

Tough Faith for Tough Times Series:
Faith to Overcome Storms

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- Building a tough faith doesn't come from cheerleading yourself, reading a few promises, and then putting them on the refrigerator and proclaiming these things. We must understand the roots of our faith.
- ~~Faith is used in such general terms that it has stolen the power out of it. Faith is something we live by~~

not just a devotion to a religion.

- There are certain reasons God responds or doesn't respond to our faith.
- Most have heard messages on living by faith from Mark 11: 23 / 24 – but today will be different. We need to look at it with a Christian faith.
- Christianity is sometimes mocked by intellectuals because they want “proof”. They feel Christians don't know what they are talking about. They believe we are not critical thinkers but have a herd mentality. In this church we believe in being spirit filled. But we also believe in being critical thinkers.
- Every human being functions from a faith assumption. Let's look at Charles Darwin. He was a church member and went to school to become a minister. But he became disillusioned with his church because it was religiously dead. It was all liturgy, tradition, and ritualism with no life and power. There was no energy of God to live his life by.
- Anytime there is a difference in what you believe and what you experience, you are destined for disillusionment.
- When Darwin travelled to the Galapagos Islands, he found fossils of Finches. Some with longer some with shorter bills. This became his main point for the process of evolution. The truth is, we all evolve, but within the confines of our own species. This is known as micro evolution. The finch never becomes a monkey!!!
- Darwin himself began from a faith assumption. He went to those islands to “prove” there was no God. That was his faith assumption - that there was no God.
- Pastor Rick also begins from a faith assumption – that there is a God. This is not a blind assumption. Pastor Rick has experienced His love and answered prayers. He has seen His miracles and His work in his life. Pastor Rick knows Him.

- These truths in 23/24 are very familiar. It speaks of praying and believing. That what we pray and believe with no doubt will come to pass. But we need to understand the roots of these scriptures.
- Some theologians and church goers say this is not literal but figurative. They say Jesus is speaking to the church about apostasy and rebellion. They believe Jesus is saying we have the power to pray and remove the apostasy from the church and bring judgment on the rebellion.
- To say this is not literal is a gross misuse of Bible explanation. This leaves everything to the power of God and says that we (as Christians) have no power or responsibility to do or change anything except just to trust Him.
- We become weak, worn, beat up people that only live with the hope that our reward is in heaven. This robs us of the power that Jesus gave us in Christianity.
- Here is how to know this is literal:
 1. Verse 12-14: The fig tree was real not figurative.
 2. Verse 20: The mountain was literal not figurative.
- Anytime Jesus gives us something figuratively, He always gives us a clue.

Mathew 13:24 (NKJV) *"Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;"*

- Jesus always says "is like" when using parables.
- This pattern is repeated in verses 31, 33, 44, 45, 47, and so on.
- In Mark 11, Jesus doesn't say "it is like a fig tree that is cursed" or "it is like you spoke to a mountain". If Jesus had said this, the message would be completely different.
- Jesus says, "surely I say to you, whoever says to this mountain". Why is this difference so important?
- If it is literal, it gives us authority to come against mountains of sickness, financial lack, any problem in our life, with our power of prayer, faith, believing, confession, and actions.
- So many people try to confess their faith without knowing the true power and purpose of their faith. They take these truths in a shallow manner and use them in a selfish way with no roots pinning them to their refrigerator. Then they get disillusioned when they don't come to pass.
- This is not about you just getting what you want but about you fulfilling God's destiny and purpose for you on this planet and about removing obstacles that keep you from it.
- Look at Mark 11:22 again. It tells us to "have faith in God". Those who try to do 11:23 without 11:22 are destined to fail.
- Verse 11:23 is mountain moving faith.
- Verse 11:22 is trusting faith. You have a personal trust in God and His goodness, knowing that when things don't work out, God has a better plan.
- Trusting faith and mountain moving faith work together. Trusting faith has an object and God is the object. Then mountain moving faith has a context (God).
- Trusting faith will get you to heaven but without mountain moving faith, you won't accomplish what you are put here for.
- Do you know why God left us here when we got saved?
 1. When you get saved, you are not only forgiven, but the authority of Christ is put into you. You can speak His name and whatever you ask shall be done -if you meet the conditions of your faith.
 2. You are in training for the eternal reign of Christ that is yet to come. We are going to reign forever and ever with Christ.
- Pray God's will that is being done in heaven will be done on earth.
- If we don't engage in prayer to take His will in heaven and bring it to pass on earth, we are missing His purpose to grow and strengthen our spiritual muscles.
- Every time we take His Word, pray to conquer addictions, strongholds, temptations, and conquer – we grow stronger every time!!!