"HELP MY UNBELIEF"

I. Ask for Faith

A. **Mark 9:14-29** *"When He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them. Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to Him, greeted Him. And He asked the scribes, 'What are you discussing with them?' Then one of the crowd answered and said, 'Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not.' He answered him and said, 'O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me.' Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. So He asked his father, 'How long has this been happening to him?' And he said, 'From childhood. And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.' Jesus said to him, 'If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.' Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears,* ***'Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!'*** *When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, 'Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!' Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, 'He is dead.' But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, 'Why could we not cast it out?' So He said to them, 'This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.'"*

This desperate father had faith, but knew it was lacking. He did not leave it at that, though; he asked for help with his unbelief! The Lord accommodated that request, healing the man's son.

B. **Luke 17:5-6** *"The apostles said to the Lord, '**Increase our faith**.' So the Lord said, 'If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, "Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea," and it would obey you.'"*
Even the apostles personally chosen by Jesus knew they needed greater faith, and so they asked for it! Christ told them that even faith as small as a mustard seed is powerful. The issue is not merely how much faith we possess, but whether we exercise the faith we have.

C. **1st Kings 3:5-13** *"Jehovah appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, 'Ask! What shall I give you?' And Solomon said: 'You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. Now, O Jehovah my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?' The speech pleased Jehovah, that Solomon had asked this thing. Then God said to him: 'Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. And I have also given you what you have*

not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days.'"

Solomon must have already possessed impressive wisdom to have requested wisdom when God invited him to ask for whatever he wanted. Similarly, it seems a certain depth of faith must already be present for a soul to know to ask for more.

D. **Matthew 7:7-11** *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"*

God encourages asking! He wants to be sought for.

II. KNOW HOW FAITH IS ESTABLISHED

A. **John 20:24-29** *"Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, 'We have seen the Lord.' So he said to them, 'Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.' And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, 'Peace to you!' Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.' And Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed.* ***Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed****.' And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but* ***these are written that you may believe*** *that Jesus*

is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."

1. When Thomas needed proof, Jesus supplied it, but admonished that the real blessing is in believing without seeing.
2. What has been recorded about Christ is sufficient evidence to convince honest hearts.

B. **Hebrews 11:1** *"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."*

2nd Corinthians 5:7 *"For we walk by faith, not by sight."*

Faith does not require visual confirmation. This is the very nature of faith.

C. **Romans 10:17** *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*

Faith is not the result of seeing proof, but of hearing the word of God, which contains the inspired testimony of eyewitnesses who saw Jesus work miracles.

III. Distinguish Doubt from Defiance

A. **Hebrews 4:2** *"Indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it."*

Skeptics and believers have been presented with the same evidence. They simply chose not to believe.

B. **Matthew 12:22-24** *"One was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed and said, 'Could this be the Son of David?' Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, '**This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub**, the ruler of the demons.'"*

What amazed the multitudes had a different effect on the Pharisees who attributed the miraculous healing to Satan. They did not **want** to believe.

C. **John 11:45-48** *"Many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. But some of them went away to the Pharisees*

*and told them the things Jesus did. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, '**What shall we do? For this Man works many signs.** If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.'"*

Lazarus's resurrection led to many believing in Jesus. The Pharisees never denied his wonders, but regarded them as a threat. Faith in Christ is a cost many are unwilling to pay. Some do not reject Christ because the evidence is insufficient, but because the consequences of accepting Him are unwelcome.

D. **Acts 4:14-18** *"Seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, **they could say nothing against it**. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, 'What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, **that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.** But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name.' So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus."*

The council recognized the miracles performed by these apostles were undeniable. Still, they wanted the message stopped. Do not let doubt become defiance since these are two different things.

IV. Recognize the Evidence God Has Provided

A. **Ecclesiastes 3:11** *"He has put eternity in their hearts."*

There is innate knowledge within every human heart that there is something beyond this mortal body and this finite world.

B. **Acts 17:22-31** *"Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, 'Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you*

worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that ***they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us****; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, "For we are also His offspring." Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.'"*

God has made us in such a way that we are naturally inclined to seek Him out. He is near enough to be found!

C. **Acts 14:15-17** *"You should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless* ***He did not leave Himself without witness****, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."*

The providence of heaven testifies to the existence of a benevolent God.

CONCLUSION: "LORD, I BELIEVE"

A. **Jude 20-23** *"You, beloved,* ***building yourselves up on your most holy faith****, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the*

mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And ***on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear****, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh."*

Faith can and must be built up. It is always a work in progress. If your faith is not as strong as it should be, you have our compassion; that is not the same as fleshly defilement, which we rebuke.

B. **1st Thessalonians 5:14** *"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly,* ***comfort the fainthearted****,* ***uphold the weak****, be patient with all."*

There is a distinction between the unruly who need warning and the fainthearted who need comfort and the weak who need to be held up. We know that and we are here to help.

C. **Colossians 2:6-7** *"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,* ***rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith****, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving."*

The roots of faith take time to grow. Let them.