

## HAVE FAITH IN GOD!

Mark 11:20-25  
Key verse 11:22

"Have faith in God," Jesus answered.

Praise and thanks be to the Lord that today we can celebrate the thanksgiving service for the graduation and faith victories in high school graduation of Samuel, Joshua, David and Noah. In the past weeks and months, they have successfully passed their baccalaureate exams by faith and have thereby experienced who our God is. At today's service, through the victory stories of our high school graduates and their mothers, we will not only learn about God's work of faith and activity in their lives, but also learn that our God is the all-powerful and sovereign Lord for the history and life of mankind. On the occasion of this thanksgiving service, based on Mark 11:20-25, we would like to reflect on who our God is and with what faith we can please this God and experience His sovereign hand in our lives. May God give our Next Generation missionaries the grace to personally hear Jesus' encouragement and exhortation, "Have faith in God!" and be preciously used as global spiritual leaders for this continent and for their generation. Amen!

### 1. Faith that moves mountains (20-23)

In the previous verses, we are told about Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on a donkey and the cleansing of the temple. We also learn that Jesus cursed a fig tree because it bore many leaves but no fruit. Let's look at verse 20: "In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots." That this tree could wither completely and to the root within a few hours was not a normal occurrence. Peter was so astonished that he cried out (21b), "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has with-

ered." Peter's reaction shows that he was bewildered because of this event. Perhaps he thought, "If such a fruitless fig tree doesn't stand a chance with Jesus, what will Jesus think of my fruitless and uninfluential life?"

But what did Jesus say? Let's read verse 22: "Have faith in God," Jesus answered. Jesus had a burning shepherd's heart for Peter and for all his disciples. He wanted them to look not to themselves, not to the spiritual situation of confronting the religious leaders, or to the reaction of the people, but to the almighty Creator God who sovereignly rules over history and the lives of people. "Have faith in God!" literally translated from the original text means, "Have God's faith!" When we see how Jesus ministered to His disciples over the past three years, this was God's faith in His sovereign counsel from the beginning. Jesus had God's faith that these ordinary, even flawed and often humanly impossible men, would be changed step by step, that they would grow in their relationship with God and eventually be used as influential men of faith and as the spiritual leaders of the future. Indeed, Jesus' disciples grew into great Bible teachers and spiritual leaders of the early church. They became the men of faith, shepherds and Bible teachers who eventually served the world mission, preaching the gospel boldly and courageously, no matter what the cost.

They overcame all adverse circumstances, even persecutions, and served God's work with faith and authority. When Peter and John encountered a paralytic begging for alms, Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the

name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." (Acts 3:6) Peter raised him up with spiritual authority. When Peter and John (in Acts 4) were intimidated by the high council of the Jews and forbidden to continue speaking in the name of Jesus, they spoke boldly and by faith in God: "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:19b, 20). "Have faith in God" means to believe in the sovereign God who directs the history and life of mankind and thereby reveals his inscrutable counsel. With him no thing is impossible! This God is able to do all things - then as well as here and now. When Jesus said: "Have faith in God", he wished from his heart that his disciples would believe in the sovereign guidance of God and grow up to be great men of faith and spiritual leaders. Jesus exhorted and encouraged them not to remain dependent on circumstances or conditions, but to accept the spiritual reign of God and His sovereign guidance into their lives despite the adverse circumstances.

What did Jesus go on to say to the disciples? Let's look at verse 23: "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him." Jesus knew his disciples and knew well that there were many immovable mountains in their hearts that made them disbelieve, helpless and anxious. Jesus had already announced his life, his death on the cross and his resurrection several times. But in the hearts of the disciples there were only human self-centered ideas and helplessness. They dreamed of an earthly kingdom of Jesus. They hoped to be able to rule with a ministerial position together with Jesus. Some were ashamed because of their helplessness when they tried to cast out an evil spirit from a boy. They did not succeed and wondered, "Why does Jesus have such authority while we can do nothing?" The day before, during the cleansing of the temple, when Jesus drove the sellers and buyers out of the temple, even overturning the

booths of the dove sellers and the tables of the money changers, and admonishing everyone not to make the temple a storehouse, but to use it as a house of prayer for all nations, the disciples were again unsettled and wondered how things would continue.

Let us read again verses 22 and 23: "Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him." No mountain is too high or too majestic for Jesus not to move it into the sea. No mountain is too great or too heavy before which we must remain helpless or even retreat. Jesus taught his disciples mountain-moving faith, so that they, and therefore we, might see every challenge, every seemingly immovable mountain, as a precious opportunity to experience God's omnipotence and sovereignty and to learn about the power of faith in God.

We remember Nehemiah in the Old Testament. Nehemiah belonged to the Next Generation of Jews who were born and raised in exile. Nehemiah lived in Persia and was the cupbearer of King Artaxerxes. One day Nehemiah learned that his people were living in Jerusalem in great misfortune and disgrace. For the walls of Jerusalem were broken down and the gates of the city were burned with fire. But when Nehemiah heard these words, he did not think that he could do anything for his people from afar. He prayed and fasted before the God of heaven that God would give him grace before the king to go to Jerusalem and serve his people. Nehemiah learned how God prepared the heart of the powerful Persian king, so that he granted him not only permission to travel, but also letters of escort and wood for the rebuilding.

Before Nehemiah, however, stood not only this single mountain. When he made a decision of faith to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, he realized that a whole mountain range was towering before him: Nehemiah could not build the wall alone. He had to

mobilize the entire nation, a nation that for 120 years had not risen to the task of rebuilding the broken walls of Jerusalem. A people that had not even learned to work together. How did Nehemiah move this mighty mountain? He testified to his people how gracious the hand of God had been upon them. He also told them the words of the king. Thereby all were encouraged and said, "Come, let us rebuild the wall!" And they took the good work in hand. During the building of the wall, other mountains appeared, such as the mountain of resistance. There were the enemies who wanted to prevent the building of the wall at all costs: with mockery, with contempt, with false claims, with slander. When the enemies saw that the gaps in the wall began to close, they became angry and all conspired with each other to fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion among the builders. Nehemiah did not remain helpless in front of this mountain either. He organized that the still open wall places were secured with armed people. But the people had become full of fear. What could Nehemiah do now? He said to the nobles and councilors and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes!" Finally, they continued to work, with the burden bearers even doing the work with one hand and holding the weapon with the other.

While the builders worked, the other half stood ready with spears to repel the enemy at any time. He himself set a good example: he and his brothers and people did not take off their clothes, and everyone had his spear at his right hand.

Nehemiah experienced other mountains: first, the mountain of inner challenge by the selfishness of the councilors, which attacked the spiritual unity. This mountain Nehemiah moved by giving a good example by his unselfishness and renouncing his income as governor. Then again the mountain of external distress, namely the attempt of the enemies to lure Nehemiah out of the

city and to enter into a compromise with the adversaries in the valley of Ono by feigned friendship. Nehemiah refused this invitation, saying, "I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?" (Nehemiah 6:3) After four attempts to draw Nehemiah away, they changed their strategy and insinuated Nehemiah would usurp political power and have himself proclaimed king of Judah.

From Nehemiah we learn of his mountain-shifting and prayerful faith. He kept strengthening his vision with the challenging spirit and his hands of prayer. He did not remain helpless before the various immovable mountains, but looked in prayer to the all-powerful God and sovereign ruler of history and in the lives of men. He knew that this God was on his side; by believing that God was on their side, Nehemiah and also all the people could fight courageously, shovel diligently and move every mountain into the sea by believing in God. Humanly speaking, Nehemiah could have become helpless before each mountain or even given up. He could have said to himself, "Why do I have to worry about this? I have a good job with the king. Let the returnees take care of it themselves...". But Nehemiah had faith in God! He recognized the sovereign counsel of God and His guidance. He knew in every situation that the gracious hand of God was upon him because he lived as a shepherd and leader. The almighty living God gave him spiritual insight, wisdom, and authority. Thus Nehemiah was able to move every single mountain, so that the miracle happened that the building of the wall was completed in only 52 days.

Spiritually, the walls of Germany and Europe are broken, trampled and destroyed by the enemies of God, such as godless humanism, relativism, genderism and many more. Most Christians are helpless and powerless and only watch how Europe descends further and further into the abyss. When M. Peter and M. Sarah began to serve the pioneering work among the students in Bonn more than 40 years ago,

they, like Nehemiah, encountered many mountains and obstacles. Missionaries from Korea were regarded strange people. Even some Christians said that there were enough churches in Germany and the missionaries should return. The mountains of godless humanism, relativism, envy and slander were piled up. But they believed in God, the sovereign ruler over history and the life of men. The missionaries shoveled without doubt in their hearts and ministered to the young people through one-to-one bible study with the living Word of God. Then they experienced that God is the sovereign ruler over people's history and life. God blessed their faith even in the seemingly impossible situation of slander and attacks from Satan to move the mountain and raise up local young students as Bible teachers and shepherds. Thus, to this day, they experience God's sovereign counsel and vision through them. God gave them even greater vision for the world mission through the European and M mission and is preparing the environment for three bases in the M countries through them.

In this passage we have learned that Jesus is the sovereign ruler of the world, for whom no mountain is too high not to be moved into the sea. The example of Nehemiah and that of the servants of God shows us that we too can move many immovable mountains into the sea in any situation through faith in God, the sovereign ruler of history. Let us follow our examples of faith. Let us renew our faith in the almighty sovereign ruler of the world, Jesus, that we may be with him, the ruler of history. God grant each of us the mountain-moving faith with which we diligently shovel, form 10,000 two-bible study teams, and prepare the environment for spiritual revival at the 1,700 universities in Germany and Europe and the construction of three bases for world mission.

## 2. Faith that prays and forgives (24-25)

Let's look at verse 24: "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that

you have received it, and it will be yours." Prayer is the most important weapon in the spiritual warfare of believers. Whoever prays experiences God's power, wisdom and help from above. Those who pray experience the spiritual reality that Jesus is the almighty and sovereign ruler of the world.

Missionary Dr. Samuel Lee, the co-founder of our church, had a burning shepherd's heart for the young people on campus and great vision for world missions. When he struggled spiritually with Jesus' Great Commission in the late 1980s and prayed for sending missionaries to the then Soviet Union, we were even laughed at by other Christians because this looked totally impossible. But we were not discouraged. With firm confidence, we persistently came to God in prayer. We danced Russian dances with great joy at conferences and Christmas services, as if our prayer had already been answered. God blessed this praying faith without a doubt. After five years, the Iron Curtain, which separated all of Eastern Europe from Western Europe, was torn down. 32 years ago today, on June 27, 1989, the barbed wire between the Hungarian-Austrian border was cut and the Iron Curtain came down step by step.

God also blessed the prayer of some Christians in former East Germany who, in the midst of the atheistic and anti-Christian system, came together in the Nikolaikirche in Leipzig and prayed for a peaceful change. With prayerful faith, they overcame all the regime's attempts of intimidation. More and more people came together to pray, finally marched peacefully through the city with candles and prayers and brought about the inconceivable. Even though combat troops and military were ready to be deployed, there was a peaceful turn without bloodshed and Germany was reunited after 40 years of division. They experienced and testified through prayerful faith without doubt that God is the sovereign, true ruler and the ruler in history and in the lives of people.

Our God is the true, sovereign ruler of the world over the history of an entire nation,

and also in the life of one person. Today we celebrate the victory of faith in the graduation of Samuel, Joshua, David and Noah, because through prayerful faith we have undoubtedly experienced this spiritual mystery. God worked mightily in their lives during their school years and revealed Himself in them as the sovereign Lord. This will be concretely witnessed by their reports of victory and by the reports of their mothers. The sovereign Lord of history will also accompany them in their further journey of life and set up each of them as a holy seed, a holy stump, and a great salvation for this continent and this generation, revealing His glory. Let us continue to accompany with prayerful faith without doubt the Next Generation co-workers and sheep that they will follow God's sovereign plan and will for their lives to the end and live a victorious life and mature into global spiritual leaders for their generation and be used influentially in God's history like Samuel, Joshua, David and Noah in the Bible.

Here I personally learn the prayer of faith anew. Often my prayer for the young people had been calculating, even unbelieving. In this pandemic, the Rhine-Sieg campus seemed to me like a field full of dead men's bones. But with the promise of God from Ezekiel 37:10, I could renew my faith in the sovereign ruler of the world, our God, and my spirit of prayer. With prayerful faith without doubt, I persistently asked God to raise up an Abraham and a Sarah of faith in St. Augustine. With the prayer of faith I may continue to intercede faithfully for Olaf W., Kai, Noah and David and experience the mighty work of God in their lives. Above all, I may testify to God who sovereignly guides and directs their lives and life stories through His Word and reveals His glory. Amen!

Jesus also taught forgiving faith. Let's look at verse 25: "And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." Many people pray very selfishly. God is supposed to hear all their wishes and prayer requests, while they

themselves are not even willing to forgive a person who has offended them or by whom they have been hurt. But God also includes our relationship with our neighbor in his work. Forgiveness brings about reconciliation. Reconciliation brings about new life and a personal love relationship with God. And also our relationship with our neighbors. Jesus taught his disciples that they should first forgive if they want to hear the prayer. That is why we pray in the Lord's Prayer, "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." In Romans 3:22b-24 Paul writes: "There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

Our Lord Jesus loved and forgave us, unlovable and unrighteous sinners, unconditionally when He laid down His life unto death on the Cross for us. On the cross, in the midst of His death pains, Jesus prayed for you and for me: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing!" (Luke 23:34a). For us sinners, Jesus even had to experience separation from His heavenly Father and deep loneliness in our place. That is why Jesus cried out on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" All this happened to Jesus because of my guilt, because of my sin. Yes, so that I might be changed from an unshamed, selfish and self-righteous sinner who could forgive no one, to a new creature and now intercede with forgiving faith for my children, hope-bearers, my campus and for this generation.

We heard about Pastor Sohn. During the civil war between North and South Korea his two sons were murdered by communists. But Pastor Sohn forgave the murderer of his sons and adopted him as his own son. How was this possible? No human being could do such a thing. But when the pastor remembered Jesus' forgiving love and thought that the murderer, without having received Jesus' forgiveness, would be lost forever, he was able to forgive him un-

conditionally and even adopt him as his son.

In the early days of the Moravian Movement there was a profound spiritual crisis when everyone had something bad to say about each other and they could not forgive each other. But Count Zinzendorf prayed and personally visited the church members and invited them to the communion service. This communion service on August 13, 1727, became a historic event. The Holy Spirit caused the quarreling parties to be reconciled, so that, filled with brotherly and forgiving love, they were in each other's arms and reconciled with each other. Thus the spiritual unity of the community was restored. The Moravian Movement grew into an influential missionary organization that sent out numerous missionaries all over the world.

Today we were able to hear Jesus' encouragement personally: "Have faith in God!" This God is the sovereign LORD over the world. He guides and directs the history and life of a person, even the history of an entire nation. God grant our high school graduates in their further life journey the faith in the almighty and sovereign God who leads and directs the life of man, even the history of a nation, and use them as men of faith, shepherds, Bible teachers and global spiritual leaders for the spiritual revival of this generation very precious. Amen!

Let us read the key verse 22: "Have faith in God," Jesus answered."