

N U R T U R E  
**F A I T H**  
with  
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The Missing Factor In Our Faith

**READ:** Psalm 118:23 (Common English Bible)

*“This has happened because of the Lord; it is astounding in our sight!”*

**REFLECT:**

Many who occupy a seat in Sunday’s worship have a reduced faith. They have given intellectual consent to the Christian ideas that they have received, either from their family, a loved one, or the persuasive witness of another. Perhaps they concur that the Christian church is a useful, necessary institution for the general well being of a community and should be supported. Some may vigorously advance the argument that the world would be a better place if more people embraced basic Christian values. Yet, many of these same people would be immensely surprised if they ever caught God doing anything. The God of their faith is one who sits in heaven and does nothing. Expectancy of God actually moving and working powerfully in the world is the missing factor of their faith.

Not so with the writer of these few words from the Psalms. Doubtless, this writer believes that God acts in the world. What we know is that something happened, that God seems to be the only explanation, and that it was astounding. No longer is God a mere object of belief, God is someone to be experienced; experienced as a force operative in the world. We are not told what happened. What we do know is that it changed this persons’ whole complexion of faith. This vital sense of the reality of God – and God’s activity in the world – presents a striking contrast with much of the faith that is common today.

Some years ago a popular television program, The A-Team, developed a fictional narrative of four Vietnam vets, framed for a crime they didn’t commit. Each weekly episode featured an elaborate – an unlikely – collaboration of the four helping the innocent while on the run from the military. Following the always heroic and successful effort of the four to correct an injustice, Col. John “Hannibal” Smith, the leader of the team, would lean back with a lit cigar, smile, and say, “I love it when a plan comes together!” That must have been the experience of the Psalmist when something always believed in suddenly works. There was a present difficulty, and God showed-up!

Of course, astounding things are supposed to happen. We are not alone in the world, watched over by a disinterested God seated in heaven. Whatever else God may be, the Bible is clear that God is a spiritual force waiting to be released through the lives of those who believe, who are expectant of God’s activity, and are daily aligning their lives with the teachings of Jesus Christ. Perhaps nothing is more profoundly absurd than the Christian who professes belief in a great God but fails to expect astounding results from that belief. The Psalmist experience can be our own. It begins with expectant prayer, eyes wide-open for the astounding things God will do with us and through us.

