Nothing can stand in the way of a heartfelt passionate transmission of God's love. As your love grows to match the love of God already flowing in your heart, the strength of the force-field of faith around you will also expand and grow proportionally.

These words are written with the force-field of faith and love extended to each of you. May the light of His wisdom and grace be your constant companion day and night.

## Fatherly Talk 4.17

### Faith Series: Differing Levels of Faith

Dearly Beloved

It is obvious from Scriptures that there are differing levels of faith amongst believers (Romans 14:1; Acts 6:5). Adjectives like little, great, strong added to faith show the flux of faith even within the same believers:

Matthew 6:30	little faith
Matthew 8:10	great faith
Matthew 8:26	little faith
Matthew 14:31	little faith
Matthew 16:8	little faith
Mark 4:40	no faith
Luke 7:9	great faith
Luke 12:28	little faith
Romans 4:19	not weak in faith
Romans 4:20	strong in faith
2 Corinthians 10:15	faith is increased
2 Thessalonians 1:3	faith grows exceedingly

We all know that faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit and it is an impartation from our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 12:9; Acts 3:16; Hebrews 12:2). We also know that it is a spiritual force (2 Corinthians 4:13). Then why is the same spiritual substance having different effects on different people? It all has to do with the ground and not the quality or substance of the seed; like in the parable of the sower

and the seed (Mark 4:1-20). It is possible to nullify the effect of faith in our lives through unbelief (Hebrews 4:2; Romans 4:20). Besides seeking to grow and increase in faith we also need to know what are the areas that cause faith to weaken and fluctuate in our lives. Obviously, when more word (which contains faith – Romans 10:17) is received, more faith will result but while increasing the quantity of potential faith we also need to check to see if there are leakages in our lives which dissipate the amount of spiritual energy of faith that we are simultaneously receiving. We need to know what causes the fluctuations of faith amongst believers and within our own lives:

1. Fear is the prime cause of faith becoming little.

The disciples were in fear for their lives when they hastily woke Jesus up. After Jesus had rebuked the winds, He chastised the disciples for their fear and their little faith (Matthew 8:26). Satan holds all mankind in bondage through fear of death (Hebrews 2:14). The only answer to this is the dedication and consecration of one's life to Jesus including a willingness to die for Him and His cause. One of the three methods of overcoming the devil is through not loving our lives even to death (the other two being the power of the blood and the power of the spoken word – Revelation 12:11). This fear includes the fear of all that may happen to one's physical life – provision, food, clothing shelter, etc. The fear of lack of provision for this physical life causes faith to be little (Matthew 6:30). The symptom of this fear eating away at faith on the inside is worry and anxiety. Worries about this life are like a soul fever. When one has a fever, one knows that the body is sick and its immune system is working overtime to combat the sickness. When one has a soul fever like worry, it is the result of an overactive soul mind trying to put food on the table or paying the mortgage or bills for one's physical life.

There is only one solution to that – die to self and all your self-dignity. For life is more than food, clothing or shelter (Matthew 6:25). And then trust fully in God (Proverbs 3:5-6; Matthew 6:33). Why bother keeping up with the Joneses when you should be seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness first?

And if you are believing God for provision and your mind plays up by thinking of what others should do for you or the lack of what they are doing to help you, then you have two things wrong. Firstly, it is wrong to look for provision to anyone else except God as your source (which is the very reason for the lack of success in believing in the first place because God has not been your source for your faith). Secondly, everyone is normally absorbed in their own battles and needs in their own lives seeking to fulfil their own faith- life successfully before being in the position to help others. There are some growth areas of faith and burdens that are one's own responsibility and not the corporate responsibility of all. Corporate burdens are corporately shared but private burdens are to be borne privately according to one's call (Galatians 6:2, 5; 2 Corinthians 11:28).

2. Doubts within oneself also eat up faith and causes it to become little faith.

When Jesus was rescuing Peter, who had sunk while walking on water, He chastised Peter for doubting (Matthew 14:31). Peter probably had concerns for his own physical life (fear of death through drowning) but there were both doubts about Jesus and doubts about his own ability to walk on water based on Jesus' command. Doubts are the result of wrong reasoning – the mind giving you the natural reasons why it cannot be done. When the disciples wrongly reasoned that they lacked physical bread, Jesus rebuked them for their doubts and little faith

(Matthew 16:8). He basically reminded them that He could easily create more bread at any time (Matthew 16:9-11). He was speaking of something spiritual while they were thinking of something natural (Matthew 16:12). Doubts are natural reasoning rather than spiritual reasoning. The spiritual mind reasons with the Scriptures to seek to have faith while the natural mind reasons away from the position of faith and trust in God's Word. Abraham had strong faith because he did not consider the natural impossibilities to God's promise but held on to God's promise (Romans 4:19-20). In fact, through complete trust in God, Abraham was fully convinced that God was able to perform what He had promised (Romans 4:21).

3. Unbelief is like poison to faith, it completely nullifies faith imparted through His word.

The choice to believe is an act of the will. One can believe even without seeing the evidence but based on one's faith in a word spoken or given (John 20:27-29). Thomas chose not to believe the testimony of the other disciples who had seen the Lord and God dealt with his unbelief. The people in Jesus' home town chose not to believe the testimonies of miracles which they had heard from other cities (Mark 6:2, 6). They reasoned that just because they knew Jesus physically as a boy growing up in their neighbourhood and knowing His physical family and sisters, that He couldn't be the Messiah. It was natural reasoning that produced unbelief. Unbelief is not non-belief. It is a choice to believe the natural senses and natural reasoning. Sometimes even those who have seen find it difficult to believe. The Israelites who had seen the mighty works of God in Egypt and the Red Sea, still could not trust and have complete faith and reliance on God because they had unbelief in their system

(Hebrews 4:2). It is possible to choose to want to believe despite having wrong reasoning and unbelief in the system like the father of the young demon possessed boy (Mark 9:24). At least he was sincere enough to ask the Lord to help him with his unbelief. He wanted to believe but all he saw was the failure of the disciples. Instead of giving up hope, he came to Jesus with tears in his eyes, crying and weeping and asking Jesus to help him to believe despite the unbelief in him. Jesus also later rebuked the unbelief in the disciples which resulted in the failure of deliverance (Matthew 17:20). All of us have some unbelief in our human natural system (otherwise we would all be like Jesus now) but it does not prevent us from choosing to believe. One of the remedies for getting unbelief out of our system is by focusing on His promises through fasting and prayer (Matthew 17:21).

We all are to grow from faith to faith (one level of faith to another) (Romans 1:17). Understanding the areas which cause us to waver in faith is part of the method to have strong unwavering faith (Romans 4:20). It is the constant vacillation between two minds that prevents the growth and the establishment of faith in our lives (James 1:6-8). If you understand and see a promise of God revealed to you (whether through written word or spoken word), then seize upon it and put your whole life into it – unto death. It is not the word that will fail you (for His promises and word do not fail) but rather our doubts and fears which rob us of the promises of God. And our doubts and fears succeed because we choose to allow them to do so. There is no doubt that every word from God to us will be challenged just as the seed of the sower is challenged by the devil, adversity and things of this life. The good news is that the challenge is literally over when you are prepared to stake your entire life unto death for God's Word and promise. Your free choice to believe will be tested with fire (1 Peter

1:7) but remember, it is not you that carry the Word but the Word which carries you. The seed of God's Word (and faith) given to you will be sufficient for all your circumstances.

Like the demon possessed boy's father who had come to the end of all his efforts, yet still with unbelief in his mind, he knelt at Jesus feet and asked for help despite his unbelief, for with all his being he still chose, with tears in his eyes, to believe. When you have done all and it still hasn't come through, it is not the time to give up, rather it is time to sit at His feet, the feet of the Author and Finisher of faith, our Lord Jesus Christ. Like the woman with the issue of blood who had spent her lifetime and her entire finances seeking to get healing, she said within herself that all she needed to do was to touch Jesus and she would be whole (Mark 5:26-28). All we need is a touch of Jesus, the Master and Giver of faith. No matter how weak or how little our faith, we must choose to always be in Jesus. No one can force us to freely choose or believe anything. It is our right and prerogative both in this life and in the next. What prevents the little faith and weak faith from coming to Jesus is free choice not their own lack of faith. Like Peter about to drown in his attempt to walk on water, crying out to Jesus for help; we need to know that we can all come to Jesus at whatever level of faith we are at. It does not remove our responsibility to grow in faith, but it means that we must never choose anyone or anything but Jesus whenever we falter in our walk of faith. When you keep a close walk with Jesus, it is likely that you would absorb more of His faith and His reasoning.

Keep a close walk with Jesus at whatever level of faith you are at, for He is indeed the Author and Finisher of our faith.

## Fatherly Talk 4.18

### Faith Series: The Work of Faith

Dearly Beloved

It is well understood by now that faith is a rest (Hebrews 4:1-10) but one also needs to understand the parallel concept of how the work of faith works (1 Thessalonians 1:3). The work (Greek *ergon*, normally translated work or labour) of faith is the small part or act that is required of us to release and demonstrate our faith. Every Bible miracle of faith has involved an act that is part of the release of the spiritual energy of faith:

Moses had to release his faith through the use of the rod (Exodus 4:17; 7:17; 8:5, 16; 14:15-16; 17:6, 8-12). Elisha struck the Jordan with the mantle (2 Kings 2:8), used salt to heal the waters (2 Kings 2:20-22), used flour to neutralise the poisoned stew (2 Kings 4:41), made iron float in water through throwing a stick (2 Kings 6:5). In the methodology used by Jesus for His miracles in the gospels, there are records of Him using the laying on of hands and other methods like spittle and clay to heal a blind man, but the most important common denominator is the use of the spoken word. In the healing of the lame man at the beautiful gate, it was not until Peter acted out in faith to pull the man up that the healing took place (Acts 3:7).

Sometimes those who are new to faith who read all the above Scriptures, begin to start 'acting their faith' presumptuously and instead of bringing miracles result in disrepute because their 'acts' or 'work' of faith produced no miracle. And if one presumptuously 'tries' to get a sick person to 'act' their faith, it would cause more harm than healing. The key to understand the act or work of faith is to understand when to act – the timing to act. There is such a thing as

the fullness of faith or being full of faith (Acts 6:8). In Acts 14:9, Paul had to observe intently to discern whether faith had reached its fullness to act before he commanded the lame man to stand on his feet. And the reason why Peter had first asked the lame man to look at him is so that he could discern whether it was the ripeness of time to act on faith for the miracle.

There are different stages before the ripeness or fullness of time to act on the faith. The stages are conception and pregnancy period of faith (Fatherly Talk 4.08), the holding pattern of faith (Fatherly Talk 4.07) and the ripeness or fullness of faith. Different areas and faith expectations will take different time lengths to bring the result of faith into manifestation. Some things take longer than others to birth forth in faith.

In the pregnancy period of faith, the object of faith or the desire for the miracle is not just energized by needs and human demand but rather it is energized by God wanting to do something through us. Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). And faith comes by hearing and hearing by the spoken word of God (Romans 10:17). This means that one needs to hear God – either through His written word or His spoken word for faith to materialize spiritually in our spirits. Jesus said that His sheep will hear His voice (John 10:27). Learning to hear God's voice is a whole topic which we have touched on from time to time in these talks. The hearing of God's voice or the Holy Spirit speaking into our lives and spirit (John 14:15-17, 26), will resonate to our souls as thoughts, impressions, desires, etc. The problem is to differentiate between our own thoughts, impressions and desires from those that are reflected by our soul from our spirit man encounter with the Holy Spirit. For this reason, many Christians who have yet to learn to hear God in their lives find it

difficult to exercise faith as they are not sensitized to yielding and hearing their own spirit man much less the Holy Spirit Himself.

Once the seed of faith is placed into our spirits, the desire or vision or burden for the final manifestation of the ultimate result of faith begins to take hold. Like the seed of God's word in the parable of the sower and the seed (Mark 4), there are three different tests and temptations that it goes through: the test of doubt and unbelief, the test of persecution and rejection, and the test of ease and worldliness. Most of the time, God's plan for His people are thwarted through their unbelief, their lack of stamina to go through difficult times of persecution (that will come because of the word received – Mark 4:17) or the distraction of the pleasures of this worldly life. For this reason, there are not many achievements of the acts of faith amongst God's people and the few that succeed are made into heroes of faith when in the New Testament every believer has the potential to be a hero of faith within the circle of their own life. Just as a farmer gives time to nurture his crop for harvest, those who have received the seed of faith must give time and discipline to the nurturing of God's seed of faith planted within the womb of their spirits. It is only those who are diligent in nurturing this seed within them that receive the end reward (Hebrews 11:6).

When a believer has passed the above three tests and is fully assured of what God has spoken into their lives, they must then learn to enter the holding pattern of faith and with patience hold on to the seed until it reaches its full pregnancy term and is birthed forth. This takes time and only those who mixed their faith with patience will receive the manifestation of faith (Hebrews 6:12). Some things take a short time (a few weeks to a few months) but other things take years and even decades. Abraham took about twenty years of faith walk to bring about the manifestation of his physical promised child. He was about

seventy-five years old when he left Haran after which God shortly gave the promise that he would have a child of his own (Genesis 12:4; 13:5; 15:1-7). He was one hundred years old when Sarah gave birth (Genesis 17:17, 21). Not a drop of the energy of faith was wasted throughout all the waiting years of Abraham because in the spiritual realm he was also exercising faith for the multitudes of those who are in Christ and his physical child Isaac pales in comparison to the Seed of Abraham who is Christ, through whom all of us received the blessings of Abraham (Galatians 3:13-14, 16).

No one on earth lives to himself or herself. Your life will impart to the overall progress of humanity's walk with God for better or for worse; of course, we pray that especially for each of you, it will always be for better. The success of those who reach their full term and bring forth manifestations of their walk of faith will make it easier for others to reach their own goals and walk of faith. In a spiritual way, all of humanity is connected and we help pull the whole human race upwards in Christ by being obedient in our own personal walk of faith and spirituality. We are all the family or household of faith (Galatians 6:10).

When the fullness of faith has come, the skill of the birthing process is also important. There are various laws in which one must function in:

1. It is likely that the methodology will be in line with the anointing or method of releasing faith that one has especially been commanded of God individually; for example, Moses using the rod, etc.
2. It is also God who chooses the exact time, exact place and exact environment in which the fullness of time for a manifestation of His word will take place (Deuteronomy 12:5).

3. It is always a coordinated process in which both the natural world and the spiritual world (more of the Holy Spirit and the angels) have worked together to bring about the events (Luke 1:26; 2:9, 13). Of course, the faith event of personal lives or smaller communities might not receive the Hallelujah chorus of the birth of Jesus on earth but every single walk of faith (personal, church or community) is of great importance to the overall progress of humanity and many, many angels are working together to bring about the physical birth of those goals or objects of faith into the physical world.
4. There will always be a key man or woman in whom the seed of faith for that event has been planted (in the womb of their spirit). Of course, for a national or international faith event, the man or woman of faith would have stirred the entire nation or international community through their faithfulness in their walk of faith. They would have walked in their holding pattern of faith against all odds and still remained standing to bring about the final act of faith which breaks into the natural world as a demonstration of the faithfulness of God.
5. Some of the birth of such faith events through the act of faith create a great tidal wave immediately but others start with a whisper that results in a tidal wave through time.

Each of your lives and walk of faith is important to God. It contributes to the overall progress of humanity towards God. Be wise in acting out your faith directly proportionally to the energy God supplies. Never seek public attention in your act of faith but always do it as unto the Lord alone to whom we all give account to.

Although David slew Goliath when he went to take lunch for his brothers, he had already, quietly and unseen by public, slain the lion

and the bear. And Jesse his father had obeyed in his part by following through with his desire to send some lunch to his sons and asking David to do so. Great earth changing events are always a combination of those whose destinies are to change the world and those men and women working in the background or shadows holding the hands of those whom they are chosen to help. Many people like to be number one, but it is just as glorious in the spiritual world to be number two or three. Everyone, of course, will be number one in God's sight but we need to realise that not all are apostles, prophets, teachers or workers of miracles (1 Corinthian 12:29).

Destinies are not created down here on earth, they were agreed to and assigned from heaven even before we were born. If we are number two or number three or anywhere down the ladder in this life, it is not because we are less important but rather we have been chosen by God in the plans and destinies assigned before we were born. The destiny to be the second man or third man is not any less glorious spiritually than to be number one. We are all to walk in the works that have been created for each of us before the foundation of the earth (Ephesians 2:10). The truth is that unless the number two or three or anyone of those down the ladder walked in their own obedience, those destined to lead or be number one can never ever fulfil their destiny. For every leader is only as good as the quality of their followers. (I used the numbering above – number one, number two, etc. – allegorically to get the illustrated point through, understanding of course that in a true sense, only God is number one).

Remember that each of you have an important role to play on earth. Be faithful and be diligent to carry out every command of God, big or small. Walk in faith and act in the fullness of faith.

## Fatherly Talk 4.19

### Faith Series: The Weapons of Our Warfare

Dearly Beloved

The apostle John wrote that whatever is born of God overcomes the world and expressed that this victory that overcomes the world is our faith (1 John 5:5). It is so powerful that the wicked one (the devil) does not touch him (1 John 5:18). Although faith is mentioned as part of the armour of God (the shield of faith) in Ephesians 6, it is obvious that each part of the armour requires an appropriation by faith, especially the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:12-18; Hebrews 11:6; Romans 14:23).

There is a spiritual wrestling that takes place against the forces of darkness (Ephesians 6:12). In fighting any battle, the most important thing is to know the arena or place where the battle is taking place. In history, battles and wars have been won by the military commander who chooses the right ground and place to fight strategically. The wrestling against spiritual forces of darkness is definitely not in flesh and blood. The arena of the battle is in the mind, in the thoughts, vision and imaginations. This is the place where the enemy seeks to build strongholds and where we release the weapons of our spiritual warfare (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). What we see, what we think and what we imagine are the areas that the enemy seeks to defeat us. Of course, before we can see, think or imagine any area, we must first establish that it is in line with the word of God and in line with God's plan for our lives.

The enemy uses the eye gate to penetrate our spiritual armour. It is his most direct line of attack against the people of God. Eve was tempted through the eye gate when she saw that the forbidden tree

was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes (Genesis 3:6). She fell and Adam fell with her. Achan, who caused the defeat of the Israelites at Ai, confessed to stealing the spoils of war because he saw and coveted a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold (Joshua 7:21). The first generation of Israelites were defeated even before battling for the land of Canaan because they saw the giants in the land and allowed fear to enter their hearts (Numbers 13:28, 33). Caleb saw the same thing, but he was not affected saying that they were well able to overcome them (Numbers 13:30). It is not the size of the mountain that is important rather it is the size of faith in your heart that counts, and we don't need much, just a mustard seed faith to remove a mountain (Matthew 17:20). Peter, who at first succeeded in walking on water briefly, failed to sustain the walk because he saw that the wind was boisterous, and he was afraid (Matthew 14:30).

Understanding this principle of spiritual warfare (guarding the eye gate and enhancing the eye gate through visualization), we need to allow the Holy Spirit and the word of God to transform our imaginations and visualization. We must be able to both behold and see Jesus and the answer to our faith and prayers (Hebrews 11:1; 12:2). When we exercise faith, we must be able to see the spiritual evidence even while it is naturally invisible (Hebrews 11:6). It is not just our natural ability to imagine and see but rather it is the gift of faith and the work of the Holy Spirit in us enabling us to visualize the end result of faith. Paul declared that the Spirit of faith enabled him to believe and speak that which God showed to him (2 Corinthians 4:13). He declared that he did not look at things which are seen but at the things which are not seen (2 Corinthians 4:18). All in all, it is the power of spiritual sight that enabled him to overcome many battles – hard pressed on every side yet not crushed, perplexed but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed (2

Corinthians 4:8-9). The apostle Paul went through all these things yet held on to the visualization of what God had shown him.

The language of the Holy Spirit is visions and dreams (Acts 2:17). These are the last days when the Holy Spirit is pouring out giving visions and dreams to all His people. It is important to hold on to that which the Holy Spirit has given. Learn all the biblical principles of visualization. The Hebrew word that relates to visualization is the word *yetzer* translated 'imagination' (Genesis 6:5; 8:21; Deuteronomy 31:21; 1 Chronicles 28:9; 29:18), 'frame' (Psalm 103:14), 'mind' (Isaiah 26:3); 'thing framed' (Isaiah 29:16) and 'image' or work (Habakkuk 2:18). In the Spiritual World, your imaginations are real and tangible and effect great things. Only when your imagination (*yetzer*) is in God do you have perfect peace (Isaiah 26:3 – translated 'mind' here). The Holy Spirit through the word of God helps to paint in the canvas of our imagination and enables us to see the evidence of things hoped for while they are yet invisible in the natural realm (Hebrews 11:1). **The battle of faith in overcoming the devil and all his works is lost and won in the arena of the imagination of our heart.** What happens in the natural is only the results and after effects of this great battle in the heart. For this reason, the exercise of faith must be through a heart filled with love (no unforgiveness) and a heart free from doubts (Mark 11:23-26). Unforgiveness, roots of bitterness and doubts cause other wild imaginations which are not in line with the faith imagination. The static produces static and nullifies making of no effect the seed of God's faith planted in us. For this reason, the Word of God is given to cleanse us and purify our inner thoughts and imaginations (Hebrews 4:12; John 15:3).

The New Testament equivalent of the Old Testament word *yetzer* is the word *dianoia*. It has been translated as 'imagination' (Luke 1:51), 'mind' (1 Peter 1:13) and 'understanding' (Ephesians 1:17). The

difference between those born again and those not born again is the *dianoia* – enlightened for those born again and darkened for those not in Christ (Ephesians 1:17; 4:18). It is in our *dianoia* that God writes His laws within us (Hebrews 8:10; 10:16 – translated ‘mind’). It should have been clear to all that when the Spirit of wisdom and revelation floods us with light (enlightened), that it would have a very great renewal impact on our imaginations and visualizations (Ephesians 1:17). And Peter alluded to the fact that our *dianoia* has loins (1 Peter 1:13 – the loins of our mind). The loins are a symbol of fertility and reproduction. It is the arena where the seed of God’s word grows. It is the arena where the visions and dreams of the Holy Spirit are implanted to germinate and reproduced in our lives.

Guard and watch over the imaginations of your heart. It is the place where the wrestling of faith takes place. We have a teaching series on *yetzer* and *dianoia* (visualization series) which explains these concepts from the biblical perspective. Master the art of spiritual visualization and the Spirit of faith will help you overcome every mountain in your lives. Remembering, of course, that the first place to start is always a cleansed heart in God (John 15:3; Hebrews 4:12) so that it would be God’s Will and God’s Word that is being visualized. Once the seed of God’s Word is received, that seed needs to be visualized to overcome all the three battles that seek to destroy the seed of God’s Word (Mark 4 – parable of the sower and the seed). Spiritual battles in the realm of the imagination are real and their effects are what moves the natural world.

May the Spirit of wisdom and revelation enlighten the eyes of your understanding and give you visions and dreams of the Holy Spirit.

## Fatherly Talk 4.20

### Faith Series:

# When We Are Weak, Then Are We Strong

Dearly Beloved

At some point or another, every Christian will have to wrestle with the concept of the 'thorn in the flesh.' This phrase symbolises the hindrances that every Christian face as they seek to possess the promises of God relevant to his or her own life. It is allegorically presented by the Israelites facing their own thorn in the flesh (or in their sides) when they entered to possess the land of Canaan (Joshua 23:13). We begin first by examining the experience of the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

The apostle Paul spoke of a spiritual battle that he had of which he pleaded three times to the Lord (2 Corinthians 12:8). We need to point to the fact that it was a spiritual battle as it involved a fallen angel (Greek *angelos* translated as 'messenger' – 2 Corinthians 12:7). Many Christians have interpreted the thorn in the flesh as just a mere physical ailment but if that was it, Paul would not have spoken about spiritual battles with fallen angels. It probably had also caused some sort of physical weakness or discomfort as the word 'infirmities' has been used here in his victory statement. However, the word 'infirmities' may or may not necessarily be a sickness. The word 'infirmities' comes from the Greek word *astheneia*, which is sometimes translated as sicknesses but at other times translated as physical weaknesses (Matthew 8:17; Luke 5:15; 8:2; Romans 8:26; 15:1; 1 Corinthians 2:3; 2 Corinthians 11:30; 12:5, 9). There are many places in the New Testament where it is completely incorrect to translate *astheneia* as sickness, the better translation is 'physical weakness' (1

Corinthians 15:43; 2 Corinthians 12:9; 2 Corinthians 13:4; Hebrews 4:15; 11:34). And 2 Corinthians 12:9 need to be translated as weakness (otherwise the meaning is completely wrong, that is God's strength can only be perfected in sickness – which is a theologically unsound statement for God's strength can be perfected in all physical weakness, includes sickness, but not limited to sickness. Otherwise, those who are healthy can never have God's strength perfected).

Moreover, there are other Greek words for sickness (*nosos* Matthew 4:23; 8:17; 10:1; Luke 7:31) and diseases (*malakia* Matthew 4:23; 9:5; 10:1). It is only contextually logical that if 2 Corinthians 12:9 cannot be translated as sickness then the preceding references in 2 Corinthians 12:5, 7 also cannot be translated as sickness. However, to be accurate to the Greek word and usage, the meaning of infirmity here in this context can refer to physical weaknesses which are not necessarily caused by sickness (*nosos*) or disease (*malakia*). My personal opinion is that Paul's sufferings of physical weaknesses could be tied to the results of the physical persecutions and beatings his body had taken but not caused by any sickness or disease. At the time of writing of 2 Corinthians which was around AD 64, it would have been about 14 years from his experience of stoning in Acts 14:19 (around AD 50). Most likely, his stoning might have resulted in clinical death (for he was presumed dead and was dragged and thrown out of the city) during which he could have experienced his visions of the third heaven. Since that stoning, he had also experienced stripes more abundant above measure, prisons and near deaths frequently, forty stripes minus one, beaten with rods, shipwrecked three times and suffered hunger, thirst, cold and nakedness (2 Corinthians 11:23-27).

Having established exegetically that Paul's thorn in the flesh was definitely a spiritual battle and possibly linked to some sort of physical weaknesses that could have resulted from his physical

persecutions, we examine the desire of Paul to be completely free from them. He outlined very clearly the following:

1. The reason for the buffeting was because of the abundance of revelations (2 Corinthians 12:7) to keep him humble (from exalting himself).
2. The method of the attack was 'buffeting' the Greek word *kolaphizo* which implies physically being hit (Matthew 26:67; Mark 14:65). However, *kolaphizo* can also imply simply being mistreated without necessarily any physical violence, in the sense of being hindered or blocked from doing one's work (1 Corinthians 4:11) or being punished or reprimanded (1 Peter 2:20). Since the enemy referred to here is a spiritual enemy, Paul could be alluding to the sense of blockade or hindrances that the enemy had placed along his path in doing God's Will. Or he could be alluding to the great sense of discomfort that his physical weak body felt as he had to surmount extra strength to overcome these physical and spiritual pressures.
3. He had called out to God three times on this matter (Greek word *parakaleo* – to exhort, invite, beseech to one's aid or to comfort - Matthew 5:4; 8:34; Acts 13:42; 16:40; 2 Corinthians 9:5; 1 Timothy 1:3). It is a much stronger word (in terms of authority usage and claim – Matthew 26:53), than the normal word for prayer (Greek – *proseuchomai*). Paul was not just submitting intercessions or requests to God, he was taking authority in God. It was only after the third time that he received the answer and key to all his weaknesses.
4. The key to defeating the thorn in the flesh was the grace of God which imparts the strength of God to Paul (2 Corinthians 12:9). God exhorts Paul that His grace was sufficient for him and His

strength is made complete or perfected or finished (Greek *telioo*) in weakness. Note that this strength or power of the Holy Spirit (Greek *dunamis*) finishes or completes the weakness by a process of union with God through the power of the Holy Spirit. The word 'perfect' implies a union with God (John 17:23; Hebrews 10:14; 1 John 2:5; 1 John 4:12). Paul learned the key to releasing the life of God (the *dunamis* power of the Holy Spirit) into the mortal body of flesh (Romans 8:11). Grace is the ability of God that God imparts beyond our own ability (2 Corinthians 8:1-3). Paul discovered through his weaknesses how to yield to the power of the Holy Spirit within him. For grace is within him and with him (1 Corinthians 15:10). The grace of God strengthens from within (*endunamo* 2 Timothy 2:1).

All of us were born with genetic and soul weaknesses. These weaknesses remain in our lives even when we are born again, sometimes even accentuated through various bad experiences in our lives. At other times, we develop weaknesses through our sin nature before we came to Christ. They could be wrong habits, physical ailments of the body, wrong thought patterns, etc. Like Paul, we need to know that the answer is not removing the weaknesses but being empowered by the grace of God's *dunamis* power from within. When Paul had an abundance of revelations, the enemy found the exact weak points in his life to buffet. When you grow in the Lord, the enemy will try to find the exact set of circumstances that exuberate your weaknesses and lure you into them. At other times, they will seek to find old thought patterns or bodily weaknesses that they can discomfort you with.

The thorn in the sides of the Israelites were the Canaanite who still remained in the land after the conquest of Joshua (Joshua 23:13). The Israelites could not have succeeded in overthrowing all of them

because God Himself said that they were too few in numbers to do that (Exodus 23:29-30; Deuteronomy 7:22). God would only allow them to conquer in direct proportion to their ability to farm the land otherwise the land would be filled with wild animals. This is a perfect allegory of how God allows us to grow from strength to strength, grace for grace and faith to faith (John 1:16; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 1:17).

The practical application of how to apply the grace and strength and power of the Holy Spirit into our lives is as follows:

Grace, strength, faith, glory and transformation into Christlikeness is by measures, a little at a time. In fact, it is a daily process. We should learn to receive our daily portion of grace and strength from God just as we learn to partake of natural food every day (2 Corinthians 4:16; Matthew 6:34). Even though we have accepted Christ into our hearts, it is still a daily process of spiritual growth through spending time with God each day (John 15:4). We are established in the grace by which we stand through faith (Romans 5:2) yet we need to learn to come frequently to the Throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

Watch your thought and vision life for from thence come the spiritual battle and buffeting (2 Corinthians 10:4-5; Romans 12:1-2). It is important to renew the eyes of our understanding (*dianoia* – re-read Fatherly Talk 4.1 which covers *dianoia*). The entrance of defeat is through the spiritual eyes (Genesis 3:6; Numbers 13:33) and the entrance to spiritual inheritance and success is through the eyes (2 Corinthians 4:18; Ephesians 1:18).

Rely on the grace of God in your life (for His grace is sufficient for you) – the anointing within and the anointing upon (Acts 1:8; 1 John 2:20). The Israelites were fewer and smaller than the

Canaanite nations (Deuteronomy 7:1, 7) but they succeeded in defeating the Canaanites because the anointing of God was upon them (symbolised by Moses' rod and the hornets and hailstones with which God defeated the Canaanites – Exodus 17:8-16; 23:28; Joshua 10:11). In whatever manner that the anointing of God (within and upon) works in your life, stir it up every day before you leave the house. Be clothed with the power from on high every day of your life (Luke 24:49).

Part of the glorification process of the Spirit within transforming our weak physical bodies is in praying in the Spirit (Romans 8:26). Note that the context of praying in the Spirit (the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses) was brought forth in view of the glorious liberty of the children of God which was to be manifested (Romans 8:21-25). In Acts 2:26, Peter quoted from Psalms 16:9 and replaced the word 'glory' in the Old Testament version with the word 'tongue' in the New Testament version. It was not a mistranslation or misinterpretation but rather it is a revelation that the New Testament people understood that the tongue is part of the glorification process. James tells us that the tongue is the whole controlling force of nature and of our body just like the bit controls the horse and the rudder controls the ship (James 3:2-12). The key to be a perfect man is in the tongue (James 3:2). When we pray in tongues, our spirit prays (1 Corinthians 14:14-15). We do need to pray in tongues and in words of understanding in line with the written Word but let us at least begin by praying in the Spirit. It is very important to spend time praying in tongues as it edifies oneself spiritually.

Well, beloved ones, the practice of the above is now in your hands. Having understood the theology and the methodology, it is only left for you to do the above and put it into practice. Within the above

sharing is the secret to overcome every single weakness in your life.  
The keys to the kingdom of God in your life is now in your hands.

The Lord bless you and increase and multiply grace and peace to you  
in the knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:2).

## Fatherly Talk 4.21

### Faith Series: The Spirit of Faith

Dearly Beloved

We all know that faith is an imparted gift from God energized through love (Ephesians 2:8; Galatians 5:6). The method of receiving faith is through the Word of God (Romans 10:17) and through looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). The 'enabling factor' through all this process is the Spirit of faith (2 Corinthians 4:13).

We all know that the Spirit of wisdom and revelation imparts knowledge, wisdom and revelation (Ephesians 1:17). The Spirit of life imparts life (Romans 8:2, 11) likewise, the Spirit of peace imparts peace and the Spirit of joy imparts joy. The Spirit of faith would have to impart faith. The question is how this process is done. For example, the Spirit of wisdom and revelation has effect on the eyes of the understanding (Ephesians 1:17). Upon which area of our beings would the Spirit of faith have an effect? Since faith is the substantiating of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen, the Spirit of faith would need to have effect on our ability to handle hope and the unseen realm (Hebrews 11:1).

The Greek word for substance in Hebrews 11:1 is the word *hupostasis* which has been translated as substance, confidence, assurance, person as seen in the verses below:

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| 2 Corinthians 2:9   | This same <u>confidence</u> of boasting           |
| 2 Corinthians 11:17 | In this <u>confidence</u> of boasting             |
| Hebrews 11:3        | And the express image of His <u>person</u>        |
| Hebrews 3:14        | If we hold the beginning of our <u>confidence</u> |
| Hebrews 11:1        | Faith is <u>the substance</u> of things hoped for |

Based on the above occurrences of *hupostasis*, we can surmise that faith has an impact upon our inner conviction (assurance) that is not just at the soul level of confidence but a definite impartation of a spiritual substance that is a very part of the nature and person (substance) of Jesus Himself. It is an impartation of His gift of faith into us. Apparently, this process of converting hope and the things unseen into a spiritual material substance in us has a beginning and an end (Hebrews 3:14; 11:1; 12:1-2). Bearing in mind that the word *hupostasis* is derived from a combination of the two words *hupo* (under) and *istemi* (stand) which together would imply a 'standing under', a taking of a thing upon oneself, an assumed position, a steadfast positioning, etc. For this reason, faith works with patience *hupomone* as it implies a holding position (and a victory quality) until the object of faith comes through (Hebrews 6:12 – refer to Fatherly Talk 4.07 and 4.08). The Spirit of faith imparts a steadfast and impenetrable heart conviction of that which faith conceives (Hebrews 4:12 – *ennoia* of the heart).

To ease our understanding, we do a side by side comparison of the effect of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation and the Spirit of faith:

<u>Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation</u>	<u>Spirit of Faith</u>
1. Enlightens the eyes of understanding	Assures the heart
2. Impacts the 'dianoia' the vision part	Impacts the <i>ennoia</i> the heart conviction part
3. Brings forth seeing-knowing	Brings forth inner-knowing
4. Affects our imagination	Affects our thought patterns ( <i>enthumesis</i> )
5. Establishes us in Christ	Establishes Christ in us

Since the core of faith is the Word of God, the Spirit of faith works in both the spoken word *rhema* and the living word *logos*. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the spoken word *rhema* of God (Romans 10:17). This speaks of a spiritual hearing and not just natural hearing for it is possible for people to hear naturally and yet not hear spiritually (Mark 4:12). Hearing spiritually needs the proper conditioning of the heart (Mark 4:20-25; 8:15). The only instrument sharp enough to condition and cleanse the heart is the living word of God (Hebrews 4:12). The living word pierces like a sharp sword and divides the things of the spirit from the things of the soul within us. The soul's thoughts and emotions are separated from the feelings and convictions of the spirit. Faith is not just a conviction for the mind and soul can have its own conviction, faith is the conviction of the heart and not just of the mind; and this conviction is in line with the word of God and not just a mere confidence fed by tradition or self-knowledge and perception.

A lot of what people call faith is not faith, it is human soul confidence. Faith produces real results; human confidence can end in zero results destroying the faith of many. Faith has the immutable ability of not being defeated by any force on earth, human or circumstantial. Through the Spirit of faith, Paul was hard pressed on every side yet not crushed, perplexed but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken by God, struck down but not destroyed all the time holding within his spirit in the earthen vessel of human frailty the excellence of the power of God (and of faith) and was always victorious (2 Corinthians 4:7-10). This powerful force of faith energized by the Spirit of faith which moves every mountain and destroys everything thrown against it, also subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness was made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to fight the armies of

the aliens (Hebrews 11:33-34). Nothing, absolutely nothing, can withstand this power of faith that comes through the impartation of the Spirit of God.

Many people who claim to have faith know nothing of this faith. If one truly has this faith imparted by the Spirit of faith, there is a conquering-of-the-impossible quality that comes with this faith of God. Nothing, absolutely nothing is impossible to this faith (Matthew 17:20). The impartation of this faith causes the receiver to boldly declare that which God is able to do through the power of the spoken word (2 Corinthians 4:13). There is no possibility of failure or nil results with this faith from God. It absolutely guarantees the fruit of the word that God has seeded into the heart of the recipient and declared by the mouth of the recipient. The key is to receive this faith through the seed of His word in our hearts first and then as the *hupostasis* is full, declare in FULL ASSURANCE of faith that which God has said that He will do even before it is visible to the natural eyes (Romans 4:21; Hebrews 10:22). The things which are seen are temporal but the things which are not seen are eternal and they form the fabric of all that is visible (2 Corinthians 4:18; Hebrews 11:3). Those who operate this gift of faith know and understand that the worlds were framed from the invisible realm by the word of God, thus they are confident to operate in that realm to change the visible realm from the realm that is invisible to the carnal man.

To walk in faith, one needs to understand the opposite of what it is to walk by faith. To walk by faith is to walk without reliance on the physical sight or the physical realm. To walk without faith is to walk by sight. We have to choose the path by which we conduct our life – to walk by sight or to walk by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7). We CANNOT do both! Choose! Either we constantly live our lives by what God says or we live our lives and make our decisions based on what we see.

The two methods are diametrically opposed to each other. To try to do both is to be double-minded and we will receive NOTHING from the Lord (James 1:6, 7). It is only when we stop being double-minded that we will start moving forward spiritually. The natural man DOES NOT and CANNOT receive the things of the Spirit of God for they will always seem foolishness to him (1 Corinthians 2:14). On the other hand, we have received the Spirit of God and the Spirit of faith by which we might KNOW the things given freely by God (1 Corinthians 2:12). Whatever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23) for it is of the natural carnal man.

Of course, we all need to walk in accordance to the level of faith that God has placed within us and to which we have grown to (Romans 14:22). Faith works with conscience within our hearts and through our conscience we can know the level of faith to walk in (1 Timothy 1:19). We need to check within our hearts the inner conviction *ennoia* and the inner thoughts *enthumesis* which the living word produces within us (Hebrews 4:12). The difference between *dianoia* and *ennoia* is the direction of the vision process that God works within us. The word *dia* is to see or know 'through' and *en* is to see or know 'in.' In *dianoia*, the eyes of our understanding are flooded with light to see the knowledge of who we are in Christ; in *ennoia*, the eyes of our heart are enabled to see within ourselves the knowledge of what God has imparted of Himself (of His life and substance) within us or who Christ is in us. When we see who Christ is within us and have a perfect understanding of the union of Christ with us, we receive the life and assurance to walk in the way Christ walked. It imparts the inner assurance and conviction that it is not us but Christ in us who lives through us (Galatians 2:20). The life that we live, we live not by our own strength but by the faith of the Lord Jesus who loved us and gave Himself for us. When the living word has completed the work in our

lives, we know not just intellectually but experientially that it IS no longer we who live but Christ who lives within us (Galatians 2:20).

It is as important to obey the spoken word *rhema* of God given to us as it is the written word of God. In his first vision of Jesus, Kenneth Hagin had obeyed God and begun his travelling ministry but was disobedient to telling people what the Lord told him to tell (page 49, *I believe in visions by Kenneth E Hagin published by Fleming Revell Company, 1972*). The Lord said to him, *“You left the church and went out in evangelistic work. But you didn’t do what I told you to do. The reason that you didn’t is that you doubted it was My Spirit that had spoken to you. You see, faith obeys My Word whether is the written Word of God or My Spirit that has spoken unto man.”*

Dear ones, it is so important to obey the Lord’s Word in these days of revival – the spoken word and the written word. Take time to wait upon the Lord and let the Spirit of faith come upon you. Discern what the Lord is specifically speaking into your life and obey it fearing neither man nor demons, nor any organisation or circumstances. We are all accountable to be where God wants us to be and to do what God wants us to do. We have only one life, live it to the fullest pleasing God in faith; for without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

Look lovingly unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of your faith. He is always there for you and lives in you.

## Fatherly Talk 4.22

### Faith Series: The Tears for Revival

Dearly Beloved

As I write this today, my eyes weep for revival. During the late twentieth century to the present time, the teaching that is coming from pulpits around the world has shifted away from an encouragement to Christians to spend more time with God to a shallow one which encourages Christians to spend less time with God. This can be found in the many 'feel-good' sermons that tell Christians that since God has done everything for them in Christ that there is no need for them to do anything including the seeking of God. There are also misconceptions of faith teaching which imply that one does not have to spend any more time with God since one merely 'receives by faith.' The total result of these new blends of teaching is that many Christians no longer spend much time in prayer, fasting and seeking the Lord. Surely, this is not the direction in which Jesus wants the church to go. In fact, we should be spending more time with God and not less time with God.

Why are such current views so popular? Firstly, I believe that many such preachers themselves do not spend much time with God. How can one encourage others to spend more time with God when they themselves do not see the benefit of doing so? Once in an Australian church when I was speaking to a pastor about having an all-night of prayer, the first reaction was 'What is the point of praying so long? Doesn't God hear our prayer already when we pray in Jesus Name?' It seems that all people are interested in is what they can get out of God – which they rightly believe since the price is paid by Jesus and no other price needs to be paid. Thus, there is no longer a requirement to do anything but to accept what Jesus has done. What a selfish and

self-centred attitude! Is this what Christianity has come to? Are we only interested in spending time with God just for ourselves and what we can get out of it? It is a symptom of the selfishness and self-centeredness of our present world system creeping into our modern church in a similar manner in which the immorality of the Corinthian city was creeping into the church of Corinth. It is hard to see our own selfishness when so much of popular Christianity is coloured by the loving of one self.

True and pure Christianity is not about ourselves but about giving our lives to others the way Jesus gave His life for us (1 John 3:16). Why do you think Paul, who could have had a good life, chose to have labours more abundant, suffer stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often, receiving thirty-nine times five (195) lashes from the Jews and three times beaten with rods? (2 Corinthians 11:23-25). Is it not because of his great love (which he received from Christ) for others (2 Corinthians 2:4; 5:14)? How did Christianity take the revelations of the apostle Paul in his epistles to produce a life-style totally opposed and different from that which the apostle Paul himself? How did Christianity take the self-sacrificing faith that our Lord Jesus taught and lived as an example amongst us and turn it into a self-indulgent lifestyle Christianity?

This is not to say that there are no self-sacrificing Christians. There are many faithful and good ministers and Christians whose lives are exemplary, but we need more of such. The sad thing is that many times those who are self-sacrificing Christians and ministers have a wrong understanding of the teachings of the Bible which definitely includes blessings, wealth and influence as per Deuteronomy 28:1-14 and as per Abraham's blessings and as per Matthew 6:33. They propagate a gospel of poverty like St Francis of Assisi. Such teachings are not going to help the average Christians, who are not called to be

like St Francis of Assisi, and who need a faith that can help them believe God to earn and provide for their families. Nor does such teaching help the Christian professionals and businessmen and women who need to know how to believe God to help them be the head and not the tail in the difficulties of the commercial world.

Within about 800 years of Christianity since the time of St Francis of Assisi, Christianity has moved from the gospel of poverty to the gospel of prosperity. It was a right reaction to the anti-world, anti-achievement and anti-good life Christianity that was popular in centuries past. However, we might have over-reacted and swung to the other extreme and have become the pro-world, pro-achievement and good-life indulgent Christianity that is now the popular veneer. Alas, we have become the Laodicea church (Revelation 3:17)! The proper reaction now is not to swing back to the hermit type Christianity of years gone by. The proper reaction is to teach Christians to use their newfound wealth and favour sacrificially. To live a life not for this world but for heaven. To lay up treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys (Matthew 6:20). Jesus is not opposed to wealth: He is opposed to covetousness. He is opposed to the holding on of wealth for selfish use.

We also need to return to God on our knees to spend more time with God and not more time in the world. We need to return to the times when we loved God so much that we would spend hours (even days) in His presence because we loved His person and His presence. We need to spend time with God in intercessions and prayers for those who do not know Him and for revival in His church.

We need to repent not just for ourselves but also on behalf of others. Daniel was a righteous man who was already used to spending regular time with God (Daniel 6:10). When he calculated that a prophetic word from Jeremiah for the return of the Israelites to their

own land had not come to pass, he humbled himself in fasting, sackcloth, ashes and prayers repenting for all the people of Israel (Daniel 9:3-19). His heart-wrenching cries were heard by God and he was comforted by God's angel revealing the timing of God's promises. Where are the Daniels and the Jeremiahs today who will cry for God's people? Jeremiah said that his eyes overflowed with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people (Lamentations 3:48). His head was as water and his eyes were a fountain of tears as he wept for the slain of the daughters of his people (Jeremiah 9:1). Why do we not cry when the sick is not healed in our midst? Why do we not cry when the unsaved are so many in our cities? Why do we not weep when all our programs for reaching the world for Christ are so unsuccessful in turning our society around? May God give us the compassion to weep for sinners and the grace to bear His glory to them. We have the blessings and the provisions of Jesus, but do we have the heart of Jesus? We need the same heart that wept and cried before He raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:35). Why did Jesus weep? He had the faith to raise Lazarus from the dead and He knew He would raise Lazarus from the dead. He wept because He loved Lazarus and Mary and Martha. He wept when He saw Mary weeping (John 11:33). O that we might hear and see the sufferings of those who do not know Him. O that we might understand and feel the pain and sorrow of those who need our Lord Jesus!

There is a bottle in the Spirit World where our tears are kept (Psalm 56:8). David was a man after God's heart (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22). David was also a man who knew what it was to spend much time in tears before the Lord. There were times when he drenched his couch with tears (Psalm 6:6). In his cries he exhorted the Lord to hear his prayer and to give ear to his cry; and not to be silent at his tears (Psalm 39:12). His hunger for the Lord was such that he saw himself as the

deer that pants after the water brooks (Psalm 42:1). He thirsted so much that many times he went without food in seeking the Lord and his tears had been his food day and night (Psalm 42:2-3). Although he acknowledged the Lord delivering his soul from death and his eyes from tears, he also knew that it took the continuing sowing in tears to bring the harvest of sheaves of revival (Psalm 116:8; 126:5-6).

The apostle Paul was a great man of revelation, visions and teachings from the Lord. He was also a man of tears. He knew what it was to serve God with many tears (Acts 20:19). Although his writings ring with authority and power, we must not forget that when he preached, he preached with great compassion warning everyone night and day with tears for three years (Acts 20:31). In his three years of sowing night and day in preaching and in tears in the city of Ephesus, Paul reaped a revival that shook the entire city with great signs and wonders (Acts 19:10-12, 26). His epistles were written with many tears (2 Corinthians 2:4). When he sought for good strong capable disciples and ministers, he did not just look at their spiritual qualifications, faith and reputation, he looked to see if they bore the compassion of Christ. He wrote to Timothy that he was mindful of his tears as much as of the faith which Timothy inherited from his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:4-5).

In times of unbelief and struggles beyond problems the mind can solve, situations the understanding cannot comprehend, and reasoning that can't make sense out of adverse circumstances, it is our tears of humility before God that break through into victory. With tears running down his cheeks, the father of the demon-possessed boy said, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24). His boy was immediately freed. Our tears are precious to Jesus. The woman with the alabaster flask of anointing oil, washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed the feet of Jesus

and anointed them with expensive fragrant oil (Luke 7:38). She did it because she loved Jesus. She loved Him much more than Simon the host did (Luke 7:42-47).

How much do you love Jesus? We do not always weep in love for Jesus but has there been any time in your life when you were in the presence of God and Jesus and the love you felt so moved you to tears? If you have not, one thing you lack; the most precious and intimate moments of pure oneness with Jesus and the Father God when His love and compassion fills our lives until tears flow from our eyes. There are times when we rejoice and shout, there are times when we are peace-filled and in quiet repose, but there are also times when we need to taste to overflowing tears the love of God. It moved David to tears, it moved Paul to tears, and the love Jesus had for us moved Him to tears. Does the love of God move you to tears? Does it melt the hardened heart like ice before the sun?

Do we love Jesus as much as the woman with the alabaster flask of oil? May our love for Him have moments of overflowing tearful compassion brought forth by His love for us.

## Fatherly Talk 4.23

### Faith Series: The Clothing of Power

Dearly Beloved

The Old Testament spoke of the garment of praise that replaced the spirit of heaviness; that we might be trees of righteousness (Isaiah 61:3). Our Lord Jesus Christ spoke of being clothed with power (Greek *dunamis*) from on high (Luke 24:49). Stephen was full of faith and power (Acts 6:8). The disciples were especially told by the Lord Jesus not to depart from Jerusalem until they were endued (clothed) with power (*dunamis*) from on high. This power was the basis for us being witnesses of Jesus (Acts 1:8). What is this power (*dunamis*) which is so essential that we should never leave the house without it?

Although the main translation is 'power,' the Greek word *dunamis* (noun form) and its other variations *dunamai*, *dunamoo*, *dunatos*, and *dunateo* has been translated in several ways which reveal what it does or impart to us:

Able or ability	Matthew 3:9; 25:15; Acts 20:32; Hebrews 11:19
Can, could	Mark 9:23; Matthew 17:19
Miracles	Acts 2:22; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28-29
Mighty works	Mark 11:20-23; Mark 6:2
Virtue	Mark 5:30; Luke 6:19; 8:46
Power	Luke 1:17, 35; 4:14; 5:17
Strength	2 Corinthians 12:9; Revelation 1:16
Possible	Mark 10:27

The above sample verses and translations show the extent of the work of *dunamis* power. It enables, empowers, strengthens, causes miracles and brings the impossible to become possible. Knowing what *dunamis* power does is simple but knowing how to activate it in our lives is another matter altogether. The enabling factor of *dunamis* power seems to be prayer (Luke 24:29), faith (Acts 6:8), grace (2 Corinthians 12:9-10), and the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:10).

*Dunamis* power is the only criteria for being a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8; Luke 24:49). Theological training, human abilities and talent, communication and publicity skills, organisation and advertising programs, etc. cannot replace the main qualification of Jesus to be His witness. Charles G. Finney spoke of this convicting power of the Holy Spirit and how to maintain and draw on this power constantly in his book, "Power from on high." Post-Pentecost, Smith Wigglesworth and John G Lake connect it to the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the speaking in tongues. The Pentecostal movement which by now is a hundred years old has advocated the speaking in tongues accompanying the baptism in the Spirit, yet there are many Pentecostals who seem to have tongues but not the power of the Holy Spirit. What is the cause of such discrepancy?

Firstly, we need to acknowledge that there are degrees of *dunamis* power. It should be obvious to any reader of the Bible that if one can be full power, then there are also degrees of filling (half filled, quarter filled, etc.) Also, if one can be clothed with power, it implies that one can be unclothed or partially clothed.

What causes these different levels or degrees of *dunamis* power?

1. The different degrees of filling with *dunamis* power are caused by the different callings and gifting which God has assigned to individuals.

Those with the gift of the working of miracles would have more *dunamis* power than those without (1 Corinthians 12:10). Those who are called to the fivefold ministry would have more gifting upon their lives to qualify them for the spiritual offices (Ephesians 4:7).

2. The varying degrees of understanding and appropriating the grace of God would also cause the proportional varying of the power of God in an individual (2 Corinthians 12: 9-10).
3. The varying degrees of faith would also result in varying degrees of the power of God in one's life (Acts 6:8; Matthew 17:19-21).
4. The varying degrees of union with Jesus would also result in varying degrees of fruit and power demonstrated (John 14:12; 15:1-5; Mark 4:20).

Understanding the possibilities of varying degrees of *dunamis* power, we should do what is necessary in our walk with the Lord to ensure that we are flowing with the maximum assigned power into our lives. There is not much we can do about our divine destinies and call as these are assigned before we were born but even within each call (including fivefold callings) there can be variations of *dunamis* power caused by either a lack of understanding in how to flow with this power or pure laziness in walking in the laws of the Spirit that release this power. Ignorance or laziness are the two key culprits of *dunamis* power diminishing. One does not have to be a fivefold to be effective in this power; for Dorcas was effective in the creative *dunamis* power such that God raised her up again to continue the work she did (Acts 9:36-43; Exodus 35:30-35).

The following are keys which must be included in a Christian life to ensure that *dunamis* power is maintained or increased:

1. A life of prayer and fasting

Even our Lord Jesus Himself was accustomed to spending much time in prayer (Matthew 14:23; Mark 1:35; 6:46; Luke 6:12; 18:1). The disciples must have been greatly impressed with Jesus' prayer life such that they asked Him to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1). Judas was able to lead the temple soldiers to Jesus to arrest Him because Jesus would usually frequent a particular spot or place at the Brook Kidron where He used to pray (John 18:1-2). Charles Finney spoke of spending time in fasting and prayer whenever the power from on high waned. Kenneth Hagin also spoke about the anointing that was imparted upon him on his hands in a vision by Jesus and he was told that 'whenever the anointing leaves you, fast and pray until it comes back' (I believe in visions by Kenneth Hagin, page 54). When the disciples, who had already received the authority and power to cast out demons could not do it, Jesus told them to fast and pray (Matthew 10:1; 17:21).

2. Learning to yield to the grace of God within

Paul was told by the Lord that His grace was sufficient for Him and that His strength was made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:10). This grace of God resides in our spirit and makes us what we are in our lives and in our ministries (Philemon 25; 1 Corinthians 15:10; Galatians 2:9; Ephesians 3:1). We can learn to be strong in the grace of God instead of being strong in ourselves (2 Timothy 2:1).

### 3. Learning to walk with the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God's *dunamis* power personified on earth. When He comes, *dunamis* power comes (Acts 1:8). We must neither quench the Spirit nor grieve Him (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19). Grieving is when we do things He did not tell us to do and quenching is when we don't do the things He tells us to do. We are told to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18-19). Part of singing in the Spirit and spiritual songs includes speaking in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:14-15). Of course, walking closely with the Holy Spirit also means walking in the love of God (Galatians 5:22-23). Our hearts should be full of God's love and our mouths filled with spiritual songs and praises to God when we are filled with the Holy Spirit. It takes meditation and practice to bring the presence of the Holy Spirit from our closet into our daily lives and routine.

### 4. Being filled with the Word of God

Stephen was filled with faith and power (Acts 6:8). We can tell that he had intricate knowledge of the Word through his preaching. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Obviously, for a person to be filled with faith, that person would have to be full of the Word of God. We are exhorted to be filled with the word of Christ which results in similar manifestations as being filled with the Spirit – psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts (Colossians 3:16).

We can never evangelize the world by our own strength or organizational ability. It is not by our own power that we can be witnesses on the earth. Like the call of Jesus to His disciples, the call of the Spirit is that we do not leave our prayer closets until we be

endued with power from on high. This should not be a once a life time thing. It should be a daily walk with Him. We never leave our house without being properly clothed. We should even more never leave our homes without being spiritually clothed with the Spirit of God. It is not a hard thing. It is merely dying to self and letting Him fill us. Everyday should be a walk in the rest of God (Hebrews 4:10). It only seems hard because our flesh does not want to lie down and bend to the Spirit of God. For this reason, God imparts grace into our lives daily. Enter boldly to the Throne of God daily and receive the daily impartations of grace for our lives (Hebrews 4:16). One secret is to do it the night before (before you sleep) so that before you sleep, you are already clothed with the grace of God and power for the next day. And the next day, it is only a quick process of the consciousness catching up to the presence of God that is ours every day.

Always pray until you sense the clothing of the Spirit. Do not let go of the prayer just because you are touched by the power. You do not want just to be touched, you want to be clothed. The power of God needs to be our daily clothing morning, noon and night. From time to time, if the anointing wanes, fast and pray. It is the constant that must be on our lives. Without Jesus we can do nothing. Without the Holy Spirit, we are powerless.

Be strong in the grace of God and be endued with power from on high.

## Fatherly Talk 4.24

### Faith Series: The Gift of Fame

Dearly Beloved

Christians do not want to admit it but most of the time, they are influenced by fame. Those who are spiritual are not that much influenced by worldly famous people, but they still are influenced by famous and well-known Christians and ministers. Attend any pastors' conference and you will note that the only main speakers are those who either are famous or have large churches or large ministries. At the same time, fame and even numerical numbers is a changing scenario. Those who were well-known before sometimes get moved to the side and others take their place like a changing newspaper headline. And even mega-churches and mega-ministries can suddenly find themselves irrelevant to the generation they are trying to reach.

Firstly, let us be realistic and know that 'Christian fame' does not equal 'world fame.' Many of the famous ministers and Christians known to us are not well-known to the non-Christian world, with exceptions of those who become infamous for their flaws or others like Mother Teresa, famous for her work amongst the poor, and Billy Graham, famous for his Christian influence in USA. Most of the time when Christians do make the headlines of the world it is usually when something bad is publicized. We need to change that.

1. Fame does come from God and is given as a stewardship

Joshua, who used to be in the shadow of Moses, was told by God as he led the Israelites into the promised land that 'this day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that as I was with Moses, so I will be with you' (Joshua

3:7). David was famous throughout Israel and all the surrounding countries and the Lord brought the fear of him throughout those countries (1 Chronicles 14:17). Solomon was famous in his lifetime through the grace of wisdom given to him (2 Chronicles 9:6). Jesus' fame went throughout all Israel and surrounding nations during the time He lived in Israel (Matthew 4:24-25; Mark 1:28). God uses fame like He uses money or abilities to bring about His influence upon the lives and affairs of men on the earth. We need to treat the gift of fame as a stewardship responsibility and walk wisely as David did before men (1 Samuel 18:5, 14).

2. Many people do not use the gift of fame wisely and waste it on the wrong things as people waste money and power when the blessings or position come to them from God.

The key to living this life is to live it in the manner which most glorifies Jesus; with this in place, when great prosperity or great power or great fame comes, we should learn to be faithful in it as a good steward. Solomon wasted his fame and fortune and did not use it to promote the worship of God. The only good thing he did was to build the temple which was his father David's vision anyway. He did not care about the people on the street but instead made them feel oppressed (1 Kings 12:4). He wasted time and money on foreign women and false gods (1 Kings 11:1-7). He did everything that the Lord told Moses to warn kings not to do: he multiplied wives when the Lord commanded not to do so; he multiplied horses and returned to Egypt when the Lord commanded not to do so; he multiplied gold for himself when the Lord commanded not to do so (Deuteronomy 17:16-20; 1 Kings 10:23-29). His heart was turned away from the Lord and there was no record of him keeping his

own handwritten devotional Bible that God instructed kings to do (Deuteronomy 17:18-19).

No one – no matter how rich, powerful or famous – should be treated any differently by any Christian, church or minister. All are equal in the sight of God and it is a disgrace to God when people who are rich, powerful or famous are treated differently from other people (James 2:1-8). All who have been given great prosperity, power or fame should also note that in the sight of God you are no different from any other ordinary men or women. Do not seek to be treated differently but just learn to walk humbly in the sight of God and man. The greatest among us must learn to be the servant of all (Matthew 23:11). Jesus observed that the Gentiles lorded over one another and the great ones among them exercised great authority over others and He said that it shall NOT be so among His disciples, who were quarrelling over who was to be at the right-hand side (Mark 10:42). Any preacher or church or organization which makes a bureaucratic structure like an earthly kingdom is NOT properly following the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. The true practice of Jesus' teaching would lead to humility and servanthood for every disciple. If we are to change the world and churchianity now, we need to stop copying secular Christianity and adopt in full the teachings and practice of Jesus. This does not mean that one is not properly organized but rather it means that one acknowledges that we are all nothing without Jesus. And if we be so gifted with fame, fortune or power, then we should treat such carefully in fear and trembling as we fulfil our position in this earthly life.

3. Fame, fortune and power can come and go as suddenly and as easily as a breath of this earthly life.

The most mundane circumstance in life can lead to sudden fame, fortune and power. David was just out bringing lunch to his brothers when the opportune time came to defeat Goliath (1 Samuel 17:17). Joseph's ordinary day out in the field was the last day he had as a freeman (Genesis 37:14-18). His resistance to temptation led him downwards into prison instead of vindication (Genesis 39:19-20). A little concern for other prisoners and a simple interpretation of dreams brought him the opportunity, two years later, to stand before Pharaoh and then becoming a Chief Minister of Pharaoh (Genesis 40:6-23; 41:12-46). David knew when not to take the wrong opportunities and when to take the right ones. He chose not to kill Saul but allowed God to be the one who made him king (1 Samuel 24:7; 26:11). Twice David had the opportunity to kill Saul, but he knew that it would have changed him forever if he had done so at the urging of his own men. Sometimes, we need to learn not to listen to surrounding advice but instead, listen to what is true and right in our heart that is in line with the word of God. Joab the famous and powerful commander of the army and Abiathar the famous and outstanding priest serving with Zadok throughout David's reign made the fatal error of taking the one opportunity to go against David's wish to make Adonijah king and they both doomed their lives forever (1 Kings 1:7). One fatal error can wash all fame, fortune and power down the drain, but one good unseen deed can bring a lifetime of fame, prosperity and power from the Lord. The story of Esther and Mordecai is a story of small insignificant events affecting the fortunes and fame of an entire empire and the whole Israelite nation. One good deed by Mordecai brought him into favour with the king and later the position of Prime Minister (Esther 6:1-3; 8:4). In the book of Esther major events

revolved around a single day (the day that Haman designed to destroy the Jews became the day of their deliverance), around a single event (the day that Haman prepared to execute Mordecai was the day Mordecai got promoted) and two dinners with the king (Queen Esther patiently took two prepared banquets before she confided in the king her wish). Never despise the day of small things (Zechariah 4:10) for they can become great global events and even eternal events enshrined into the history of mankind and of heavenly record (David and Goliath – 1 Samuel 17:48-58; woman who washed Jesus' feet - Mark 14:9).

4. If our hearts are right, God can restore all that is lost.

God is in the restoration business. He gives back all that the swarming locust, the crawling locust, the consuming locust and the chewing locust has eaten (Joel 2:25). God restored to David his entire kingdom after the rebellion of Absalom seeded by his personal failure with Bathsheba. The records of 1 Chronicles (recorded from the priestly view) on David's life does not contain the rebellion of Absalom (a major news breaking event by today's standards) because God completely restored David and established his kingdom. The key in restoration sometimes can rest in one event or one person strengthened by God. At Ziklag, when the men of David and David himself had lost all their possessions, wives and children, David experienced his loneliest time when he had to strengthen himself in the Lord and re-motivate his men to follow him to get back all that was stolen from them (1 Samuel 30:6). David himself was sorely distressed but he pulled himself up in the Lord. One little slave boy, who was left behind because he was sick (almost dying without bread and water for three days), was the key to the recovery of everything lost - small and great (1 Samuel 30:18).

Hezekiah became proud when the Lord was blessing him and made him rich, famous and powerful (2 Chronicles 32:24-26). When he was sick and dying, he repented, and the Lord gave him another fifteen years (2 Kings 20:1-11). The compiling of the book of Psalms was part of the later works of Hezekiah that has lasted throughout Bible history. If you knew you only had fifteen years to live, would you not have spent the rest of your life-giving praise and glory to God through psalms? The fifteen psalms of ascent (or degrees) were especially the compilation of Hezekiah to mark each extra year the Lord gave him to live (Psalm 120–134). Hezekiah repented and changed his heart to bring it in line with God. We are living in a time of restoration and God will be restoring those whose hearts are right in the sight of God (Acts 3:21).

Turbulent times will come when the fame, fortune and position of many will be shifted and changed. Some who are famous and rich will become unknown and poor. Others who have great influence and power will be reduced to nothing. While those who are nobodies in the world today will become well-known in the sight of God and men. This will not just happen in the secular world but also in Christendom. This is a decade to learn humility before the Lord and may we be true followers of God and true disciples of Jesus; and not just followers of the popular and famous in Christendom.

The Lord resists the proud and gives grace to the humble and exalts them (1 Peter 5:5-6). The little events are already taking place which will impact globally and all eternity. Multitudes of angels and high messengers from God are already establishing various new inheritors of prosperity, fame and power from the Spiritual World invisibly and they will become visible within this decade to all the earth.