

# Faith Requires Application

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*Richard Dawson*

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**Luke 1<sup>1-20</sup> / Matt 5<sup>13-16</sup> / Ps 25<sup>1-10</sup>**

Soap, Salt, Paint... what do these three have in common? Yes. Each of these is useless to us unless it is applied. Soap to be of use must be applied to the thing that needs to be cleaned. Salt is no use sitting in the shaker. It has to be on or in the food – it has to be applied. Paint doesn't work sitting in the paint tin. It has to be applied to the thing you want painted. And there are many things like this. Things which require application. Kindness is no use sitting in our heads or our hearts – it has to be applied. Generosity doesn't work sitting in our bank account – it has to be applied. Healthy eating is not just a good thought you have while munching through another piece of Kentucky Fried Chicken – it has to be applied. Learning a piece of music doesn't work playing air guitar – even if it looks really really good... you have to practice, you have to work at it, you have to apply yourself.

Likewise, Faith is not just a thought or a principle. Faith requires, indeed, is, application. In other words, faith doesn't work as just a thought or a principle. Rather faith is the act of trusting God – **it's the application of what we know about God.** David said this in one of his early Psalms...

**<sup>1</sup>In you, Lord my God, I put my trust.**

**<sup>2</sup>I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame, nor let my**

**enemies triumph over me.**

**<sup>3</sup>No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame, but shame will come on those who are treacherous without cause.**

**(Ps 25)**

He was determined to apply his faith to everything he did – to trust in God to save him from all things which threatened to crush him. And he did... he applied faith to everything he did. To his shepherding...

**<sup>37</sup>David said, “The LORD, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine.” So Saul said to David, “Go, and may the LORD be with you!” (1 Sam 17)**

and to his fighting...

**<sup>19</sup>David inquired of the LORD, “Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you give them into my hand?” The LORD said to David, “Go up; for I will certainly give the Philistines into your hand.” (2 Sam 5)**

and his reigning...**<sup>7</sup>Answer me quickly, LORD; my spirit fails.**

**Do not hide your face from me or I will be like those who go down to the pit.**

**<sup>8</sup>Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you.**

**Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life.**

**(Psalm 143)**

In all of these areas of his life – David **applies** his faith. He trusts God, he seeks God, he obeys God, he puts God first. This, friends, is what it means to have faith and the thing is – we don't see God working unless we do this. We don't see God moving in power unless we give up our power to God – unless we trust God with our power. We don't see God changing things until we stop trying to change them ourselves or at least in our own strength and we don't see God moving mountains till we decide that a mountain should be moved and seek God's help in doing it. **Faith is about application** just as paint requires to be painted on something.

Many times I believe we look for something different. We look for proof that the paint will work – **while it's still in the pot!** Show me O God that this point will do the job. Show me that this food needs salt; show me that this soap actually cleans things... **before I have to paint anything; before I have to add the salt; before I have to use the soap on my dirty self.**

**The fact is that often the dirtiest people aren't the ones without soap but the ones who simply don't or won't use it. Likewise, the most faithless people aren't the ones who don't know Jesus but the ones who insist that Jesus remain locked in a book or in a doctrine or on a Cross!**

Friends, we will never know the power of God unless we begin to rely on that power in every situation – **unless we begin applying it to every situation.**

But Richard, what if it doesn't work? What if we are embarrassed? What if people take offense?

The fact of the matter is that it is almost inevitable that such things will happen. You will encounter situations where faith doesn't appear to work – Jesus did! He went to His own home town and despite being the Son of God this is what happened...

### **A Prophet Without Honour**

**<sup>53</sup>When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. <sup>54</sup>Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. <sup>55</sup>"Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? <sup>56</sup>Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" <sup>57</sup>And they took offense at him.**

**But Jesus said to them, "Only in their own towns and in their own homes are prophets without honour."**

**<sup>58</sup>And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith. (Matt 13)**

And we will be embarrassed because faith stands against the culture of this world and we will have to stand with it as Jesus did when He mixed with sinners. 'Aren't you embarrassed Jesus to be seen with all those sinners, those unclean people, those women?' 'Aren't you embarrassed to have such a motley group

of uneducated men and women as your disciples?’ Aren’t you embarrassed Jesus to have no home to lay your head?’ Aren’t you embarrassed Jesus to be teaching half-casts and poor people?’

And we will be rejected. People will look right past us to what we stand for and they will immediately walk away.

But if we want to taste the reality of God’s wonderful power and presence we will need to apply faith because it’s no use to us stuck in the pages of the Bible. Faith is meant to be applied to our daily living – our waking and our sleeping; our work; our spending; our eating; our speaking; our thinking; our hopes and our dreams. Our very life is the tabernacle of faith – it has no other home.

A philosopher, a scientist, and a simple man—none of whom could swim—were trapped in a cove with sheer cliff faces. They split up, but the tide kept coming in. Rescuers lowered a rope with a safety harness. The philosopher said, "Ah, this looks like a rope, but I might be mistaken—it could be wishful thinking or an illusion." So he didn't attach himself, and he was drowned. The scientist said, "Ah, this is an 11 mm polyester rope with a breaking strain of 2800 kg. It conforms to the MR 10-81 standard," and then proceeded to give an exhaustive, and entirely correct, analysis of the rope's physical and chemical properties. But he didn't attach himself, and he was drowned. The simple man said, "Ah, I'm not sure if it's a rope or a python

tail, but it's my only chance, so I'm grabbing it and holding on with my whole life." He was saved.

When Jesus came to us as a baby God wasn't just displaying His love and Grace and He wasn't just drawing close to us so that we might know that He could entirely identify with our situation and condition and He wasn't just giving Himself in the most amazing and complete way possible... no, what God does in the baby Jesus is to show us how faith works – **because in Jesus God applies love!** Jesus is the epitome of faith in action. Jesus is faith applied.

God calls us to faith in Jesus but this is not just an exercise in mental agreement. If I ask you to cross the road with me and you say 'Yes' something else needs to happen doesn't it. You need to cross the road with me.

Jesus is asking you and I to cross the road with Him today. He won't leave us as we do this. He won't desert us – He will walk with us all the way. But He does want us to cross the road – to do more than just say 'Yes.' Faith requires application... Will you cross the road with Jesus this summer?