

Experiencing God

Crisis of Belief

Hebrews 11:6

August 20, 2016

Today

We are moving right along in our Experiencing God series. Last week we discovered that God has spoken to people through a variety of ways. He desires to include His people in His redemptive work. As our relationship with Him grows and strengthens, He begins to invite us to participate in His plans.

When God invites you to join Him, the assignment is God-sized. It won't take long for you to realize that you cannot do what He is asking you to do. When God does something in you or through you, it is something only He can do. When God reveals His plans and purposes – you will face a crisis of belief – a time of decision - a moment when you must decide what you truly believe about God. It is a crossroads. Your response will determine whether you become involved with God or continue to go your own way, missing perhaps the greatest adventure of your life.

This is often the place where people give up. They see no way to accomplish what God has asked them to do and instead of placing the responsibility of accomplishing the task where it belongs – at the feet of Jesus, who, by the way has promised to complete EVERYTHING He starts – They just simple decide it can't be done. And of course, it can't be done with human wisdom and strength. That's why it is a God-sized plan. Only God can accomplish it.

BIBLE EXAMPLES:

- **Moses (Exodus 14:26-31)** – God told Moses to use his rod to part the Red Sea and then take 2 million people across on dry land. Moses had to decide if he believed God could hold back millions of tons of water during the journey. Moses could do none of the things God asked him to do, but through Moses God freed a people.
- **Joshua (Joshua 6:1-20)** – God told Israel to march around Jericho for 7 days, yell really loud, and then witness its destruction. They had to decide if they believed God could destroy a city. Joshua could do none of the things God asked him to do, but through Joshua God established a nation.
- **Gideon (Judges 7:1-8)** – God told Gideon to engage the enemy of Israel with an inferior army. Gideon had to decide if he believed God could defeat the combined armies of the Midianites and Amalekites with only 300 men. Those 300 men could do none of the things God asked them to do, but through them God destroyed an army.

The assignments God gives are always God-sized. They are always beyond human strength and wisdom because God wants to work through us to demonstrate HIS nature, strength, power and love to the watching world.

The ONLY way to experience God working through your life is to say YES to the invitation.

Saying YES requires FAITH:

- **Hebrews 11:1** – Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
- **Matthew 17:20** – He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."
- **Martin Luther King:** Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.
- **DL Moody:** Faith takes God without any ifs.
- **Oswald Chambers:** Faith never knows where it is being led, but it loves and knows the One who is leading.

Faith requires ACTION:

- **James 2:14-26** – What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself. ¹⁸ But someone may well say, "You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." ¹⁹ You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. ²⁰ But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? ²² You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone. ²⁵ And in the same way was not Rahab the harlot also

justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶ For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

It is one thing to say you have faith in God – that you have a relationship with Him – that you are a Christian, a follower of Christ and a completely different thing to live that truth out in your life.

What you believe about Him will determine how you respond – regardless of what you say or what you claim. Your actions say more about what you believe than what you say. Action proves the truth of your claims.

- **David and Goliath** (1 Samuel 17:32-50): What David claimed to believe about God was followed by action and the result was the death of Goliath and the defeat of the Philistine army.
- **Three Boys** (Daniel 3:13-18): What they claimed to believe about God was followed by in action (NOT bowing to the statue) and as a result, a mighty king was humbled and God was glorified.

The entire book of Acts is a history of the early church. It is not really a story of what people did so much as it is a revelation of what happens when God works and His people participate in what He is doing. When the early Christians followed the directions of the Holy Spirit, **God turned the world on its head.**

- The uneducated disciples spoke in foreign languages they had never studied.
- Previously brash, yet timid disciples stood boldly before the Sanhedrin.
- An Ethiopian was baptized.
- Many were healed
- A devout woman was raised from the dead.
- Paul was converted.
- The gospel spread to all the earth

A.E. Tozer: If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95% of what we do would not change and we would not know the difference. If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the early church, 95% of what they did would stop and everyone would know the difference.

Today, what the world often sees is a church or Christian doing religious things. But they are not seeing God. They don't see anything happening that can be explained only in terms of God's activity. WHY?

- We lack the faith to attempt God-sized tasks.
- We are attempting to do those things only we can do.

It is possible to do all sorts of things for God – be busy, busy, busy with church activities but never experience God and never show the world a God who loves them.

Our world is not attracted to Christ because they are not seeing Him at work in our lives. They don't want to get involved in what they are seeing in our lives. We are not giving them opportunities to encounter God. They see only us.

This should never be the case with followers of Christ. We should ooze the presence and activity of God. People should be attracted to God because they see something different in us.

When people see the difference Jesus makes in a life, a family, a church – it will affect how they respond to the Gospel.

It is my prayer and desire that this church be a light in this community. That we seek to know what it is God wants this church body to do and that we embrace the God-sized task He has in mind. It will require Faith and Action, but if we are obedient to the call of God, this church will come to reflect Him and this community will be turned on its head.

I believe it! I believe it! I believe it!!