

Gospel Power



"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16)

Volume VIII

April 22, 2001

No. 15

"All Things Are Possible To Him Who Believes"

Hal Hammons

No professed Christian will deny the importance of "believing" on Jesus. But the concept of faith is more complicated than just "Yes, I have it," or, "No, I don't have it." Faith has degrees. Faith has levels. And not every level is equally acceptable. The story of the man with the demon-possessed son in Mark 9:14-29 brings this out clearly.

Some don't believe at all. Verse 14 of our text indicates "some scribes" were arguing with the people in the crowd, presumably attempting to discredit Jesus. People such as these ones were constantly coming to the Lord, claiming to want a sign (Matthew 12:38-40) or an answer (Matthew 22:23-28, 34-36). Perhaps it is these ones to whom Jesus refers as an "unbelieving generation" in verse 19 of our text. Granting one request only leads to another request, never to a true belief in Him. For such ones Jesus will never be able to work the work He has in mind. It's not possible.

Some don't believe as much as they think they believe. This man must have felt cheated in the cruelest of ways when he brought his son to the great teacher and got the disciples instead (v. 17-18). They had attempted to cure the boy and were unsuccessful. "This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer," Jesus told them (verse 29). The implication is that the disciples

did not trust in God enough, or rely upon God enough, to be able to accomplish His purpose. Surely they imagined their faith to be enough; obviously it wasn't. The Lord requires more from us than a healthy self-image. We must have a true faith, one that places complete and total confidence in Him. Without such a faith, we will not be able to accomplish the things He asks of us. It's not possible.

Some believe, and they know they have a long way to go. The father himself appears to be in this category, judging from his paradoxical statement in verse 24, "I do believe; help my unbelief." He had confidence in Jesus in regard to the healing of his son; after all, he brought him to Jesus twice. But he didn't believe as strongly as he should have, as shown in his request in verse 22 - "But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" Jesus seizes upon the word "if" in his statement, and stresses the importance of true faith in the one who would come to Him. Many of the ones Jesus (and later, the apostles) healed exhibited no outward manifestations of faith at all; some don't appear to have known even who Jesus was (John 9:35-38). So the phrase "all things are possible" doesn't appear to refer to the healing of the sick, or at least not exclusively to that. Of course, Jesus promises far greater blessings

than physical healing. He gives us all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3). This includes forgiveness of sins, the right of prayer, and the hope of heaven. A person with this kind of faith will not be satisfied with his or her spiritual standing, but rather will push for growth in all areas of spiritual endeavor. And such a push will inevitably yield positive results. This kind of person – and only this kind – may actually become what Jesus has in mind for all of us. It’s possible.

~via *Bible Viewpoints*, Katy, Texas.



Moving Boundaries

Andy Diestelkamp

This past fall a friendly controversy began as a result of our efforts to improve the driveway by the church building. Our neighbors to the north got the impression that our gravel driveway had shifted over the years and was actually overlapping onto their property. Their curiosity got the best of them, and I found them digging into the gravel in our driveway one morning. “What are you looking for?” I politely asked. They explained that they had done some measuring and were guessing that there was a metal landmark placed in the ground there. They had dug down a few inches through the gravel and had found nothing. Later in the day I found them with a rented metal detector and a deeper hole in our driveway. Sure enough, there was a metal landmark. The controversy was over, the end of all dispute. Our driveway had widened by about two feet over the years. What was amazing to me was that a rusty piece of metal had two parties staring at it in total agreement on what it meant.

The following day was a work day at the building, and the easiest solution to the problem was to dig that landmark up and move it two feet to the north. Problem fixed! But that’s not what we did because that would have been

unethical, illegal, and just plain wrong. If we had moved that marker and been caught by the authorities, we would have been written up in the local newspaper, prosecuted, and fined. It is wrong to move a landmark! Isn’t it amazing to think about how unanimous the decision against us would have been?

The Law of Moses was not just the spiritual law of Israel, but it was also their civil law. God legislated against the moving of landmarks and equated it with stealing (Deut 19:14; 27:17; Job 24:2; Prov 22:28; 23:10).

God’s word is authoritative. When mere men begin tampering with His landmarks, we are treading on holy ground.

What a story it would have been for the newspaper if I had moved that landmark! Imagine the outcry, the condemnation, the charge of hypocrisy that would have been heard if I had moved that landmark. My defense for such action? It’s just as old rusty piece of metal. It was put there a long time ago. Times have changed! Who’s to say that it’s the standard? Anybody could have put that there.

No court and no community would accept such a lame defense. Guilty! Yet, if men or churches want to move God’s landmarks, there is little objection. What kind of defense do we hear? It’s just an old ancient myth. It was written a long time ago. Times change! Who’s to say that it’s the standard? Anybody could have written that!

Which landmark is more sacred, more holy: the city’s or God’s? We answer that by the reaction we have to their movement.

Moral relativism is like our drifting driveway. Ignore, misplace, forget, or remove God’s landmarks and suddenly we can’t draw any lines. Proof of this is seen in the issues being debated today. Is sucking the brains out of a nearly delivered baby a protected right? Should there be homosexual marriage? Is “consensual” pedophilia ok?

The problem is that the standard is disre-

garded and covered by hardened hearts that are ever-widening in their toleration. Even when some dig to find the standard and show it to the world, it is ignored as obsolete, unreliable, and some just boldly move the standards.

Shall I charge our neighbors with hate because they pointed out the landmark in our driveway? That is exactly what some do when we point to scripture to show what it says about homosexuality, fornication, divorce, remarriage, etc. (Matthew 19:9; Romans 1:24-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). People read that and just pull up the landmark and move it two feet north. No problem.

From moral issues to the plain teaching of Christ and His apostles on salvation, some are left scratching their heads and wondering just where that landmark is, while most just don't bother to dig, trusting that a loving God would not mind us widening the driveway. How indignant we can become when anyone tampers with landmarks set by men. How apathetic we are when God's landmarks are ignored. Give honor where honor is due. Honor God's landmarks.

~via *Seeking Things Above*, Huntsville, Alabama



Conviction or Convenience

Ferrell Jenkins

When Jereboam introduced the corrupting, idolatrous calf worship in Israel he took the first step toward the complete downfall of the Northern tribes. 1 Kings 12 relates how he changed the object of worship from God to two golden calves. He made Dan and Bethel the places of worship rather than Jerusalem. The priest no longer had to be of Levi, but could be from any tribe. The feast day was changed from the 7th month and 15th day to the 8th month and 15th day.

All of this originated in the heart of man and was in violation to the commands of the Lord. The Bible says, "this thing became a sin." In order to fulfill his own selfish desire to remain king over Israel, Jereboam convinced the people that it was "too much for you to go up to Jerusalem." He arranged things so that the people no longer had to serve God because of their conviction but simply out of convenience.

This innovation had a telling effect on the morals of Israel. All of Jereboam's man-devised corruptions were introduced about 935 B.C. By the year 722 B.C. just 213 years later, the Lord punished Israel by allowing the Assyrians to carry them away into captivity.

Just to show the demoralizing effect of these human conveniences, let us contrast Israel with Judah. Judah, made up of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, did not become so corrupt, as to be carried away into captivity until 586 B.C., when the last group was taken to Babylon.

When man changes the plans and arrangements of God he is headed for apostasy. Let the sin of Jereboam and Israel serve as a warning to us that we can not tamper with the Lord's commands. We should not, simply out of convenience (or any other reason), change the conditions of membership into the Lord's church. Man has no right to change the worship, organization, or work of the church of Christ to suit his own convenience. We must serve the Lord with conviction!

~via *Searching the Scriptures*; Vol. 1 No. 3.

Left Behind?



There are questions about life after death and there is much speculation as to what will occur. On April 1st and 8th two lessons were presented on "*Left Behind: What's It All About?*" and "*Death and The Second Coming of Christ*". If you would like a copy of these tapes we will be glad to send them to you. Just call, write or e-mail your name and address to us. We will be glad to send them to you.

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Millinea Word* is at home ... *Onzell Tucker* continues to recover at home following her surgery and is to go to the doctor on Tuesday and Wednesday this week... *Mary Best* is to go back to the doctor this week concerning her thyroid problem ... *Judy Williams mother, Flossie Kazzire*, received a good report following her surgery this past week in Tuscaloosa ... *Glenda Phillips mother, Ula Pearl Green*, returned to the doctor this past week... Remember *Wanda Tucker's father, Billy Letson*, who is continuing to take medication for his Leukemia... *Helen Trousdale and Gurtie Snoddy's niece, Martha Henson*, who is battling cancer ... *Sheila Goode & Lou Ann Phillips mother, Shirley Slaton*, continues treatments for her cancer... *Sandra Glass' cousin, Tina Strickland*, who is continuing her treatments for her cancer ... Also remember *Mattie Blanche Word* who continues at home and not able to be out... *Aldeen Noles* who is not able to be out ... Also remember *Gurtie Snoddy* who is in the Mitchell-Hollingsworth Nursing Home... *Mary Best's nephew, Shannon Johnson*, who is at home ... Remember *Tisha Thomas' grandmother, Nellie Hunter*, and *Millinea Word's mother, Nola McCafferty*, who are both in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski.

GOSPEL MEETING: *The Underwood Heights church* in Florence is beginning a meeting today and it will continue through Friday with services each this evening through Friday at 7:30 p.m. The speaker will be *Larry Ray Hafley of Baytown, Texas*.

COMMUNICATION GROUPS: Tonight will be the time for communication group 4 to meet. If you are in group four, plan to attend this meeting tonight after our service.

Remember Our Bible Class Periods

Sunday at 9:45 a.m. and Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

Gospel Power

is published in interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Anderson church.

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Anderson church Home Page

Anderson-church.org

Elders

Michael Clemmons (256) 247-0836
Scottie Goode (931) 565-3391
Monroe Pressnell (256) 232-0780

Deacons

Phil Pressnell (256) 232-8509
Rocky Rose (256) 247-0011
Larry White (256) 247-0988

Evangelist & Editor

David A. Cox (256) 247-1049
Office-(256) 247-5539

E-mail address: dacox@hiwaay.net

U.S. Postage
Paid
Bulk Rate
Anderson, Alabama
Non-Profit
Permit #6

Anderson church of Christ
P.O. Box 66
Anderson, Alabama 35610

Address Correction Requested