

**TRANSFORMING
FAITH**
to Shape the World Around Us

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DEDICATION

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INTRODUCTION

With God, you are stronger than your struggles and
more fierce than your fears.

—Germany Kent

We possess tremendous power as children of God. God knew we would need power to have dominion over his creation. God placed us in a position of power to govern the earth as heaven is governed. We are the reflection of God on earth—the eyes, feet, tongue, arms, and legs of God. God put within us the power to manage his creation and gave us the authority to govern earth with his backing. We were put in the position of stewardship, not ownership, in a covenant relationship with the God. This exalted position was given to us only as trustees because “the earth is the LORD’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein” (Ps 24:1).

Our stewardship comes with responsibility. Whatever goes on in the earth realm, it is our responsibility to allow it or reject it. We have the authority to say yes or no. The ontological question is “What happened in reality that caused chaos to threaten our highest good?” Traditional theology says we willfully allowed sin (the opposite of our highest good) to enter into the equation between God and humanity, which had ethical and ontological consequences. We lost our power and authority and became servants of sin: “Man’s sin destroyed the creation covenant and fractured his relationship with the Creator. Because God loved man, however, He provided a means by which man could be restored to a right relationship: the covenant of redemption.”¹ For hundreds of centuries, Satan and the demons—the promoters of sin—reigned over humanity with a maniacal hatred until the Son of God, Jesus Christ, came along and defeated him on

the cross: “Having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross” (Col 2:15). As a result Christ returned to us the stewardship and relationship we lost by sin. We once again have been empowered and given authority by faith to do God’s will on earth.

Therefore, since Christ publicly defeated sin, death, and the grave, our faith can no longer be a private matter. We must engage society for its transformation. Christ’s ministry was public. The power Jesus demonstrated to heal the sick, raise the dead, feed the hungry, open up blinded eyes, cut loose stammering tongues, and perform all kinds of miracles was public, and we must share our faith as Jesus did. Jesus said, “Behold, I have given you the authority to trample on snakes and scorpions, and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you” (Luke 10:19). Because of what Christ did on Calvary, we have what it takes to redeem the evil times in which we live. “The Spirit who gave Daniel his wisdom, and Isaiah his eloquence, and Jeremiah his tenacity, and Amos his holy indignation, can equip us with power, even you and me, for there is no exception.”²

Shame on us if we don’t use the power and authority God has given us through Jesus. We are a paragon of possibilities through Christ. God takes our moral failures and mistakes and turns them into miracle-working power to transform the world. So if you have messed up in life and think your life is over, you are more in line with biblical characters than you think. The scriptures are replete with people who messed up, screwed up, were twisted up, tied up, and tangled up. But through the creative redemptive power and grace of God, these same people obtained supernatural results because they put faith in the one greater than themselves. The power they allowed to operate in and through them by faith is available to us today. So don’t think biblical characters were endowed with special characteristics that we don’t have. Since faith is a gift of God (Eph 2:8–9), biblical characters have no advantage over us in receiving this faith imputed to us through grace. “If we exercise our faith as they did we will also experience similar triumphs as they enjoyed, for it is God’s desire that we do so,

which is why He graced us with this precious gift.”³ We all have the same endowment; we are human just as Jesus Christ was human.

What made Jesus such a great and powerful personality was “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5:19). What God accomplished through Christ can be done through us if we allow God to live in us by faith. It is not enough to believe in God. We must act on our belief by faith to transform the world. The world doesn’t measure our belief; the world measures the actions we take and the results we get based upon our faith. Moses may not be well known for the rod in his hand, but he is known for splitting the Red Sea. We may not know the wife of Joshua, but we do know that through faith, Joshua caused the sun to stand still. It may not matter to us that David was the last child of Jesse, but it does matter that by faith he stood up to an intimidating giant called Goliath and destroyed him. Albert Einstein may not be known for being a violin player, but he is known for developing the theory of relativity. The world looks at results, not creeds, but deeds that produce results.

The same faith that Moses, Joshua, David, Jesus, Einstein, and others throughout human history demonstrated to show the power of God to transform the world is the same enormous power scientists call the “big bang.” Think about the billions of galaxies that were formed from this enormous power; think about the planets that were formed as a result of this enormous power. Once we look in space and see the stars, the moon, and the planets that orbit around the sun held together by an unseen energy called gravity, we have to conclude that enormous power brought all of this together in one amazing order. God is this power, and we have this enormous creative power available to us, which can only be activated by faith: “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” (Heb 11:3). Just like the planets orbit around the sun for their power, when we orbit around the Son of God by faith, we have power to

achieve amazing things. Since God has put mankind as manager over the work of His hand, anything that needs correcting is his responsibility. Martin Buber, the Jewish existentialist, stated, “Man can choose God and he can reject God.... That man has the power to lead the world to perdition implies that he has power to lead the world to redemption.... These two powers of man constitute the actual admission of man into mightiness.... The fact remains that the creation of this being, man, means that God has made room for a codetermine power, for a starting-point for events.”⁴

This tremendous power within humanity must be accessed by faith in order to rise to our God-given potential and purpose. God and humans acting together can transform the world. To achieve this, there must be a covenant relationship between God and humans to help us not lead the world to perdition as Martin Buber indicated. God loves us so much that God *became* us. Harvey Cox stated,

Yahweh was willing to stoop so low as to work in tandem with man, to work on a team, no matter how poorly the human partner was working out. It can certainly be said that in Jesus of Nazareth God did show that he was willing to take man's side of the unfilled covenant, to be the junior partner in the asymmetrical relationship. He who is “high and lifted up” suggests that...he is willing to put himself in the position of working within a group.... The idea of an I-You relationship between God and man is strongly hinted by the language of Galatians 4.... Man's relationship derives from the work they do together.⁵

Whatever is accomplished on earth through this partnership between God and humans means that humans must always be expected to do their part and follow God as recipients of the covenant of grace. Karl Barth said, “God is the giver and man the recipient. Man is an active, not an inactive recipient, yet even in his activity he is still a recipient. In the present context the decisive point is that God

directs, demands, orders, and commands, while man can exercise his responsibility only by obeying God's command."⁶

Therefore, there is no excuse for humanity to allow the decimation of themselves and the planet when they possess so much power through Christ Jesus our Lord. Our failure to act to oppose wrong, evil, and injustice is the result of unfaithfulness. Obedience to God is always required to accomplish God's will on earth. Obedience is

an action that characterizes the event of the Christian life. It controls it in all its dimensions. In it man as a Christian acquires his freedom, and in it consists the exercise of this freedom: his conversion and decision. It is the work of his faith and gratitude. His faithfulness is his persistence in the repetition of this action. It is the epitome and common denominator of all that the gracious God expects and wants of man and all that comes into question as man's obedience to the gracious God. God commands this action, and in performing it man does what is right and good before him.⁷

A. W. Tozer reminds us that "the Bible recognizes no faith that does not lead to obedience, nor does it recognize any obedience that does not spring from faith. The two are opposite sides of the same coin. Were we to split a coin edgewise we would destroy both sides and render the whole thing valueless. So faith and obedience are forever joined and each one is without value when separated from the other."⁸

Jesus Christ was in a persistent relationship with God: "He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross" (Phil 2:8). We are expected by faith to do likewise if we desire to transform the world as Jesus did. The disciples were able to perform miracles because they were in relationship with Jesus Christ. God's tremendous power was released through them, causing an explosions of miracles to happen among them. We can do the same thing in our time. Scripture says that people laid the sick in the streets that "Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by...and all of them

were healed” (Acts 5:15–16). People had faith in the shadow of Peter because they perceived that Peter and John had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13). It wasn’t the shadow of Peter that healed the people, nor was it the hair on Samson’s head that gave him supernatural strength. It was the power of God channeled through these human vessels by faith to achieve amazing results.

Power companies have power lines running to our homes and businesses; however, it is up to us to turn on the switch to access the power. It doesn’t matter the size or the location of our homes and businesses; we have the same power running to them. So it is with faith. Faith is the switch that accesses this enormous power through us. It doesn’t matter our race, creed, color, tongue, or nationality; the same faith is available to us all. When we flip the switch of faith in our individual and collective lives, power is released and amazing things take place. The ordinary becomes the extraordinary; the simple becomes the supernatural; the unknown becomes the well-known. God through Christ can use anybody regardless of their limitations to bring glory to his name. However, none of this is possible without putting faith in action.

When we act by faith, God releases his power of transformation to bring liberation, restoration, and reconciliation in a divided and torn situation. God is the power; we are the instruments through which this power is made manifest on earth. God uses our hands, feet, eyes, and tongue to accomplish his work on earth. We must never forget that we are the instruments and transmitters and God is the power. In any situation and circumstance, when we act on our faith in God, the dam of heaven is open and the power of God rushes down to aid us. “It is faith in [God] that we must rediscover. With this faith we can transform bleak and desolate valleys into sunlit paths of joy and bring new light into the dark caverns of pessimism.”⁹

Just as God achieved amazing things through characters in the Bible, God can do the same through us. The characters in the Bible were flawed—suffering from defects, deficiencies, and disadvantages as we do—but God has proven he is still willing to achieve great things

in and through us. All we have to do is open up ourselves to God by faith. When Jacob opened up himself by faith, he was transformed from Jacob to Israel. When Rahab opened up herself by faith, she moved from being a harlot to heroine. When Simon of sand opened up himself by faith, he became Peter the rock. When persecuting Saul opened himself up by faith, he became the apostle Paul.

There are many within the “hall of faith” who opened up themselves by faith to be used by the power of God. By faith God is calling us to do the possible; God will do the impossible. Therefore, there is no excuse for us allowing our society and nation to be in a perpetual state of nihilism when we have tremendous power at our disposal. Could it be that Jesus Christ may cast us in utter darkness for not using the talents given to us to bring transformation to our world? Our lack of faith in God and in our abilities to transform the world around us is robbing the kingdom of heaven of souls and God of his glory in the world.

God is not asking us to have everything figured out before we act by faith. We may never understand how God achieves great things. We may never comprehend the complexities of God’s ways. But we must trust God in all things and have faith and put this faith in action. We are not expected to waste our time on earth trying to figure out an infinite God, for we are finite creatures. Isaiah reminds us, “God’s thoughts are not our thoughts nor God’s ways our ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God’s ways higher than our ways and thoughts than our thoughts” (Isa 55:8–9). Despite our limited understanding of an infinite God, acting on our faith in God can yield amazing results.

Too often we fail in achieving great things on earth because our faith in God is missing in action. We put faith in the government, in our economy, in institutions that often fail us. Using human strength and knowledge alone to get supernatural results is impossible. Remember, Samson, who disobeyed God and gave the secret of his strength to Delilah, did not know that the Lord had left him (Judg 16:20). When God left Samson, he no longer possessed supernatural strength

to defeat his enemies. When we have God as our divine partner and this partnership is persistent, God gives us supernatural power to achieve things for his glory. Not only does God give us supernatural strength, but “God gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did” (Rom 4:17). Partnership with God makes all the difference in the world. Jesus said, “Without me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). Trying to impact and transform the world without the power of God is futile. It is like trying to blow down an oak tree with your breath. It is like trying to drain the earth of its water with a pump. It is like trying to fight demonic spirits with physical strength. These efforts are futile regardless how many times we try. This posture of not willing to partner with God is the direct result of our pride as a consequence of the fall of humanity.

Reinhold Niebuhr suggests that the fall of humanity caused a loss in our “capacity for faith, hope, and love—that is, the ability to rise above the natural order and have communion with divine and supernatural order, to know God and, in fellowship with him, to be delivered of the fears, anxieties, and sins which result from this separation from God. The fallen man is thus essentially an incomplete man, who is completed by the infusion of sacramental grace, which retires practically, though not quite, all of the supernatural virtues which were lost in the Fall.”¹⁰ He further states that man’s pride is his “unwillingness to acknowledge his creatureliness. He is betrayed by his greatness to hide his weakness. He is tempted by his ability to gain his own security to deny his insecurity, and refuses to admit that he has no final security except in God. He is tempted by his knowledge to deny his ignorance. (This is the source of all “ideological taint” in human knowledge.)”¹¹ Therefore, it is necessary to have faith in God and be in partnership with him to achieve great things on earth.

Jesus said, “With God all things are possible” (Matt 19:26). In partnership with God we can declare in faith that nothing is too difficult for God (Jer 32:27). Moreover, when we accept God’s word by faith and “believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb 11:6), we can be victorious over

any situation. Notice I keep using the word *faith*, “for without faith, it is impossible to please God” (Heb 11:6). Faithlessness is fatal to our efforts. It is like trying to drive a car with no oil or gas. It is like walking over broken glass hoping to receive no cuts and bruises. Faithlessness kept the children of Israel from reaching the promised land, and it will keep us from achieving our goals and coming into our destiny. Faith is necessary, and putting faith in action is imperative if we expect God’s power to give us supernatural results. There is no way Moses’s strength alone could have delivered the children of Israel. But Moses’s faith in God—and his decision to act on his faith—ended the long night of oppression for many of God’s children. The opening of the Red Sea was an act of faith and the power of God.

Consequently, faith is the TNT—the standard measure of strength of bombs and other explosives—in us. It is the atomic bomb of accomplishments that could explode, which could transform the world around us. Faith then is not optional; it is mandatory. Without TNT there can be no major explosions of accomplishments through us. Faith in God rests on the foundational belief that there is no power that can surpass the power of God. There is none like God in heaven, in earth, nor beneath the earth. There is no power anywhere in the visible or invisible world that equals God. Isaiah said,

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?... Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.... Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing. With whom, then, will you compare God? (Isa 40:12–18)

This is the God we must have faith in—the God of Jesus Christ, who raised him from the dead. Faith in anything else—money,

position, power—won't yield supernatural results. Many people have put their faith in the idol gods of this world only to be disappointed, betrayed, and destroyed. Like the prophets of Baal who called upon him and were never answered, so it is with us who put faith in idol gods. Therefore, for God to accomplish amazing things through us, we must have faith in the true and living God and be willing risk-takers, doers, and people of action. Although at times we may not know the outcome of our actions, we still must act by faith, believing God, who declared, "I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come" (Isa 46:10). One thing is certain: God will not leave us in shame or allow our efforts to do his will be defeated. We must walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor 5:7).

What is faith? According to the scripture, "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb 11:1). Faith doesn't mean all the details will be disclosed. It doesn't mean seeing before believing. Faith is stepping into the unknown and trusting God despite the circumstances. It means holding on to God's word when the situation and circumstances dictate letting go. It means echoing with conviction, "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him" (Job 13:15).

When we trust God in the deep darkness without wavering, God accomplishes great things in and through us. When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego faced imminent death in a fiery furnace for not bowing to an idol god, faith stood and spoke: "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up" (Dan 3:16–18). God delivered them, and the king was convinced that God is God.

However, it is not enough simply to communicate faith; we must be willing to demonstrate it, "for faith without works is dead" (Jas 2:20). God is willing to demonstrate and orchestrate his power

through us when we live and act by faith. Every place where God has shown himself strong came through those willing to act on faith. They were not the smartest, not the most promising, not the most moral, not the most qualified. Yet they acted on their faith in God, who looked beyond their problems and saw their potential. Their faith moved God to perform some wonderful miracles through them. The same can happen for us because “God shows no partiality.” (Acts 10:34).

Equally, God is willing to use ordinary, untrained, unqualified, and deeply flawed people who are willing to act on faith to achieve some amazing things. Acts 4:13 says, “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.” Many people may question people’s usefulness to God because they are poor, uneducated, unknown, unimportant. Some may feel that their background of lawlessness or criminal behavior disqualifies them from being used by God. Others may feel that since they have not come from a line of preachers, scholars, educators, protestors, they are the last people God would think about using. Some may feel that their age is a factor of God not using them for someone much younger or someone much older. All of these reasons are invalid because biblical and contemporary history show that God uses people across ethnic, color, class, gender, age, religious, and political lines. Whomever God wants to use, God qualifies. Whomever God wants to promote, God picks. And God’s selection sometimes comes from the most unpromising soil.

The main point is not the perfection of a person, though Jesus wants us to strive for it, but having faith in God and putting this faith in action. Faith is like traveling through the fog even if you cannot see the path. It is like throwing your fishing line in the water though you do not see the fish. It is like going up the stairs though you don’t see the whole staircase. It is like sitting down on a chair believing it will hold you up. God wants us to have this kind of faith and confidence in him. Regardless of the situation and circumstances, God will perform

his good will and purpose through us when we put faith in action. To transform the world around us takes partnership with God and operating in faith. The problems in our world—oppression, racism, sexism, terrorism, injustice, war, police brutality, etc.—are not greater than God. They can be solved by faith. God and humanity working together can transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows.

Scripture says “by faith” Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Moses, etc. (Heb 11:1–8). These people all acted by faith despite their imperfections and limitations in the world. Faith, then, “is an essential possibility of man, and therefore its existence is necessary and universal. It is possible and necessary also in our period. If faith is understood as what it centrally is, ultimate concern, it cannot be undercut by modern science or any kind of philosophy. And it cannot be discredited by its superstitions or authoritarians distortions within and outside churches, sects and movements.”¹² For God through Christ to use us in these last days, to transform our broken and lost world, we must act by faith so our names will be added to the roll of the faithful. The roll of the faithful was a vast group of people. Many were poor, untrained, immoral, and uneducated. A few were rich, some were crooks, and others were social outcasts. God is willing to transform and use anyone to do his will, regardless of what they do or do not possess: “The just shall live by faith” (Rom 1:17). Regardless of what is going on in and around us, we must keep our relationship with God fresh and thriving. In the final consummation, the faithful are justified through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Therefore, “faith is the one condition on which all Divine power can enter into man and work through him. It is the susceptibility of the unseen: man’s will yielded up to, and moulded by, the will of God.”¹³ Those whom God uses to carry out his will and good purpose are all arrested by God’s power and transformed by God’s love, grace, and mercy. Heaven’s book is still adding names of people who lived in faith, acted by faith, received in faith, and experienced God’s transforming power by faith. What about your name? This book is written to help you live in and act on your faith in God through Jesus Christ.

Whatever God says, we must hear and obey. It is through hearing the word of God that faith is awakened in us. By acting on faith we receive the blessing through obedience: "Obedience and faith must go together. Not as if to the faith he has the obedience must be added, but faith must be made manifest in obedience. Faith is obedience at home and looking to the Master: obedience is faith going out to do His will."¹⁴ The same God who lived in and worked through the faithful is willing to do the same through us.

Chapter one of this book focuses on having faith in God. Chapter two focuses on growing in the faith. Chapter three focuses on the Kingdom of God not as talk but action. It is not a matter of profession but power. Power to arrest the dark forces of life that are often a nightmare and unending holocaust. Chapter four focuses on faith in action. Chapter five focuses on bold faith. Chapter six focuses on faith and politics. Chapter seven focuses on remaining faithful. It is my hope and prayer that this book will deepen your faith, motivate you to live by and act on faith to transform the world around you, and strengthen your resolve to remain faithful that you may be the recipient of the promises of God through Jesus Christ in this world and the one to come.

ENDNOTES

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