

L.E.A.D. – FAITH AND DOUBT

We are instructed frequently throughout the Scriptures that we must have faith and also that we must challenge any doubt in our lives contrary to that faith, as it will end up damaging our relationship with our Father God. It is one thing to say that we have faith or no doubt. Still, it is fundamental that we understand the extent to which they affect our lives because faith and doubt are the opposing forces that can either bring us closer to God’s perfect plan for our lives or take us further away from it, and it especially important to remember that it is our responsibility to ensure that we are moving closer to God with each step and not further away.

Faith is an expression of confidence, and where better to place that faith than in something that is taking us toward redemption, perfection, and eternal life of love and freedom from death? We know from God’s Word that He is working for our good and that all things, regardless of how they appear to us at the time, whether comfort or strife, contribute to the improvement of our lives, the development of our relationship with God and ultimately our preparation for the Kingdom (Romans 8:28). Not only this, but our Father, through Yeshua, is working good *in* our lives too, every minute of every day until the day that our Messiah returns as our King (Philippians 1:6). This is something to have confidence in, something that we can place our faith in, but it can all be taken away if we succumb to doubt.



To reach perfection, we must be perfected. This is the crucial lesson that the destination, no matter how wonderful, is less significant for us in this time than the development of our nature along the way so that we might be worthy of it. Recall the story of Yeshua walking on water in Matthew 14:25-32, in which Peter, showing a stronger faith than his brethren, steps out of the boat and onto the water,

but in a moment of doubt begins to sink into the water, only to be rescued by Yeshua pulling him up by the hand. Interestingly, Yeshua’s famous statement (“O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”), was directed at Peter, even though the others had not even left the boat. Peter had

expressed faith at first but then let the circumstances around him dictate his feelings, leading to doubt that, were it not for Messiah's rescue, may have led to his death beneath the waves. This is an excellent risk for believers, who may start strong in faith but then waver as the storm rises around them. Faith in YHWH is faith in life itself, and our closeness to Him is directly related to our faith in Him and His work even amid the most violent storm. YHWH is the Maker of all things, and with the universe under His power (Isaiah 45:6-13), nothing is impossible for Him (Matthew 19:26, Mark 10:27, Luke 18:27), so this fact alone should remind us that our faith, hope, and trust better placed in God than in our abilities and plans. That God has both supreme power and strategies for good for those who are a part of His Kingdom should be enough to encourage us to put more trust in Him, regardless of what storms rage around us (Isaiah 41:10, Jeremiah 29:11).

Doubt is something we must guard ourselves against as it takes us away from the solace, we can find in the words above: God has only our good in His heart. Still, even those in the presence of Messiah Himself were not immune to doubt, as we saw in Peter sinking into the water and also in the famous instance of Thomas' doubt, written in John 20:27. Thomas, from that moment, can be considered as least amongst the disciples because he had to see and touch to believe physically; his *spirit-man* was so small that he couldn't see with his spiritual vision what was right in front of him, but this doubt was not just contained to that moment, it was something that must have been building for a while for it to be expressed outwardly at that time. The adversary always plants a seed of doubt before the significant crisis begins, the problem itself only 'watering' the seed of doubt and allowing it to grow and strengthen within, breaking out when it will cause the most damage to our walk. This is why we must improve our *spirit-man* and increase our faith now, so that when a crisis does come, we can weather the storm and come out with a stronger connection to God and a spirit bolstered against the works of the enemy, no matter what we face. This begins by trusting in the righteous ways of YHWH and not our minimal understanding, walking in the faith that He will direct the path of those who place their trust in Him entirely. As noted in Jeremiah 29:11, it is God who knows the plans, not us, as no man can honestly see the mind of God (Isaiah 55:8-9), but even so, we are to trust in His plans because, again, we know that they are for our good.

Faith is the substance of our hope and trust in the works and Word of God, not the situational results we see with our physical eyes. What we see is not the outcome nor the complete truth of things, which means that it is not 'real' in the eternal realm. Faith is the only real connection we have to that eternal realm that allows it to manifest in ours; it is the pipeline through which freely flows the Water of Life. Faith is a manifestation of Truth because our God is Truth, and our faith is in Him; it is the evidence of the 'things not seen that show that the goodness, glory, love, and work of God in our lives (Hebrews 1:11) and show that we are living for the sake of truth and goodness.

We should see the world and our lives through the lens of faith and confidence in the will of God. Still, if we only carry doubts with us, we will find ourselves blinded, our own eyesight diminished. Our understanding confounded, just as Zacharias, father to John the Baptist and priest to Israel, had seen himself muted, unable to speak, due to his lack of belief in the words that were carried to him from the Father by Gabriel (Luke 1:18-20). Zacharias could not be allowed to spread his doubt through his words, so the power to speak was taken from him, just as

our perception and understanding will be diminished by God so that we do not continue down the wrong path, encouraging us to start seeing more with the Spirit, because as Paul stated, we walk by faith in the perfect will of God and not by a sight that only allows us to see what's happening on the surface (2 Corinthians 5:7).

We are supposed to 'be still, in a state of peace within ourselves, no matter what is happening around us and most especially when things are going wrong, but this can be so difficult when we are fighting against the urge to try and fix things through our limited strength and flawed understanding. God has always given us what we need, but we need to be patient and silent, waiting for Him to reveal the solution because only One in His lofty position could even hope to know what every situation needs for a good outcome. We exalt God when we demonstrate our trust in His will in times of crisis and allow Him to work without trying to control the situation ourselves (Psalm 46:10). An excellent analogy for this is like standing on a shore, staring across a seemingly infinite ocean, knowing that we have to cross it to reach our destination. With no ship in sight and no sign of a way across it, we start to swim but soon find ourselves in dangerous waters, surrounded by sharks and on the verge of drowning through exhaustion. At that point, we are passed by a boat that would have carried us from one shore to the other, and we realize that if we only waited for a bit longer, God would have sent our means of passage. Although while standing on that shore, we could see no other way of crossing the ocean, had we just put our trust in God's will and waited in stillness. That boat would have arrived and carried us across that ocean, but instead, we took ourselves further into danger and closer to the risk of death. Faith is a matter of life and death!

Faith is almost a supernatural power, bending reality and expectation and bringing the Laws of heaven down to earth. How often have you found that something should have failed by 'common expectation' or a situation went very wrong? Still, the outcome has been almost miraculously positive by putting faith in God's will and fervent prayer. This is the power of faith, but the same could be said for its opposite, doubt. With God's help, something that would have been a glorious demonstration of His power in our lives instead can end up being the worst it could be through our faithless interference. We must have faith if the negative power of doubt is to be dispelled entirely from our lives, but more so than that, if we carry God's name to the world and reveal His power to others as His emissaries. Yeshua exhibited this when he cursed the fig tree, and it immediately withered. Still, this power, as explained by Messiah, is a result of faith in God and belief in the certainty of the manifestation of His will (Matthew 21:18-22).

Sometimes the fastest and safest route across the mountain range is through a tunnel, but this way is naturally daunting, damp, and dark. Much in the same way, God may take us on a dangerous route, but ultimately, as long as we are moving along this road in faith, then however it seems to us, it is the safest place you could hope to be. Sometimes that darkness keeps the real dangers and seeds of doubt out of our scope of vision and allows us to keep walking forwards. Doubt, however, will lead us into darkness without end with no hope of the 'light at the end of the tunnel,' but if we walk true to our trust in God's will, we will eventually emerge from that darkness and back into daylight. Faith is the reality of the heavenly realm, not the distorted reality of the world's so-called 'reason,' which will often bring more doubts and crises of faith than solutions. We must live in that reality in which God has control, but as this is not something we can see with our eyes, only through faith can we perceive the truth of things. The storm may

feel very real as it rages around us, but the absolute truth of it is Messiah calling us out of the boat to walk on water with Him because when it is for God that we live our lives, then not even violence of the worst storm could ever be enough to drag us down.

Shalom,

Jim Staley