

UNDERSTANDING FAITH SERIES

TWO WAYS OF DISCERNING FAITH

We are talking about faith and today's message is tied to the last message where we showed how there is a slight difference between exercising faith to receive from the anointing upon a man of God and exercising faith in our personal private life to receive from the anointing within. There are principles that are the same. But there are principles that are slightly different. So there is a difference between exercising faith to receive or to be healed under the anointing upon and to receive something from the anointing within by personal faith. There are slight differences but both do require faith. Faith is predominant in both. We are going to speak specially this morning and show one of the most important aspects of faith is acting on discerning the presence of faith in someone to be healed. There are slight differences between acting in faith under the anointing upon and acting in faith under personal faith or the anointing within.

Acting in faith under anointing upon is slightly different. The difference is in the discerning of faith. Lets look at Acts 14 and read a passage of scripture that will give us light in this area. Paul in his missionary journey has traveled now to Iconium and now as he continued preaching they went to Lystra and Derbe in verse 6. Verse 8-12 *Now at Lystra there was a man sitting, who could not use his feet; he was a cripple from birth, who had never walked. He listened to Paul speaking; and Paul, looking intently him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, said in a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he sprang up and walked. And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, because he was the chief speaker, they called Hermes.*

In verse 15 Paul told them *“Men, why are you doing this? We also are men, of like nature with you, and bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways, yet he did not leave Himself without witness, for He did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness. With these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them.*

As we teach this series on faith, we pray that you would become a more positive person. It is not possible to be a person of great faith and be negative at the same time. All pessimists tend to be unbelievers. One day I asked a businessman who was very pessimistic and very negative why he was that way. Why do you choose to be a pessimist? And he said, “If I believe that something good is going to happen and it doesn’t happen I may get disappointed. So I might as well get disappointed now so that I don’t get disappointed later.” I hope that’s not your philosophy. It is not God’s philosophy neither is it Jesus’ philosophy. See the pessimist live as if there is no God, as if there is no future. What the businessman said was correct in the natural but it is incorrect in the spiritual sense because the element of God helping us was not brought in. If God is our hope there is no disappointment. In fact the bible does say that faith does not disappoint. God does not disappoint us. In fact everyday as you grow and experience new experiences, you become either more positive or negative. We ought to become more positive in faith. Faith is a positive force.

And here we see that Paul as he was preaching in the streets. Many times we have constructed in our minds and in our mental conception the fact that God can only work in an auditorium. We forget that many of the miracles of Jesus and of the apostles took place on the streets. Right out there where they are the hard knocks of life, where you have no time to pray. You have to do all your prayers before that. Where you don’t even have the time to sing *Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me*. All the homework has to be done in your private life. And when you go forth you expect God’s gifts to operate while you are on your job – when you are working on your computer, while you are taking your commuter train. Wherever you are you expect the gifts of God to manifest. It takes place in

normal circumstances of life. Many of Jesus' miracles were without a song leader or without preparation because Jesus had done all the preparation. He gets up very early in the morning to seek the Lord, to wait upon the Lord. He had done His homework. The reason why many times it takes a long time to get into a position of God's operation or God's manifestation is people don't do their homework. And you know homework. Homework is homework whether it is spiritual or natural. If you don't do it at home you got to do it outside. If we all do our spiritual homework and develop a relationship with God we would just launch into the Spirit any time any place any here.

So here we are with Paul on the streets preaching his heart out. He loves God and he loves to preach the gospel. So he is announcing the good news about Jesus Christ. And there was this man Luke who wrote this gospel and the bible qualifies him as a medical doctor. And in the writings of Luke you will find more detailed description of sicknesses that can only be observed by one who is skilled or knowledgeable in the medical sense. He would qualify what kind of sickness. You compare with the other gospel he is more explicit in describing the kind of sicknesses.

So here in verse 8 he says *a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting and he was crippled from his mother's womb*. He had never walked before. But there he is sitting down and listening to the gospel. And of course Paul noticed him. It does not record that after he was healed there were muscles added. You see since he had never walked before his legs would have no muscles and his legs would look like matchsticks. He was just healed and there he was dancing away. But if God had done a creative miracle then muscles would have been added instantly. So here he was walking and leaping on his matchstick legs.

You ask me, "How do you get such clear details in your messages?" You see we taught how to develop your devotional life. There are three ways you should read your bible. One of the ways is to read the bible with your imagination. The first is use the Word as a meditation tool; it is food for you. Take out scriptures and meditate on them. The second is to study by revelation. When God gives a revelation you have to check it up with the Word and that can take time. Some of you received a revelation while you are sitting here. God speaks a word that tells

something about His scripture. Like He could say something to your heart like God had forgiven you. But you are not sure where the scriptures are. And you take that Word and you study everywhere about forgiveness, the revelation of forgiveness and cleansing. So one thought and one revelation is followed up by studying the Word. The third way is reading the bible with your imagination. As you read one sentence you close your eyes and you see what actually happened. How do I do that? The Holy Spirit is your tourist guide in the spirit realm. God did not leave us without a Comforter. To paraphrase for us modern people where tourism is a No. 1 earner in many countries, God's Holy Spirit is the tourist guide in the spirit realm. There are many places we have not been in the Spirit. There are many things we have not experienced in the Spirit. But when we ask the Holy Spirit, "What is that? Show me this thing in the Spirit." He will begin to show. He will tell you how it all started. He will tell the details of the story. So that's how we got it.

Here we are back on this topic on faith. So this man is walking about healed. Now there are two things we want to see first. Here is the man sitting down listening to the Word. It may have been his first time. The apostle Paul was preaching. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Fear comes by hearing and hearing by the word of the devil. Do you know fear is also educated? You are trained to fear. If you were not told that there is a plane crash after many hundred flights, you may not have the fear of flying. But once the fact comes to you that there is an air crash after every ten thousandth flight, you will be thinking whether the plane you are getting on could be the ten thousandth. How did you get that fear? Fear comes by hearing and hearing by the word of the devil. We develop fear; we learn to fear. And faith comes by hearing God's Word.

Paul saw this man got faith. The bible says in verse 8 and 9 says this man heard. Faith comes by hearing. So this man heard the Word of God. So he heard the Word of God and faith started pouring into his heart. Faith was growing as the Word came to him. Here is a fact that we want to note here. This man had faith. The bible says he had faith. How do we know? The bible says that Paul *looked intently*. That's a very polite way of saying. We could have put it as Paul *stared at him*. Naturally and socially we feel that people who stare too long are rude. Do you notice that people who stare in the natural either love you a lot or they are very angry with you? So there is Paul staring at this man. The reason Paul stared or looked intently was because he saw faith taking place in him. You can't see faith until its acted or

you can't see faith until it is expressed by facial expression, by verbal confession or by action. Here is the man lying down. He is not doing anything. He probably was staring back too. So there we have the story of the two staring at each other. Paul was staring at him and the crippled man was staring back at Paul. But Paul discerned in the Spirit.

See faith can be discerned. Discernment is different from discerning of spirits. The gift of discerning of spirits mentioned in I Cor. 12 is a manifestation of the Spirit that takes place under the anointing upon. And it does not talk about the area of judging right or wrong or discernment of good and evil. But it speaks about discerning of spirits plural. It talks about the ability to look into the spirit realm to see spirits whether its angel or demonic spirits. Neither is it just a negative gift just to see demons. But it is discerning of seeing of spirits. What we are talking about is the discernment, which Philippians chapter one in his prayer Paul says he prayed in verse 6 and 7 that the Philippians church would grow in discernment. That's what my New King James says. In your Old King James it says grow in judgment. But that's the same word translated discernment as in Hebrews chapter 5 where those who are matured and know the solid food of God they could discern good and evil. They have their spiritual senses trained to discern good and evil.

So here in the book of Acts chapter 14 noticed the apostle Paul seeing or discerning that he had faith to be healed. Now here is the amazing thing. He had faith to be healed and he was not healed yet. Between the time he had faith and the time he was healed, he was still lying there looking at Paul. The bible says that he had faith. That's what we are speaking on today that faith must be acted out. Faith must be acted out to complete the whole process of faith. Faith hears, faith sees, faith stands and faith acts. It must complete the cycle of faith. Here is where we want to see a little point here. Paul knew there was faith. The man did not even know he himself had faith. Of course their spiritual positions were different. This man may have heard the gospel for the first time. We can accept this as a fact that he was new in the things of the spirit. He was unfamiliar with the things of the spirit. This man had something taking place in his spirit where faith was being imparted that he did not know of. He had faith and he didn't know.

Paul knew that he had faith. Paul was matured as a Christian. He had been many

years in the Lord. He was born again in the book of Acts chapter 9, which is about A.D. 35. And he went into the ministry after a period of about 9 years when the Lord separated Paul and Barnabas in Acts chapter 11 in about A.D. 44. He was told to help in the church of Antioch in his ninth year as a Christian. Then in Acts 13 in verse 1 to 3 while they were praying together he started his missionary journey. It could be A.D. 45 or 46. It may have been about 11 years after his conversion. Now he is here on his missionary journey, which may have taken time. So by this time Paul is a matured Christian. He had known the Lord at least more than a decade. So he was more familiar with the things of the Spirit. He knew the things of the Spirit and he could discern when something spiritual was taking place. He could discern faith.

There is a difference between those two people. The lame man had faith and did not know it. Paul had faith himself and knew that this man had faith. And this man doesn't know and Paul had to help this man. Its important for us to realize that faith must be there first before the action comes. If there were an action before faith comes it would have been disastrous. That has happened sadly in many Christians' life. Remember we talked about discerning faith by the conscience. This man had no way of knowing. Paul knew. How did Paul knew and discerned faith? So here is where we see the major difference between exercising faith personally by the anointing within and exercising faith when the anointing upon is being operated. Here Paul was also operating by the anointing upon. Whether it be anointing upon or anointing within faith is necessary. You try to operate the anointing upon without faith it will not work. It doesn't mean that when God gives you a tangible manifestation of the anointing upon that you can operate it without faith. No, faith is the universal force of this universe. It is a primary force according to Hebrews chapter 11 verse 3 *By faith we understand that the worlds were created by the Word of God.* The prime force of this universe is faith.

Just to remind you those who are familiar with Kenneth Hagin's *I Believe in Visions*. Do you remember the time that Jesus appeared to him? Jesus put His fingers in Hagin's palms and said to him, "I give you a special anointing to bring healing to the sick." And the very next chapter was entitled "*If*"- *The Badge of Doubt*. Under the anointing upon, Hagin started ministering to a man who could not bend his back straight as a plank. And he laid his hand on him and he discerned that there was a demonic case. God told him how to discern the difference. He cast out the demon.

There was no manifestation of the demon coming out. It doesn't mean that when you cast out demons there must always be a scream. So here after he discerned the demon and cast him out, Hagin said this, "See if you can bend." The man tried and he can't bend. He did that again. "See if you can bend." "I am sorry I can't." Finally he gave up and the man started going back. When he was going back Jesus appeared to Hagin. Jesus said, "I told you in My Name they will come out." And Jesus was very authoritative when He spoke that. And Hagin looked back very timidly and said, "Yes, Lord I did but they didn't come out." Jesus stepped a little nearer and said, "I told you in My Name they will come out." And the man was walking halfway and all the whole church heard the conversation between Hagin and Jesus except they didn't hear Jesus' conversation. And the man was walking back stopped halfway because he heard Hagin talking to somebody. Then finally this is what Hagin mentioned. He said for the first time he saw what Jesus looks like when He was very angry. The first time he met Jesus he looked into Jesus' eyes he saw rivers of love. This time Jesus looked very angry and Jesus pointed a finger right between his eyes. And He said, "I told you in My Name they will come out." And he said when he looked into Jesus eyes it looks like His eyes were on fire. Then suddenly revelation came. He realized his mistake. He called the man back. Again he laid hands on that person and said, "Come out in Jesus' Name." And then he said, "Bend." The man could bend and was completely healed. The difference was Hagin had earlier said, "See *if* you could bend." *If* is a language of doubt. Even though Hagin had the anointing upon, that anointing could even be hindered when there is some doubt.

Small things like that determine whether a miracle takes place. Small, small things make a difference between a miracle and a failure. Small things determine whether you sink or you swim. It was just the small, small thing that determined whether Peter could walk on the water or he would be sinking. So here is an anointing upon that was not operating because there was no faith. See before there is an action there must be a discerning of faith. Don't ever forget that. Before you act on faith whether it be for a healing or whether it be for a financial situation you must discern faith. If there is no faith and you act please get the ambulance ready because disasters will strike. And God is not responsible. Don't blame God. God has principles in His Word. The people would just look at half of the faith message and jump off without looking at the whole plan of God in His Word. There is similarity in both. Faith must be discerned. If you are ministering on anointing upon you must discern faith before you work a miracle. Two hundred people may come on a

wheel chair. It doesn't mean that when the anointing upon come you just run to all and kick them out of their wheel chairs. Some may get healed. We still must discern faith when we operate under the anointing upon. Unbelief and doubt will cripple an anointing upon.

Mark 6 Jesus had an anointing upon and He could not work because the people did not believe. So faith must be discerned as you operate an anointing upon there will be a flow of faith. On the other side on your personal level, if you are operating on your personal faith or going to act on an area you must discern faith in your heart. Now you see the difference. The minister who is operating under the anointing upon must assume the responsibility of guiding you to the area. He is the one who helps you to discern faith in your life where you may be able to discern. The responsibility rests a lot on the one who ministers. That is the reason why it is easier to get healing or blessing by the anointing upon as we don't do anything. We just had to be opened and lean on that person. But Jesus still does that. He allows us to flow with another person's faith because we are all growing from faith to faith. None of us are independent in a sense we are all inter-dependent. We all grow together in the Lord. And there are areas we do to a certain extend lean on one another. And part of the key of receiving is also learning to trust on that one who is ministering. And so under the anointing upon the responsibility of discerning faith rest upon the one who ministers. You have to be sharp at that. And it is an area where you could train yourself in. Sometimes it is so clear that you cannot miss it. Sometimes it is an area that needs finer tuning.

In the early days of my ministry I used to ask the people to just line up and lay hands on them one by one. And so I was doing that in one of the old folks homes. And as we prayed for the first one and the second one there was some manifestation where pain has disappeared. And I remembered how it felt like. Then about the third or the fourth person you could almost see the faith bubbling up. He had seen the others in front of him. You see what was happening. He was about the third or fourth and he saw the others in front of him got healed. His problem was more serious. He had an accident and could not walk. And as he was just limping forward, you could see the faith bubbling up. And that was the first time I started discerning what faith was like under anointing upon. I was learning in all those things. There was expectancy; there were all these things that go together with one who has faith. And before we could do anything there was a demon afflicting his

life. It left and he fell under the power and he got up and started walking normally. And that is one of the ways where we learned to grow in the anointing. After the meeting is over you try to remember what it felt like. So that the next time it happens you are more familiar with your way of sensation. There are some things you are supposed to forget but there are some things you are supposed to remember. And God helps you to know which one to forget and which one to remember.

And so here was that discerning of faith that was wonderful. And through time I realize that this was something like what Paul experienced when he saw faith. When I was starting off in the ministry I was not so sharp in discerning of faith. In the early days in the faith message you can get carried away. Here was this person he was in his house and he was lying down and cannot walk properly. So here I was strike up with the Word of God. I said to him, "Believe, confess it is done. Whatever you believe, when you pray you receive." This operates in the personal anointing but operating in the anointing upon is slightly different because you got to discern faith in others. If you exercise that for yourself its different. If you are exercising faith for somebody else you got to discern faith and flow with that level of faith. You cannot put your faith on people. And here I was bold as a lion. After I prayed for him I didn't discern anything. Straight away I went to that person and said, "Get up and walk." I actually pulled that person up. It was the most embarrassing thing that took place. He fell back right on his chair and looked worse than before. So we went through those things like that. We made mistakes in those areas.

In the early days whenever people hear of your faith, they will come to you. And people from various churches and various places, when they get into trouble or sickness they will do their own praying. They may reach a point where they have nowhere else to turn. The doctors said there is no cure. Their own churches have prayed their hearts out. And everything seems to fail. They always remember you at the last minute. And here you are going like a super hero and they are in the dying stages. Remember they have tried everything and you are the last hope. I was not so discerning in those days. And I used to go and say, "Okay I will pray." The way I pray is very positive. I never prayed for people to die. I pray in the bible way. I say, "I will pray together with you and pray for healing." That's the way we should believe. Basically this is my philosophy that if a person is going to die any

way you don't lose anything by exercising all your faith for them to be healed and they die. You make no difference. After all they are going to die. See if somebody is going to die of some disease give it the fight all you can. After all if you didn't do it they will still die. And you did it and they die you have everything to gain and nothing to lose. Except this problem when nothing happens don't look for a scapegoat.

In the early days we get a lot of blame just because we were there giving hope to people where we are not supposed to give hope. We learned to be more discerning nowadays. I still have that philosophy in a sense that if everything is lost do it all you can. You got everything to gain and nothing to lose. After all that person is going to die anyway. But with a little added wisdom of discerning faith where you could tell whether the patient has faith to be healed you become sharper. You could tell whether this could flow in this area of faith and bring forth that miracle. And in the anointing upon the responsibility to discern rests on the minister. On the personal faith there is a difference. You are on your own in a certain sense. Yet the responsibility of discerning faith is to be done by somebody who has that anointing upon and that happens to be you. You are the one who must discern faith in your life. You must discern whether there is faith to do those things. When you act in faith there is a need to discern faith. Under the anointing upon the responsibility falls on the minister because the minister is the one helping others to act on faith. But under your personal faith where you have grown in faith, you must always discern faith in yourself.

You need to act in faith and there must be no doubt. Faith without action is dead. Let me just throw out some scriptures here. In Matt. 7 Jesus talked about the wise man and the foolish man. Please do not think that Jesus was just talking about people who understand and know. Jesus did not say the wise man is the man who hear and understand. Neither did He say the foolish man was the one who did not hear. Both heard. The wise man heard, the foolish man heard. The difference Jesus said was this. *He who hears and do it.* It is when you act in faith that something is crystallized in you and there is a completion of the whole process of faith in your life. Something is birthed in you. See you can have faith but not act on it. And remember this, the level of your discernment of faith many times rest upon your spiritual level. We have illustrated with Paul and that man. That crippled man was new in the things in the Spirit. He could not discern faith when he had it.

Sometimes because we are not sensitive to the Spirit we have faith and we know not. What needs to be done is to act. And you are not acting. See faith has come and we know not and we acted not and we received not. The level of our discernment is proportional to our spiritual life. As we grow in the things of the Spirit we could discern faith whether its there for something or not. But if we are new and are growing in the realm of the Spirit, just remember to be opened to the things of God. Sometimes in another anointed atmosphere the ministry of another man may help you to discern faith in your life where you didn't discern before. In all these things it will not violate this principle that after you discerned there is confirmation in your heart.

How do we know what kind of confirmation? If you read the book of Galatians chapter 5 verse 22 and 23 it talks about the fruit of the Spirit. But people missed the whole point of what Paul was trying to say. What Paul was trying to say is how to be led by the Spirit and know that you are acting in faith. See Galatians is a book that talks about faith contrasting with the works of the flesh. Lets turn to the book of Galatians chapter 5. See the context of the fruit of the Spirit was verse 18 *But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law.* And then he went on to talk about the leading of the Spirit what it would be like. Verse 22 starts with a *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.* So here we have the fruit of the Spirit. And this is one of the tremendous tests. Whether you are acting in faith under the anointing upon or acting in faith under the anointing within the fruit of the Spirit is operative. Galatians 5 in the first few verses says faith worked by love. That's how it helps you to discern. Sometimes when you act in faith love is not there. If the fruit of the Spirit is absent then it is not faith. That is why sometimes when you see some ministers of God who don't discern faith properly. They are rough and pushy. Its not faith it's the flesh. Faith works by love. The fruit of the Spirit will always be there. And as you act in faith the fruit of the Spirit starts growing. See the work of faith requires love and the walk of faith requires action. There is a movement in faith.

Sometimes we need encouragement to move. Even the book of James tells us faith without works is like a body without the spirit. So it says faith needs works. How much faith you really have is demonstrated right now by how much you actually acted. For example if somebody said I have faith for a million dollars. Let me check how much you have really given. See how much you give tells me how much faith

you actually have to receive. How much faith you have to give tells me how much faith you actually have to receive. You may deceive others and deceive yourself by claiming things that are beyond your faith but you cannot lie by your action. Your action shows your real level. People say I have all the faith in the world to be healed. But they lie down and do nothing. One thing that amazes me sometimes is when I go and minister in hospitals and pray for people, Some of them are given 6 months to live. Some are given 3 months. And they want to be healed; they desired to be healed. But they are not desirous to give it all they have got. Lying on the hospital bed are tons of worldly magazines, Time Magazine, Newsweek, all the different types of newspaper and the bible is hidden somewhere. Six months to live and all they do is read news here news there. I am amazed because the action of that person does not show that he really has the faith to recover. And that person wants healing but how do you want to be healed? If you cannot get it by personal faith, you have to get it by receiving from the anointing upon a man of God. But even then to receive from the anointing upon, you will need to have a certain measure of response and openness and faith.

This is what I would have done if I were in that position with 6 months to live. I would say, "Please don't give me anything of the world. Let me hear day and night only God's Word. Please give me the bible don't give me the newspaper. I want to hear God's Word." They want the spiritual but they are more in the natural. You can't; either you are in the spiritual or in the natural. So as you act in faith in any area of your life is demonstrated by your action. So lets examine our hearts. Are we acting and of course before you act have you discerned. How do I discern? You pray in the Spirit of God. You grow in the Spirit of God. Even Peter in Acts 3 when he told the lame man, "Silver and gold have I not but what I have I give to you. In the Name of Jesus, rise up and walk." They all surrounded him after the healing was done and Peter said this was done because of faith in the Name of Jesus. Acts 3:16 *And His name, by faith in His name, has made this man strong.* Notice Peter did something. The first word of Peter to that man was not, "Silver and gold have I none." The first word Peter spoke to that man was, "Look at us." Why did he say that? He wanted to discern faith.

The same thing in Acts 14 is taking place here now in Acts 3. Peter said look at us and Peter stared intently at him. You see in verse 4 what did Peter do. He fixed his eyes on him saying, "You look on us," and as the man looked back something was

taking place. He was discerning. That man was lying there. He saw faith and he was so bold and he pulled the man up. Minister of God discern faith before you do that. But when you discern faith you must operate under the anointing upon. If you don't operate under the anointing upon nothing will happen. When you discerned faith act on it and keep acting and keep acting.