

"Faith Praying"

Why do I find it so hard to pray?

Because I am afraid it will not work
Because I don't want to be rejected
Because I have experienced past failure

It's hard to be committed to something I'm not good at!

What is my problem? In a word: Faith!

Three troubling stories about faith:

Waling on the water:

"You of little faith"

Casting out the demon:

"Faith as small as a mustard seed"

Withering the fig tree:

"If you have faith and do not doubt"

What are the common elements of these stories?

They are preceded by even bigger events
They are about doing what Jesus did
They teach about overcoming difficulties
They show the powerlessness of doubt
They put God's reputation on the line

The questions faith asks?

For whose will am I seeking?

Do I want God's will
Have I sought God's will?
Am I doing God's will?

For whose glory am I seeking?

Who will get the credit?
Who will get the benefit?
Who will get the blessing?

For whose kingdom am I seeking?

Who will be king of my life?
Where is my treasure stored up?
Who holds my hope for the future?

Faith means letting go and letting God!

Matthew 14:22-33

22 Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

25 During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

27 But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

28 "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

29 "Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Matthew 17:14-20

14 When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. 15 "Lord, have mercy on my son," he said. "He has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. 16 I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him."

17 "O unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me." 18 Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment.

19 Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

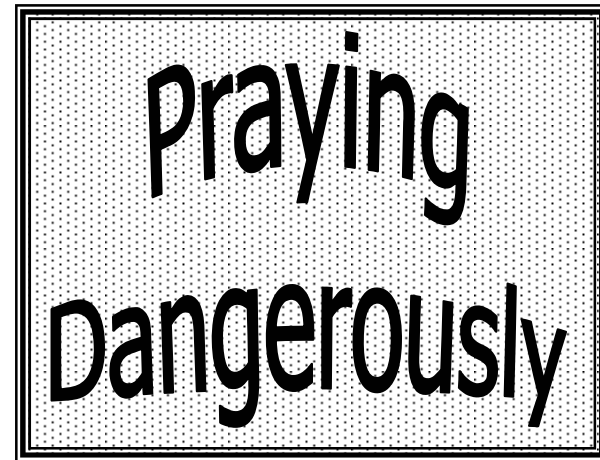
20 He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

Matthew 21:18-22

18 Early in the morning, as he was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. 19 Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered.

20 When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" they asked.

21 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. 22 If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."



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Matthew 14:22-33, 17:14-21, 21:18-22

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