

A Faith Filled Ministry

A faith filled ministry of all believers.

We must move from “the what” to the “who”.

Matthew 19:16-21 [NIV] *“Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?” “Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.” “Which ones?” the man enquired. Jesus replied, “‘Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honour your father and mother,’ and ‘love your neighbour as yourself.’” “All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?” Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”*

Jesus started where this man was. This diligent rich young man obeyed the law yet sensed there was more he must do. This was the “what”, all that he was doing in his own strength. Jesus affirmed this effort, then pointed to Himself “follow Me” this was the “who”.

Matthew 19:22-26 [NIV] *“When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. Then Jesus said to his disciples, “I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”*

For people who by their own intellect and diligence have attained great wealth and standing in the community, it is hard for them to surrender to another person and follow them.

Christ was using this event to teach His own disciples that they also must move from the “what” they could do in their own strength to “who”, God to work in and through them.

John 15:1-5 [NIV] *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”*

This is why we have to make this transformation of our mind set.

Romans 12:2 [NIV] *“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

A transformed mind that has faith in what God has done and can do in our lives.

Romans 12:3 [NIV] *“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.”*

An act of humbling ourselves before God and becoming focused on the Holy Spirit for it is through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that our faith is increased.

For faith [faithfulness to God] is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 16:13-17 [NIV] *“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’ They replied, ‘Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ ‘But what about you?’ he asked. ‘Who do you say I am?’ Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.’”*

This statement of faith in Jesus Christ was revealed by the Holy Spirit, it was not the opinion of the people.

John 14:6-10 [NIV] *“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.’ Philip said, ‘Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.’ Jesus answered: ‘Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.’”*

Jesus the Son of Man, perfectly reflected God the Father, but note it was the Father who was doing the work in Him.

When people look at us as Christians [little Christs] they should see Jesus Christ because it is the active Holy Spirit in us that should be doing the work of witness.

As Christians we are not in charge of our lives, the Holy Spirit must be in charge.

Thankfully we will never ever be in charge, it will always be God.

That is very Good News!

To recognise this fact takes faith.

John 6:35-37 [NIV] *“Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and **he who believes in me** will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.’”*

Christ reveals Himself as bread that has come down from heaven [like the Manna did under the Old Covenant].

“Believes in me” this takes faith on our part.

John 6:38-39 [NIV] *“For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.”*

Total submission to the Father.

John 6:40 [NIV] *“For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

The result of faith in Jesus.

John 6:41-42 [NIV] *“At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, ‘I am the bread that came down from heaven.’ They said, ‘Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven?’”*

This is human judgement, the result of leaving faith out of the equation.

John 6:43 [NIV] *“Stop grumbling among yourselves,” Jesus answered.”*

Stop grumbling.

John 6:60-61 [NIV] *“On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?” Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you?”*

Even disciples grumbled because faith in Jesus Christ was not part of the equation.

Without faith the message does offend people.

John 6:62 [NIV] *“What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before!”*

Seeing is not faith for faith is trust without sight, faith is spiritual.

John 6:63-66 [NIV] *“The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no-one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him.” From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.”*

The spirit [faith] gives life, the flesh [human judgement without faith only based on sight] is useless.

The Father enables us to have faith by sending the Holy Spirit to dwell in us and bring forth the “fruit” of faith.

John 6:67-68 [NIV] *“You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”*

They did not leave because they had moved from the “what” to the “who”, they knew Who Christ is.

Matthew 10:34-36 [NIV] *“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn “a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.”*

Only Jesus does this **not us**.

If our teaching is offensive to others make sure it is **not** our teaching but that of Jesus Himself, His Words.

Our job is to model Jesus in faith.

John 7:37-39 [NIV] *“On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”*

If we “drink in” Jesus, the Word and believe in Him, the Holy Spirit will flow through us, doing God’s work through us.

This can only happen if we surrender totally to Jesus Christ, for Him to be central to all we think and do as individuals and as a fellowship of Christians.

Jesus never commissioned us to build His Church.

Matthew 16:13-18 [NIV] *“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”*

The rock on which Christ was going to build His Church was the faith statement of Peter “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”

Romans 10:1-15 [NIV] *“Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: “The man who does these things will live by them.” But the righteousness that is by faith says: “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) “or ‘Who will descend into the deep?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”*

This is moving from the “what” can we do, to “who” will do the work of God in and through us.

Let us all become the “*beautiful feet*” of the Holy Spirit preaching the Good News of what God has done for all humanity, in Jesus Christ the saviour of all humanity.