

JANUARY 2005

FAITH I.D.E.A.S.

Probably the best way to start the new year is with the doctrine of faith. As we see our nation at yet in another war in Iraq, the loss of personal freedoms, living among people who not only have rejected Bible Doctrine, the Truth, but who have taken a hostile stance against it, a people who are rushing to the bottom of degeneracy, as we see the news of a massive earthquake and tidal waves on the other side of the planet, and a violent shaking of the earth; we are prone to think of the events that will take place on the earth right before the return of Jesus Christ.

Christ prophesied in Matthew 24:6-12 that there would be wars and rumors of war, nation rising against nation, kingdom against kingdom, famines and earthquakes in various places, Christians being persecuted, hated and put to death, the majority of Christians turning away from the faith, the agape love of most Christians growing cold, (no true filling of the true Holy Spirit), and the increase of wickedness. All of these things we are presently witnessing. *“And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”*

We see the dollar continuing its downward slide against the Euro, which has very serious repercussions for our economy,. We see America's manufacturing jobs being outsourced to foreign nations making it very difficult for the men and women of America to find meaningful employment and a livable wage. We see the national debt and trade deficit still rising every year giving further concern for our economy. We see evil being called good, and good evil. We see many in America that have no integrity, character, dignity or love for the truth. We see 2 Timothy 3:1-5 being manifested before our very eyes everyday, *“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despiser's of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”*

Yet we have hope! Why? Because of the doctrines of God's Word and all his many promises to us! A promise such as the Lord gives us in Matthew 21:22, *“Whatsoever things ye ask for, by means of prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”* (Corrected translation to reflect the grammar of the original Greek).

God still honors his Word and he still honors our faith! Regardless of what is going on in society around us, regardless of the apostasy of believers, regardless if the entire world forgets God, his son Jesus Christ and Bible Doctrine; God still honors those believers who love his Word, have faith in his Word and who come to him with their prayers of faith.

The grace of God is still there waiting for us and is appropriated through faith in his Word. The power of God is still there waiting for us and operates in the sphere of the believer's faith. And God is still there longing to be gracious to us; literally, tapping his foot waiting for us to get with his program of the faith rest life. Waiting for us to get under the doctrinal teaching of a Pastor-Teacher out of a local church; believing the doctrine, living by it, loving it and applying the it to our lives.

In Matthew 21:22 the Lord tells us that it is *whatsoever things we ask for*, which opens the door for everything! Always, of course, conditioned by the sovereign will of the Father. You say that you don't know if his will will allow it or not? I say pray anyway, let God sort it out! We need to have our hearts enlarged, our minds expanded and our faith to soar by the promise of "*Whatsoever things ye ask for*"!

And next we see how it's done, "*by means of prayer*". Prayer is the vehicle by which we express our desires, our will to God. There's nothing wrong with having a will; God has one; he made us creatures with volition and he wants us to use it. We also understand that our will, at times, can conflict with his perfect will, so we willingly submit to his authority in the matter.

Yet we still pray; we still express our will to God in whatever the matter is. You say what if God doesn't grant it? I say ask him again! Keep on praying over the matter until you get a clear yes, or a clear no. It's not that we're trying to bend God's will to get what we want; we do recognize the weakness and frailty of our fleshly natures, but to get to the place where our faith actually believes that we will receive what we have asked him for.

Which brings us to the next point- believing. The grammar shows us that, **while** we are praying to the Father, **while** we are expressing our will, our desire to him, **while** we are doing that, we must be believing that he will do it, that we will receive from him what we have asked him for!

This gets into the matter of **power**. We do not have the power to bring about whatever it is that we desire, but God does! *Yahweh* is all powerful! Nothing is too difficult for him, and with him all things are possible! So in prayer we are asking God to use his power to bring about what we desire. And there's nothing wrong with that! God wants to do things for us; he wants to use his power to make real in life the things we desire, for it **pleases** him to do so, and it brings him **glory** in doing so. Coupled always with the knowledge that God's will is always the overriding decider in the matter.

But there are two main issues that must be addressed in the matter of faith and prayer. One deals with God's **sovereignty** as the ruler of the universe and his eternal purpose.

What we ask God for cannot go against his sovereign will concerning other things. And on a personal level; it can't go against God's personal will for the individual believer. It can't violate his personal plan for their lives; and it won't be granted if it's detrimental to their growth or faith.

The second issue is his personal integrity, his **righteousness**. So, in keeping with his righteousness, whatever he does for us must be done according to his grace, not as a reward for our works. The grace of God rejects our works, and vice versa. The righteousness and justice of God has condemned man's works for they are out of the flesh. He has determined that the only way he will do things for us is out of his undeserved, unearned, unmerited favor. And that means it must be done through faith, for only faith is non-meritorious and works in accordance with God's grace. Hence, the necessity for faith in our prayers.

That's why it's, "*Whatsoever things ye ask for, by means of prayer, **believing**, ye shall receive.*" Our faith should soar and our confidence in the Lord grow because that means that the "sky's the limit" for all believers in Christ! No more are we bound by others, by governments, by churches, our families, or friends. No more are we repressed and limited by what others think. God will answer our prayers of faith! **We can sit in the quietness of our home or apartment believing and praying and God's power will make it happen and no one, not even the devil, can stop it!**

This brings us to the next point, which deals with a time factor, and the certainty of God answering our prayers. The Word promises, "***Believing**, ye shall receive.*" The issue is not how moral we are, our personality, religiosity, or legalism, but faith, faith in the Word of God, faith in his promises, faith in Bible Doctrine.

To *receive* is the future indicative of *lambano*. Now the tense of a verb deals with whether the action has taken place in the past, if it's taking place in the present, or if it will take place in the future. The future tense tells us that the action of receiving the answer to our prayer will take place sometime in the future. It may be in a few moments, a day, a week, or longer, but it will take place at sometime in the future.

We have to understand this; we have to realize that there will always be the time factor that exists between the time we ask God for something and the time that we actually have it. There's something else about this and that is the future tense, with the indicative mood, brings out the absolute certainty of this. Which tells us that if we make our desires, our will known to the Father, by means of prayer, and believing that he will do it for us, then we will absolutely, most certainly, receive them from him!

By this we have hope, hope for today and hope for tomorrow. By this we have confidence for today and for the future. By this we leave the pack of humanity behind as we go forward with God into a new life. A life that God will create for us by his grace and power; a life created by faith. As others are caught up in their lusts, their arrogance, their negativity and their bitterness; **we have a positive, enthusiastic faith attitude toward the future because we know the One who has the power to change our future into something great!**

And we have **ideas**; we have faith ideas; ideas that are inspired by the spiritual mental attitude of *agape*. Our minds are filled with new ideas everyday because we live in the sphere of faith. And we're not "idle dreamers", for we act on those ideas; we believe, we pray and God makes them happen.

In Galatians 5:6 it says, "*For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*", εν γαρ χριστω ιησου ουτε περιτομη τι ισχυει ουτε ακροβυστια αλλα πιστις δι αγαπης ενεργουμενη. What this tells us that the mental attitude of *agape*, which is brought about by the filling of the Holy spirit, **inspires faith ideas!** The Christian, who is under the teaching of the Word of God, and living in the filling of the Holy Spirit, and whose mind is dominated by the *agape* love mental attitude will have faith ideas!

Hopefully, I will be able to get my series FAITH I.D.E.A.S on the site available in MP3 format. In this study we will see a fantastic dynamic that God wants us to live our lives by. Ideas being an acronym for:

- I- Ideas inspired by faith.
- D- The decision to act on that faith.
- E- The energizing power of the Holy Spirit as we live by faith.
- A- The activity prompted by faith.
- S- The success that God will bring about because of our faith.

And it all goes back to, "*Whatsoever things ye ask for, by means of prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*" It goes back to, "*With God, all things are possible.*" When the believer believes the Word of God, really believes it; when he believes that all things are possible with God through faith, then his mind will start to soar with all kinds of possibilities! He will begin to have the mental attitude of faith, hope and confidence in life in the present and toward the future, and he will begin to see the power of God at work in his life in a way that he has never seen before. Why? Because the Lord honors faith in his Word!

Pastor Mike