

In the biography of the Hudson Taylor, great missionary to China during the Victorian era, we find these words: “Hudson’s Taylor’s loyalty to Christ and His Word made him aggressive in his defense of the faith. Arthur T. Pierson spoke of his 'strange wonderment' at the readiness of clergyman to make concessions to the rationalistic enemies of supernaturalism. Taylor often used the illustration of the Russian who tossed out his children one by one to the pursuing hungry wolves in order that he himself might escape their violence. ‘Why appease the clamor of these critics,’ he would thunder, ‘by tossing out vital truths of the faith? Don’t have less faith in God than you have in man!’ Here was a man of strong convictions.”

The definition of "supernatural" is: a manifestation or event attributed to some force beyond scientific understanding or the laws of nature. Things have not changed since the 1800s; if anything, the skepticism has grown. People doubt the miracle working ability of God. Why do we do this and what is the remedy?

### **1. We are not believing.**

I find myself often saying the phrase, “I am not believing this!” Usually I say this in jest. Even in prayer, as I meditate upon people whom I love that are not right with God or circumstances that are off-kilter, I will say sometimes out-loud, “Lord, I’m not believing this, How did this happen? I am simply not believing this.” As I was in prayer this morning I believe the Lord pricked my heart and said, “Stop saying that!”

My mind immediately went to the biblical story of a man who had a son stricken with a demonic power that left the child speechless. Not only was the boy speechless and unable to express his discomfort and agony but the demonic stronghold also caused other problems. The father said, “*And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth (cuts) him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away* (dehydrates to the point of physical impairment)...” (Mark 9:18). The father went on to describe the young man’s maladies: “*And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him...*” (Mark 9:22a). I hear the pitiful cry of this dad when he says, “*...but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us*” (Mark 9:22b). Immediately Jesus threw the ball back in his lap and said, “*...If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth*” (Mark 9:23). That question is as viable today as it was two millennia ago. The man got what Jesus was saying and in total honesty answered, “*And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief*” (Mark 9: 24). This dad was not going to let time stand in his way, for the boy had been like this for years (Mark 9:21). He was also not going to let the failure of the disciples dissuade him (Mark 9:18), for they could not do anything to help the boy and his broken-hearted father. Finally and most importantly, he was not going to let his unbelief win the day and with tears he rebukes his own unbelief and sides with the statement of the Lord that if he would believe, all things would be possible, yes even his poor afflicted son could and would be healed! The result is given to us in Mark 9: 25, as Jesus “*...rebuked*

permanent, for the demon stronghold was forbidden to ever enter the boy and cause havoc again.

Let us learn from this true story and be determined to believe God! I am resolute today to substitute the phrase “I am not believing this” to, “Lord I am believing You and Your power!”

## **2. Belief grows in the atmosphere of faith.**

*“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Romans 10:17). Reading and studying the Bible is not just a good spiritual exercise, it actually builds faith. We need not complain that God is not on His throne if we are neglecting the basic discipline of Bible study.

Also, we need to associate closely with those who have faith and avoid a constant companionship with those who mock faith and the Christian lifestyle. The Bible says, *“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners”* (I Corinthians 15:33). Jairus came to Jesus asking him to come lay hands on his sick daughter. While in route to pray for her, Christ was interrupted by the woman who had the issue of blood. After our Lord healed her, he proceeded to Jairus’ daughter. As Jesus was walking that direction the word came back from Jairus’ house that the little girl had died. Notice our Lord’s response, *“And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James”* (Mark 5:37). Jesus insisted that only these three faithful disciples go with Him to the bedside of the deceased little girl. As Jesus entered the house, He said, *“...Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.”* The skeptics responded pitifully and the Lord was quick to dismiss them from the room: *“And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying”* (Mark 5: 40). Notice who the Lord has with Him in the room with the little girl - His faithful disciples and the parents. He ordered the unbelieving mockers out of the room. The result of faith’s atmosphere? *“And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.*

*And straightway the damsel arose, and walked...”* (Mark 5: 41, 42a).

Too many churches have dispensationalized away the miracles of God by the incorrect exegesis in Bible study. Most do not realize by emphasizing what God cannot or will not do they are creating the atmosphere of unbelief. The centurion came to the Lord requesting that He would just speak the word only (He need not bother to come to his house) and he knew the servant would be healed by Christ if He would just speak the word of faith. I love Jesus’ assessment, statement and action! *“And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour”* (Matthew 8:13). Belief not only grows in the atmosphere of faith, it reaches out and takes hold of the miraculous. The words of Jesus reflect the atmosphere of faith, *“...as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee....”*

## **3. Open your hearts to the faith life.**

*"...where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of..."* (Judges 6:13b). Gideon was doubting because of what was said earlier in the book, *"And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel"* (Judges 2:10). We see when the "Joshua generation" died off, so did the miracles, because the next generation refused to walk in the faith that their parents walked in. Gideon rose to the occasion and by faith defeated the Midianites. The key to his victory is found in Hebrews 11:32 and 33, *"And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon...Who through faith subdued kingdoms..."* Let us not just read, study and admire the lives of godly Bible characters, but let us emulate and walk in the same faith available for us today! Just believe!

-Pastor Pope-