

Faith Is Like That

On a trip to the mountains of the American west we decided to cross a pass that was above 10,000 feet. We could see the summit in the distance and started on the designated route, following markings the map told us would take us there. There were times the summit was obscured by trees and turns in the road. There were a series of difficult switchbacks and dangerous curves that called for caution. Sometimes it seemed the grade was down hill away from the summit, or even carrying us back where we came from. An occasional car was disabled along the way and we wondered if that might happen to us. Someone would ask how much further it was and we wondered if it was worth the effort.

We reached the top and felt the joy of achievement. We paused and beheld the beauties we could not see from below. From this vantage point we could see for miles, whereas below we were limited by distance and obstructions. We saw the road we had traveled and from the top it didn't look near that difficult and long; it now had a beauty we could not appreciate as we traveled it. The journey up was well worth the effort for the joy we now had.

Walking by faith is like that. God in His word gives us just a glimpse of the summit, enough that we long to be there, a place of rest and beauty beyond imagination. We may not fully understand until we reach the end but it will be worth it. The fact that others "break down" will not stop us. The difficulties of "switch-backs" and "dangerous curves" do not frighten us. God has set up "guard rails" and "sign posts" for our protection and guidance. Though we be weary and wonder if it be worthwhile, and how much longer we must climb, "we faint not ... our... inward man is renewed ... our light affliction worketh for us ... an eternal weight of glory." To attain "a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ... we walk by faith and not by sight: we are of good courage ... we make it our aim to be well pleasing in his sight" (2 Cor. 4:16-5:9).

By faith, Abraham sojourned, looking "for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." He died in faith, having seen the promises afar, "desiring a better country, that is an heavenly," for God prepared for him a city (Heb. 11:8-16). Abraham's faith was tried but it never wavered in unbelief, rather waxed strong, giving God the glory, being fully assured that what God had promised He could perform (Rom. 4:20,21). "They that are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" and are "heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:9,29).

"For the which cause I suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12). That's what walking by faith is all about.

- by Morris D. Norman

Big Fish Story

I have heard many big fish yarns, but the evolutionists ask us to believe the biggest one yet. Somewhere in the remote past, they say, a fish flapped out on dry land and his fins turned into legs. After that, the story of Jonah and the whale seems easy!

- by R. L. Whiteside

Regrets At Death

I have never heard and I never expect to hear of one who, when about to die:

- Regrets that he became a Christian.
- Regrets that he tried earnestly to live as a Christian.
- Regrets that he gave so much time to prayer and study of the Bible.
- Regrets that he gave a generous portion of his money to do the Lord's work.
- Regrets that he tried to reach others who were lost in sin around him.
- Regrets that he assembled conscientiously and regularly with the brethren for worship, exhortation and edification.

But I have heard of many and expect to hear of more who, when about to die:

- Regretted not becoming a child of the King.
- Regretted not trying earnestly to live as a Christian.
- Regretted that they had not given much time to prayer and study of the Bible.
- Regretted they had not given a generous portion of their money to do the Lord's work.
- Regretted they had not tried to reach others around them who were lost in sin.
- Regretted they had not assembled conscientiously and regularly with their brethren for worship, exhortation and edification.

What about you? When you are facing death, as each of us will one day, will you have any regrets? Do not wait until it is too late to set your priorities straight. What is important is what you can take with you into eternity. Anything else has to be of much less value.

- by Bill Crews

What About Miracles Today?

There are lots of people who believe that miracles still happen today. What does the Bible say?

YES, it is an absolute fact that God through His Holy Spirit gave men in the first century the power to perform miracles. (A miracle is, by definition, a supernatural act that defies explanation by the laws of nature.) The question is: Does God still give men such power today?

NO, there are no miracles (remember our definition) occurring today. Here are the reasons why:

1) Miracles served a specific purpose in the first century. They were the means by which God revealed and confirmed His will to mankind (Mk. 16:17-20; Heb. 2:3,4). Since God has finished His revelation (2 Pet. 1:3) there is no longer any need for men to perform miracles. They have ended.

2) There were two ways to receive miraculous power in the first century. One way was by the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4,5; 2:1-4). That baptism was only for a few - not for all - and it no longer is available (Eph 4:4-6). The only other way that men received miraculous abilities was by the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 8:14-17). Obviously there are no apostles still living today, and therefore there is no way to receive these powers. Miracles have ended because the means by which they were imparted are no longer available to us.

3) The New Testament actually tells us that miracles were to end and tells when they would end. In 1 Cor. 13:8-13, Paul states that miracles would end when God's complete revelation was made known to men. We now have His final word and, according to His own testimony, miracles have ended.

- by Greg Gwin