

Eternity Daily Bible Study - No. 392

Series: Solution-Focused Faith

Topic: The Direction of Faith

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Matthew 9:28-29 MKJV And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, Do you believe that I am able to do this? They said to Him, Yes, Lord. (29) Then He touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith let it be to you.

Matthew 15:28 MKJV Then Jesus answered and said to her, O woman, great is your faith! So be it to you even as you wish. And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Matthew 17:20 MKJV And Jesus said to them, Because of your unbelief. For truly I say to you, If you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, Move from here to there. And it shall move. And nothing shall be impossible to you.

Happy New Year! I thought it would be good if we went into 2005 “full of faith and believing” so I will do ten or so bible-studies on what I call “solution-focused faith”. Now to explain the term solution-focused.

Solution focused thinking focuses entirely on the desired end state and how to get there, and on what works and how to do more of it. Solution-focused thinking is the opposite of problem-focused thinking. It does not bog down in the “paralysis of analysis” or get into gloom and doom predictions. If you get a flat tire do you get out the jack and the spare and quickly fix it and move on, or do you say “How did that nail get there” and get angry and blame people. The first person is solution focused, the second is problem-focused; solution focused people have faith and hope and move forward in life, problem focused people have fear, anger and despair and stay stuck by the side of the road.

God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all (1 John1:5) that means God is POSITIVE. God never says “Oh that is just too hard for Me, I can’t do it.” God calls into being that which is not. He is creative and creates wonderful solutions. Sometimes God does point out the problem – but only in order to fix it, not to grumble over it forever.

When Jesus came across a problem – sickness, disease, death, a storm or whatever, He did not call a committee to order and analyze it for six months. He just envisioned the desired end solution and called it into being (e.g., “Lazarus come forth”, “be healed”, “be made clean”, “little girl rise up”, “peace be still” (to the storm) etc.

Jesus does not say “leprosy I rebuke you be gone” he says “be cleansed”. He never says to someone “tell me your life history and why you are sinning” he simply says “you are forgiven, now go and sin no more.” The focus is on the future solution not the current problem.

David and Goliath is another great instance, or the twelve spies, ten of whom saw the problems and two of whom saw the Solution. Or the feeding of the five thousand where the disciples saw the problem (not even ten thousand denarii!) while the little boy offered up a solution (five loaves and two fish). In the midst of the dark and terrible storm in Acts (Acts 27) when everyone is convinced they are lost and going to perish an angel comes to Paul, not with an analysis of the problem but with its solution.

Over and over again we see that faith has a direction – the future, and faith has content – the desired end state, the realization of God’s perfect will for that situation.

Do we truly believe that a good, wise and perfect God is interested in us and cares about our affairs and has a wise, good and perfect solution for them that can be known? The solution-focused saint believes there is such a solution, seeks God for it, then holds on to it by faith.

This is not an easy story to tell but shortly after we were married my wife and I were searching for accommodation near her university in Manila. Nearly everything was taken and we started looking at a place that I can only describe as a “terrible dump” little more than a converted garage. We were in need but this was dreadful. But I said “This is too dreadful it cannot be God’s place for us, this is the Devil’s offer!” After a bit more searching we found a clean place among good friends. This, we turned into a beautiful home. God’s place for us was perfect! The lesson I learned is that the Devil often offers a quick solution that is a disaster - the car that is a lemon, the wrong woman to marry, the wrong career, the cheap nasty lawyer, and Satan hassles us to take it to “solve our problem”.

But God’s solutions are good and perfect solutions! Look at God’s solutions in Creation from the neck of the giraffe, to the trunk of the elephant, to the wings of the bumble-bee – they are all good and perfect solutions.

Faith knows that God loves us and cares for us and that His long arm of power works everywhere for good and that His justice protects all our interests. (Psalms 23, 37, 73, 103 etc)

Faith knows that God is wise and creative and has wonderful perfect solutions that He can reveal to us who believe. (James 1:5-8, 3:16-18)

Faith knows the peace of God is His perfect “shalom” and is not just an emotion but is also a lifestyle, a concrete tangible realizable state of actual blessing and favor from God. (Isaiah 9:1-7, 26:3,12, 32:15-20)

Faith is confident that God is working all things together for good for those who love Him. (Romans 8:28)

Faith walks in those solutions. Faith sees the God-given perfect solution and receives it and believes it.

Unbelief sees the problem and denies that there is a God-given solution.

Presumption sees the problem and imagines some crazy solution that has nothing to do with God. Most prosperity gospel teaching on “visualize your desired car” fits here.

Faith takes one look at the water and sees wine, one glance at the mountain and says “where should I move it to Lord?”. Faith listens for God’s solution and does not cook up a human solution.

The first two verses from Matthew I opened this devotional with emphasize “according to your faith be it unto you”. The third talks about mustard-seed faith moving mountains. Faith is our ability to believe in the good activity of the perfectly wise God.

Hebrews 11:6 MKJV But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Faith for ministry finances means believing that God will reveal a financial solution that honors His name and is adequate for His work and meanwhile making do with “five loaves and two fishes” and the power of God.

Faith for evangelism means believing that God will lead you to those He has prepared to receive the gospel. Faith sees the harvest not the hardness.

Faith for healing means letting God show you the perfect healing for that person (which may be passing to glory) and then believing it according to His Word.

Faith is when the human spirit is firmly set on the promises and power of God, and is not swallowed up by the waves of doubt and the sight of the stormy problems. Faith sees tangible real solutions coming from God in good and perfect ways – because there is no imperfection in God.

Faith walks in the light, where there is no darkness at all and dwells in the Truth of God’s goodness power and love, so the direction of faith is always TOWARDS THE PERFECT SOLUTION - which it calls into being! (And faith lets God decide what the perfect solution is!)

Blessings,

John Edmiston (johned@aibi.ph)

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