

Do You Believe? (2020)

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, June 28, 2020

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us today. Whether you are here IN-PERSON or watching via the LIVESTREAM, you are most welcome. Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take some notes. We have much to cover in a relatively short amount of time.

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 1

FYI – This morning I want to present a STANDALONE sermon that flows out of my own walk with Christ as of late. It touches upon a theme that I have addressed before (c. 2010), but its TIMELESS message feels particularly TIMELY in these days. May it speak to your heart as it has spoken to mine in the course of preparation...

Matthew 9:27–31 (NIV)

27 As Jesus went on from there [Christ had just raised a ruler’s young daughter from the dead], two blind men followed him, calling out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”

28 When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?”

“Yes, Lord,” they replied.

29 Then he touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith let it be done to you”; 30 and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, “See that no one knows about this.” 31 But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region.

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 2

This brief account presents one of Jesus’ many MIRACULOUS works. Consider that the ministry of Christ was characterized by SUPERNATURAL wonders (e.g., cleansing of lepers, casting out of demons, opening of deaf ears, loosing of muted tongues, raising of the dead, etc.). And herein we see the RESTORATION of SIGHT to two men who were blind.

NOTE – There is MUCH that we could discuss about this text: **a)** the significance of Jesus being called the Son of David; **b)** the sincerity and depth of the faith of these blind men; and **c)** the reasons why Christ cautioned them from spreading the report of their experiences, and beyond...

KEY 1 – Yet I want to concentrate on the rather probing QUESTION that Jesus posed in v. 28...

Matthew 9:28 (Emphasis Mine)

28 When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, “**Do you believe that I am able to do this?**”

KEY 2 – I believe that this Q of Christ—posed to the blind men—is one that He CONTINUALLY asks of His people...

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 3

...THUS, it is worthy of some analysis!

FYI – I want to spend some **DISSECTING** this Q (exploring its meaning and significance). To do this, I will employ a study **TOOL** that I have found beneficial at times—i.e., a **TOOL** that will help us to **UNPACK** the depths of this passage that we might **RESPOND** appropriately in kind.

KEY – I want to read through this text emphasizing one word or segment at a time. There is benefit herein...

LET'S DELVE IN...

“DO”

Q. What is the first word that you see in this question of Christ?

Matthew 9:28b (Emphasis Mine)

“Do you believe that I am able to do this?”

Q. What is significant about this little word? What does it entail?

1) “DO” Infers a Sense of Choice

IMAGINE that we are together for potluck supper and someone brings a **CAKE** for us to share. During the course of the meal I ask you, “Do you want a piece of cake?” The fact that I am asking “**DO** you?” indicates that you have a **CHOICE** to make. You must decide at that critical moment whether or not you would like a piece!

2) “DO” Necessitates the Giving of a Response

SUPPOSE in that same scenario I ask, “Do you want a piece of cake?” and you simply do **NOT** respond. You and I are making eye-contact and you have clearly heard and understood the Q. However, you provide **NO** response either way, looking at me like a deer in headlights. Even if you have made a choice, you must give **VOICE** to it!

KEY – Apply these principles to the Q posed by Christ to the two blind men...

When Jesus asked, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” they had to make a **DETERMINATION** at the heart level and **RESPOND** in kind. They could decide upon belief and say **YES** to Him **OR** they could decide upon disbelief and say **NO** to Him. There were no other options...

FYI – I believe that the same is true for US in Century-21...

...i.e., When Jesus whispers to your heart, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” you must make a **DETERMINATION** in your heart and **VOICE** it accordingly. You can decide upon belief and say **YES** to Him **OR** you can decide upon disbelief and say **NO**. It will be one or the other!

“YOU”

Matthew 9:28b (Emphasis Mine)

“Do **you** believe that I am able to do this?”

Q. What is significant about this word? What does it entail?

“YOU” personalizes this query. Christ was NOT asking this Q of His disciples, of the religious leaders or of the nameless/faceless masses. Rather, He was asking this of two men in particular (i.e., face-to-face). The spotlight of His focus and attention was COMPLETELY on them at this singular moment in time, as He sought to know (i.e., expose) the condition of their hearts and faith.

NOTE – Put yourself in their shoes for a moment. IMAGINE what it would have been like to have the God of the universe ask you such a question! There is NO hiding; NO dodging the question; NO one else to answer on your behalf. Just you and Him! I almost feel for them in a sense...

Matthew 9:28b (Emphasis Mine)

“Do **you** believe that I am able to do this?”

Q. But what if this is a Q He is asking of you in the here and now?

Q. What if it is not limited to these two blind men—but to each of us?

Matthew 9:28b (Emphasis Mine)

“Do **you** believe that I am able to do this?”

- YOU have nowhere to hide
- YOU have no one to answer for you
- YOU have no way to dodge His probing Q

It’s just you and the God Over All...

Q. How do you respond?

“BELIEVE”

Matthew 9:28b (Emphasis Mine)

“Do you **believe** that I am able to do this?”

Q. What is significant about this word? What does it entail?

FYI – To believe is to “trust, rely upon and place confidence in” someone or something. In asking His Q. Christ EXPLORED the faith of these blind men—i.e., seeking to know to what degree they TRUSTED Him, were willing to RELY upon Him for their needs, CONFIDENT IN and CONVINCED OF His goodness and power!

KEY – The same is true for US. If the Lord wants anything, He wants YOUR trust; your reliance; your willingness to place confidence in his goodness and power. If Christianity is anything, it is an ever-increasing CALL to faith in the One Who is faithful! Remember—without faith it is IMPOSSIBLE to please Him (cf. Heb. 11)!

“I”

Matthew 9:28b (Emphasis Mine)

“Do you believe that I am able to do this?”

Q. What is significant about this smallest of words? What does it entail?

KEY – “I” identifies the object or the focus of their belief. When Jesus asked this question of these two blind men, He was NOT asking, “Do you think that SOMEONE/ANYONE can heal you?” Rather, He asks a more POIGNANT question...

Matthew 9:28b (Emphasis Mine)

“Do you believe that I am able to do this?”

NOTE – Jesus was making Himself the OBJECT of their belief, CONNECTING Himself to their crisis. Ultimately, He was trying to get them to understand WHO and WHAT they were dealing with! Q. And WHO and WHAT (precisely) were they dealing with?

A. He Who is THE...

- Almighty (Rev. 1:8; Matt. 28:18)
- Alpha and Omega (Rev. 1:8; 22:13)
- Author of Life (Acts 3:15)
- Author of Salvation (Heb. 2:10)
- Beginning and End (Rev. 22:13)
- Creator (John 1:3)
- Deliverer (Rom. 11:26)
- Eternal Life (1 John 1:2; 5:20)
- Faithful and True (Rev. 19:11)
- God (John 1:1; 20:28; Heb. 1:8; 1 John 5:20.)
- Good Shepherd (John 10:11, 14)
- Holy and True (Rev. 3:7)
- Holy One (Acts 3:14)
- Hope (1 Tim. 1:1)
- I Am (John 8:58)
- Immanuel (Matt. 1:23)
- Judge of the living and the dead (Acts 10:42)
- King Eternal (1 Tim. 1:17)
- King of Israel (John 1:49)
- King of the Jews (Mt. 27:11)
- King of kings (1 Tim 6:15; Rev. 19:16)
- King of the Ages (Rev. 15:3)
- Lamb of God (John 1:29)
- Light of the World (John 8:12)
- Lord (2 Pet. 2:20)
- Our Peace (Eph 2:14)
- Our Protection (2 Thess. 3:3)
- Our Redemption (1 Cor. 1:30)
- Our Righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30)
- Resurrection and Life (John 11:25)
- Ruler of God’s Creation (Rev. 3:14)
- Ruler of the Kings of the Earth (Rev. 1:5)
- Savior (Eph. 5:23; Titus 1:4; 3:6; 2 Pet. 2:20)
- Son of David (Luke 18:39)
- Son of God (John 1:49; Heb. 4:14)
- Son of Man (Mt. 8:20)
- Son of the Most High God (Luke 1:32)

KEY – “I” also identifies the object of OUR faith. When Jesus asks this Q of US, He is NOT asking, “Do you think SOMEONE/ANYONE can work this miracle on your behalf?” He is asking if you believe that HE is able. He is EVER at work, trying to get us to understand precisely WHO and WHAT we are dealing with. May this be a time for fresh insight and revelation!

“AM ABLE”

Matthew 9:28b (Emphasis Mine)

“Do you believe that I **am able** to do this?”

Q. What is significant about these words? What do they entail?

1) AM

Take note of what Jesus does NOT say in this text. He does NOT pose the Q: “Do you believe that I MIGHT be able to do this?” OR “Do you believe that I SHOULD be able? OR “Do you believe that I MAY BE willing to do this?” Rather, He poses the more soul-searching (emphasis mine): “Do you believe that I **am able** to do this?”

KEY – This required something DEFINITIVE about their faith in God’s ability to respond to their need. It took the matter of their belief from the realm of the ABSTRACT/HYPOTHETICAL to the CONCRETE and to the REAL-WORLD nature of their problem! Similarly, God is NOT concerned with the abstractions of YOUR faith, but its REALITY in relation to actual circumstances...

...i.e., God is NOT concerned with your response to the Q: “Do you believe that I am able to provide?” (for instance). He is very much concerned with your response to the Q: “Do you believe that I AM able to provide FOR YOU?” One is HYPOTHETICAL—the other is NOT.

2) ABLE

Q. When Jesus asks these blind men, “Do you believe that I am ABLE to do this?” what was He asking?

A. He sought to discern the degree to which they were CONVINCED of His power, ability, capacity/capability.

Q. To what degree are YOU convinced of God’s ability to meet your needs in the real world?

Q. How convinced are YOU of His power, ability, capacity and capability to intervene in your life?

KEY – The manner in which you A this Q DETERMINES MUCH of your Christian experience...

This leads to the FINAL portion of this penetrating Q...

“THIS”

Matthew 9:28b (Emphasis Mine)

“Do you believe that I am able to do [i.e., perform or accomplish] **this**?”

Q. What is significant about this remaining term? What does it entail?

Ultimately, “THIS” connects the power of God to a SPECIFIC problem in the human condition. In the account recorded in Matthew 9, what does “THIS” refer to? Simply stated, Jesus was asking: “Do you believe that I am able to heal your BLINDNESS; restore your sight; give you vision?”

FYI – These men came to Jesus with a specific problem, and He responded to them concerning that problem. These men did NOT come to Christ about blindness just for Him to deal with a peripheral or unrelated matter. He dealt with the issue at hand, and He sought to know the condition of their faith! Hence...

Matthew 9:28b (Emphasis Mine)

“Do you believe that I am able to do **this**?”

KEY – I believe it is much the same for US. He continually asks...

Matthew 9:28b (Emphasis Mine)

“Do you believe that I am able to do **this**?”

Q. What is the “THIS” that tends to concern you?

Q. What is the “THIS” that you bring to Him habitually?

For some it MIGHT be...

- Healing for an Afflicted Body
- The Mending of a Broken Heart
- The Mending of a Broken Marriage
- The Salvation of ‘Wayward’ Children
- Material Provision of an Earthly Need
- Wisdom in Navigating a Practical Dec.
- Power to Operate as an Eff. Witness

NOTE – The “THIS” might vary from person to person and change from season to season. But I believe we will all ALWAYS have a “THIS” (i.e., something that concerns us and drives us to prayer). Concurrently, I believe that the Lord continues to pose His same Q accordingly...

Matthew 9:28b (Emphasis Mine)

“Do you believe that I am able to do **this**?”

Q. What say you?

CLOSING REMARKS

FYI – I want to conclude in much the SAME way that I opened this AM (i.e., reading of Matt. 9)...

Matthew 9:27–29a (Emphasis Mine)

27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”

28 When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?”

“**Yes, Lord,**” they replied.

29 **Then** he touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith let it be done to you”; 30 and their sight was restored.

NOTE – Despite overwhelming obstacles, these two men found the capacity to respond in FAITH to the Q of Christ. When Jesus asked them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” they said YES—and in that moment of faith the Lord intervened. And here WE are—millennia later—talking of this glorious event!

FYI – The intersection between faith and the power of God brought about SUPERNATURAL result!

Q. What will your response to the Lord be today (despite the obstacles)?

A. I can only pray that it will be one of FAITH—unlocking His power divine!

CONCLUSION 2

KEY – Thank you for taking the time to join us today. Should those of you who have joined us online wish to give, please do so through the giving portal of our church WEBSITE (www.NewLifeBarre.org). For those who are present, you may place your donation in the OFFERING BOXES in this Sanctuary.

Numbers 6:24–26

24 The Lord bless you
and keep you;

25 the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;

26 the Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.