

## Cast the Doubt Out!

I think many of God's people don't realise how sinister and dangerous unbelief is. Many pious and self-righteous Christians look down their religious noses at people committing other, more visible sins. They criticise them sharply without realising that the unbelief they harbour in their hearts, and in some cases enshrine in their doctrines, is more wicked in God's sight than the sins they are condemning. Jesus rebuked His disciples for unbelief more than any other thing. **The reason unbelief is so dangerous is that not only is it a sin in itself, but it also can be a gateway for other sins as well.** We know faith is the currency of God's kingdom, and without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6).

However, I think many people have a basic misunderstanding about faith. They pray and seek more and more faith. But what if I told you that you already have plenty of faith? **The problem is not that you have too little faith; the problem is that you have too much unbelief!**

In Mark 9:24, a man said to Jesus, *"I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"* (NIV). Notice that he didn't ask Jesus to give him more faith. In fact, he said, "I do believe." This man recognised that the problem was not too little faith but too much unbelief! Faith and unbelief can be present at the same time. **Faith has the potential to move mountains, but unbelief will nullify the power of faith.**

Let me explain it like this. When my wife was in Bible college, she owned a silver diesel Volkswagen Jetta. One day she lent the car to a friend. On his way to return the car, as a courtesy he decided to refill the fuel he had used. He pulled into the petrol station, inserted his credit card, opened the cap of the petrol tank, and began to fill it—with petrol! How he missed the bold red warning on the tank that said "DIESEL FUEL ONLY", I will never know. **But one thing is certain; his little mistake was costly for us and devastating for the vehicle.**

After the petrol was added, the vehicle would no longer run. It's not that there was too little diesel in the tank. The problem was the injection of a substance that was incompatible with the vehicle's design. **This is exactly how unbelief works! The devil wants to inject unbelief into our spirits because he knows it will bring us to a screeching halt.**

Let us consider the context of the verse where Jesus talked about mountain-moving faith. The story is found in Matthew 17:14–21. A certain man with a demon-possessed son had come to Jesus's disciples for help, but when they could not cast out the evil spirits, they asked Jesus why they had been so unsuccessful. He said to them, "Because of your unbelief". **This is a very clear and precise explanation that Jesus reiterated by going on to say, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this**

**mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."**

So far this seems very straightforward. But the simplicity and clarity of this statement is often overshadowed by confusion over the next words Jesus spoke: *"However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."* (v. 21). It almost sounds as if Jesus contradicted Himself. When asked why the disciples had not been able to exorcise the demon, He said it was because of unbelief. But now He seems to be saying that it is because they had not fasted and prayed enough. Which is it? **The confusion comes when we fail to realise the moral of the story.**

At first glance it may appear that the demon is the focal point of this account, but a closer look will reveal that the real antagonist in this story is not the demon but the spirit of unbelief! The disciples were concerned about the demon inside the boy, but Jesus was concerned about the unbelief inside His disciples. The disciples' question was about casting out demons, but Jesus's answer was about casting out doubt. **Jesus knew that once unbelief has been cast out, exorcising demons would be a piece of cake!**

Sometimes we have to pray long prayers and fast for many days before we get the victory, but it is not because our appeals coerce God into doing something. And it is not because we have finally earned the answer to our prayers by logging enough credit hours into our spiritual bank account. **Much fasting and prayer may be necessary and useful in helping us gain victory over our own stubborn flesh and cast out the spirit of unbelief that blocks God's power from flowing through us.** It is this kind of unbelief that goes out only "by prayer and fasting." It is also worth mentioning that some manuscripts do not contain the statement about prayer and fasting at all, which is why many Bible translations have left it out completely. **Any way you look at it, faith is the key to powerful prayer.** This is the point Jesus made in this story.

In Matthew 9:25, when Jairus's daughter died, Jesus had to send everyone out of the room before He could raise her from the dead. Why didn't He allow all those scornful sceptics to see the miracle with their own eyes? Because He had to cast the unbelief out. Peter did the same thing in Acts 9:40: *"But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, 'Tabitha, arise.'* And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up". Jesus taught His disciples an important lesson: **Cast the spirit of unbelief out, and nothing will be able to stand against you. Demons, death, and even the most formidable mountains will obey your command!**

*This Bible Study has been taken from Evangelist Daniel Kolenda's book, ["Live Before You Die"](#). This book outlines a straightforward approach to recognising God's will in your life.*