

Jawbone

Although we don't live in the days of miracles when God intervened in the lives of His people in a more physical way, we do have something more powerful in our possession than what even the strength of Samson could ever accomplish. We have God's written word, the sword of the Spirit (*Eph 6:17*), the inspired pen being mightier than the physical sword. Within it we can find words of encouragement for the people of God to live by when we are faced with sometimes seemingly insurmountable odds. Faithful Christians are the "few" that have found that straight and narrow gate that leads to life (*Mat 7:14*). And where did we find that gate? Within the pages of His word. Ultimately, the level of our faith in God will determine, and expose, our own spiritual strength when difficult times will challenge it. Question is, are we ready for those times? Have we grown to the point where we are able to face the giants that wish to demean our faith as if it were just a superstition? Hopefully, this lesson will goad us on to further "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" (*2 Pet 3:18*). (*English Standard Version*)

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction (*proof*) of things not seen.

- We can back our faith with proof! Faith in battle is determined by how sharp the sword is. Without a well-honed and sharpened blade it would be near impossible to try and convince others of their need for God's grace and mercy. One of the qualifications to overseers Paul gave to Titus, was one that we all need grasp. To...

Tit 1:9 ... hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he [**we**] may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

- There are no excuses that will be acceptable to God on the day of judgment for not sharpening our swords for battles we often ignore out of fear of being embarrassed for our lack of knowledge. When we disregard such conflicts as being someone else's responsibility, when we feel we don't have the time to read and study our Bibles, we are disregarding the responsibility that every Christian has been blessed with "to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being" (*Eph 3:16*). If we disregard such duty we risk weakening the faith within which in turn makes it "impossible to please Him" (*Heb 11:6*).

Heb 11:31 By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies. **32** And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets-- **33** who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, **34** quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. **35** Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. **36** Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. **37** They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated-- **38** of whom the world was not worthy--wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. **39** And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, **40** since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

- Their eternal reward would not come until Jesus fulfilled His part in the scheme of redemption. Do we ever think of how the world then was not deserving of having those of faith living among them? Think about it. How does the world view us? And does God deem

the world unworthy of having us living among those without faith? Can the world tell the difference when it comes to our behavior among everyone else? The world sees things differently than we are supposed to especially when it comes to what is weak and what is strong. Our battles may be physical at times in defending the faith (*turning the other cheek*- Mat 5:39), but for the most part, they are spiritual or psychological which can be even more difficult to win.

2Co 12:10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For **when I am weak, then I am strong.**

- It has been understood that before a new recruit can become strengthened for battle he has to first be broken and rebuilt. Our spiritual strength comes when we are broken through being humbled by the word of God before being rebuilt in His image. As our faith grows His grace becomes more abundant. Faith, then, has its rewards.

Milk & Honey Faith

Num 13:25 At the end of forty days they returned from spying out the land. **26** And they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the people of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh. They brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. **27** And they told him, "We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. **28** However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. And besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there."

- Milk and honey was a metaphor that noted that the land was highly productive. When the Israelites finally marched into the promised land after **40** years of wandering in the wilderness, they took ownership of a land already prepared for them by the hand of God.

Deu 6:10 "And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you--with great and good cities that **you did not build**, **11** and houses full of all good things that **you did not fill**, and cisterns that **you did not dig**, and vineyards and olive trees that **you did not plant**--and when you eat and are full, **12** then take care lest you forget the LORD, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

- All the Israelites had to do was to trust God when He said He would help them conquer the land that was promised to them. But it only took a discouraging report from the few among them that convinced them that they would be unable to accomplish what God had promised He would help them do. Why is it that the leaven of doubt, although less in overall substance, is all it takes to hinder the work of God in accomplishing what He has commanded us to do?

Num 13:30 But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it."

- The few who had the faith to go up and conquer the land expressed such faith in vain. And God became enraged because of those of little faith.

Doubt

- Doubt is necessary in order to find truth. If we never doubted anything we would have excepted everything. Therefore that type of doubt is good. Without it how could any of us

have become Christians in the first place? And we can doubt the ability of others, especially where there's evidence through past situations that might justify it. But to doubt the ability of God is a whole different item all together. When we doubt God we show a lack of faith in His ability to do whatever He has promised to aid us in and **that** doubt is sin. What if the first disciples doubted anyone could be saved through the commission given by the authority of Christ? Where would we be right now were it not for their faith and the faith passed on to others down through the history of the church by way of teaching the next generation?

Mat 28:19 Go therefore and (*if we're not active we won't be able to...*) make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name (*Gk.3686- authority*) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- If we do everything He has commanded, we know, unless we doubt His word, that He will be with us in our work to promote the gospel here. But how can we teach everything Jesus commanded if we don't take the time to study to do so? Are we that busy or preoccupied with the things of this life that take our attention away from what is necessary? Are we a bunch of Marthas?

Luk 10:41 But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, 42 but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

- There will always be the few among many, like Martha, who are so busy with physical things that take their focus away from what is truly necessary to be prepared for our eternal existence in Heaven! Thus, there will always exist those who doubt the power of God to accomplish what He wants us to do with His help. But if the number of doubters was less, could we imagine where the church would be right now with regard to populating the earth? How many more then would be entering the spiritual promised land?

Heb 11:16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city.

- What would it take, what will it take, to get even brethren to understand and have faith in the power of God, even after "the perfect came and the partial passed away" (*1 Cor 13:10*)? Again, we are no longer living in the age when miracles were necessary to convince the unbelievers, those who doubted. It takes a strong faith to go forward in battle against the adversary who would rather we just sit back and leave it up to others to populate the eternal kingdom on earth. That type of doubt is the product of Satan.

Num 13:31 Then the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are." 32 So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, "The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height. 33 And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them."

- It only takes the few who are without faith to instill in the minds of those wavering even a touch of doubt. Then begins the effects of leaven. And that's all the adversary needs to stoke the fire of rebellion. Because rebellion is the antithesis of faith which is Satan's greatest

enemy. Paul dealt with this very thing when there were Judaizers creeping in to cause doubt among the converted Jews.

Gal 5:7 You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? **8** This persuasion is not from **Him** who calls you. **9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.**

- It only takes a small amount of discord among brethren to stifle the work of growing the kingdom. And discord is one of the seven things that **God** hates.

Pro 6:16 There are six things that the **LORD** hates, seven (*number of completion*) that are an abomination to **Him:** **17** haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, **18** a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, **19** a false witness who breathes out lies, and **one who sows discord among brothers.**

- All the lame excuses we can muster still won't disregard the fact that we are commanded, via the great commission, to teach in order to grow the kingdom in our own little area.

Num 14:3 Why is the **LORD** bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to **Egypt?**" **4** And they said to one another, "Let us choose a leader and go back to **Egypt.**"

- There will always be those of the **Lord's** church who will see the importance of sacrifice and find it easier to return to their past worldly existence where not much is required of them to live a contented life. It takes a firm belief in the cause of **Christ** to "stand in the faith" and "be strong" (**1 Cor 16:13**).

Num 14:6 And **Joshua** the son of **Nun** and **Caleb** the son of **Jephunneh**, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes **7** and said to all the congregation of the people of **Israel**, "The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. **8 If the LORD delights in us, He will bring us into this land** and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. **9** Only do not rebel against the **LORD**. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the **LORD** is with us; do not fear them."

- As **Jesus** said, we are not to "fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul" (**Mat 10:28**). **God was** on their side but all it took was for the lack of faith to change that. Can we be any different? If **God** is on our side, and if the proof of that hasn't been evident enough already, we will succeed in doing **His** will here in **Holy**!

Rom 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If **God** be for us, who *can be* against us?

- The lack of faith then is akin to having a rebellious heart which has the same effect as oil does to water. It repulses **Him**.

Deu 1:34 "And the **LORD** heard your words and was angered, and **He** swore, **35** 'Not one of these men of this evil generation shall see the good land that I swore to give to your fathers, **36** except **Caleb** the son of **Jephunneh**. He shall see it, and to him and to his children **I** will give the land on which he has trodden, because he has wholly followed the **LORD!**'"

- God rewards those who have the faith necessary to do His will. That reward will come “now in this time” but “with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life” (*Mk 10:30*).

Jos 15:13 According to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, he gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh a portion among the people of Judah, Kiriath-arba, that is, Hebron (Arba was the father of Anak). **14** And Caleb drove out from there the three sons of Anak, Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai, the descendants of Anak. **15** And he went up from there against the inhabitants of Debir. Now the name of Debir formerly was Kiriath-sepher.

- Joshua and Caleb received, in their lifetimes, their physical rewards from God for their faith in accomplishing His will. And they had to be of a ripe old age when they were finally recompensed for their faith. What about us? Will we have the faith to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you [us]” (*Mat 6:33*)? But someone might say how “we are only a few. How can we accomplish such a task with what little we have in number?”

David

- We cannot doubt the fact that God is able to use the smallest, weakest and humblest among people to accomplish great things. David slew Goliath with something as small as a pebble to knock him down in order to behead the giant when the giant tried to intimidate him into submission with all his armor and weaponry. He did not break David’s resolve in winning a battle that David knew belonged to the Lord. And if it belonged to the Lord, no one or no thing could possibly be victorious unless they fought on God’s side.

1Sa 17:32 And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." **33** And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth."

- We need not look at the obstacles that block the road to success. We need only look beyond them to see what lies at the end of the road and focus on that.

1Sa 17:37 And David said, "The LORD Who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"

- We have to remember the successes we have enjoyed so far, as the Israelites who crossed the Red Sea “upon dry land” (*Ex 14:29*) and had fought for and obtained the promised land (*Jos 22:4*), and understand how God was with us in making these things possible. We did not do this without His help!

1Sa 17:38 Then Saul clothed David with his armor. He put a helmet of bronze on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail, **39** and David strapped his sword over his armor. And he tried in vain to go, for he had not tested them. Then David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them." So David put them off.

- If we are not ready to go forward with what we have then we need to get ready. As David hadn’t tested the armor and sword he was given to go to battle, we need to ask ourselves, “why aren’t we ready to fulfill what we’ve been commanded to do?” David still had the faith

to go forward with **what he had tested** because he was **comfortable** with what he had **already used**. With that he was able to defeat his enemies.

1Sa 17:40 Then he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd's pouch. His sling was in his hand, and he approached the **Philistine**. **41** And the **Philistine** moved forward and came near to **David**, with his shield-bearer in front of him.

- Every Christian needs to be tried with what we have in order to be comfortable in spreading the gospel with others. It may seem like a **David** and **Goliath** type situation at first, but as we become more connected to the word through studying it, we are more able to take on the **Goliaths** the adversary will send our way.

1Sa 17:42 And when the **Philistine** looked and saw **David**, he disdained him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. **43** And the **Philistine** said to **David**, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the **Philistine** cursed **David** by his gods.

- When **Paul** wrote to the young preacher **Timothy** concerning his youth, **Timothy** was instructed to not let that be a factor of discouragement.

1Ti 4:12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers **an example** in speech, in conduct, in love, **in faith**, in purity. **13** Until I come, **devote yourself** to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, **to teaching**.

- **Timothy** served as the New Testament example of **David** in taking on the perception of others that he was unable to succeed because of his youth. Therefore, our youth (*including our newest conversions*) should never be discouraged since they are the next generation to further the work of the kingdom until **Christ** returns (*unless He comes in the meantime*). We need to remember **David**'s words when he confronted **Goliath** as an example of how we are to confront our adversaries who would hamper the expansion of the kingdom/church today.

1Sa 17:45 Then **David** said to the **Philistine**, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you **in the name** (*Heb.8034- authority*) **of the LORD** of hosts, the **God** of the armies of **Israel**, **Whom** you have defied. **46** This day the **LORD** will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the **Philistines** this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, **that all the earth may know** that there is a **God** in **Israel**, **47** and that all this assembly may know that the **LORD saves not with sword and spear**. For the battle is the **LORD's**, and **He** will give you into our hand." (*This area needs to know there is a God in Mt. Holly and that we are His representatives!*)

- The church belongs to **Christ**, **He** died for her so the battle is **His** to wage. We are but **His** servants that serve as soldiers in this conflict between good and evil. The victory is ours when we have the faith to pursue it.

Gideon

Jdg 6:14 And the **LORD** turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours and save **Israel** from the hand of **Midian**; do not I send you?" **15** And he said to **Him**, "Please, **Lord**, how can I save **Israel**? Behold, my clan is the weakest in **Manasseh**, and I am the least in my father's house." **16** And the **LORD** said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall strike the **Midianites** as one man."

- As the Lord told Gideon that He would be with him, so it is today when Christ said “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Mat 28:20). But we need also remember that we can do nothing without Him to guide us in this spiritual conflict.

Jdg 7:2 The LORD said to Gideon, "The people with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.' ³ Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return home and hurry away from Mount Gilead.'" Then 22,000 of the people returned, and 10,000 remained.

- Not every Christian is able to take part in the “front lines”. One fear that is understood as the most common is public speaking. Not everyone can do it. And not everyone is able to do other things that are necessary in bringing the world to Christ. Those abilities are required of those who are able. But that doesn’t mean the rest are to be content in doing nothing toward supporting those who are in the thick of it.

Jdg 7:4 And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people are still too many. Take them down to the water, and I will test them for you there, and anyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' shall go with you, and anyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' shall not go."

- Obviously, there are those who are more comfortable, more qualified for certain tasks. But in the end, all glory belongs to the Lord. He is the One Who deserves it since He is the One Who paid the price for enlistment in His army to be possible.

Jdg 7:7 And the LORD said to Gideon, "With the 300 men who lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hand, and let all the others go every man to his home."

- Once again, not everyone is capable of certain tasks but all are important.

1Co 12:22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

Samson

- At this point in time the Israelites were under Philistine control.

Jdg 13:1 And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, so the LORD gave them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.

- And, as was with all the enemies of Israel, when their captors fulfilled what was required of them in punishing His people, God then focused His wrath on them. In this case, it was through the hands of Samson, who was “a Nazirite to God from the womb” whose purpose was “to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines” (Jdg 13:5). As a Nazirite “no razor shall come upon his head” which was the source of his strength and faith in God. As part of God’s plan to redeem Israel, Samson saw, desired and was given a Philistine woman as his wife but in his absence she was given to another man which enraged Samson.

Jdg 15:4 So Samson went and caught 300 foxes and took torches. And he turned them tail to tail and put a torch between each pair of tails. ⁵ And when he had set fire to the torches, he let the foxes go into the standing grain of the Philistines and set fire to the stacked grain and the standing grain, as well as the olive orchards. ⁶ Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?" And they

said, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." And the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire.

- Not a story the people at P.E.T.A. would condone just as the Philistines didn't who in turn punished Samson's wife and her father for it.

Jdg 15:9 The Philistines went to the land of Judah and stopped near a place named Lehi (*lekh-ee'*). Their army camped there. 10 The men of the tribe of Judah asked them, "Why have you Philistines come here to fight us?" They answered, "We have come to get Samson. We want to make him our prisoner. We want to punish him for what he has done to our people." 11 Then 3000 men from the tribe of Judah went to the cave near the Rock of Etam (*ay-tawm'*) and said to Samson, "What have you done to us? Don't you know that the Philistines rule over us?" Samson answered, "I only punished them for what they did to me." 12 Then they said to Samson, "We have come to tie you up. We will give you to the Philistines." Samson said to the men from Judah, "Promise me that you yourselves will not hurt me." 13 The men from Judah said, "We agree. We will just tie you up and give you to the Philistines. We promise that we will not kill you." So they tied Samson with two new ropes and led him up from the cave in the rock. 14 When Samson came to the place called Lehi, the Philistines came to meet him. They were shouting with joy. Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Samson with great power. Samson broke the ropes--they were like burned strings falling from his arms and the ropes on his hands seemed to melt away. 15 Samson found a jawbone of a dead donkey and killed 1000 Philistine men with it. 16 Then Samson said, "With a donkey's jawbone, I killed 1000 men! With a donkey's jawbone, I piled them into a tall pile." 17 When Samson finished speaking, he threw the jawbone down. So that place was named Ramath Lehi.

- So, if Caleb was able, in his old age, to drive out the sons of Anak in order to possess the city he was promised through his faithfulness, if the Israelites were able to conquer the Midianites with the 300 chosen of God, if David was able to bring Goliath down with one little pebble and if Samson was able to slay 1000 Philistine warriors with only the jawbone of a donkey, how can we not have a faith within to expand the kingdom here in Mt. Holly, or anywhere for that matter?

Mat 17:14 And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to Him and, kneeling before Him, 15 said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly. For often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. 16 And I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not heal him." 17 And Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to Me." 18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly. 19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" 20 He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."

"It has been supposed by some, therefore, that he meant to say, If you have the smallest or feeblest faith that is genuine, you can do all things." [emph. mine] Albert Barnes

- Therein lies the real question. Is our faith genuine to where we can move Mt. Holly with the power of a donkey's jawbone? In our case the gospel (*Rom 1:16*)? God's will is that it is!

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