

From the PASTOR'S DESK



The Faith of the Apostles

The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.' Their request seems to come from nowhere.

Although Jesus chose twelve and named them apostles, we don't hear the term apostles that much in Luke. He says the twelve more often, and most often He uses the term disciples. He calls them apostles when they return from their missionary journey, when they are at the table for the Last Supper, and when the women bring news of the empty tomb. So, the use of the word apostles must be significant here.

The word faith is another word used infrequently by Luke. It seems to describe a disposition. Whether it is the men who lower the paralytic through the roof, or the centurion who relies on the word of Jesus because he knows he is unworthy to be under the same roof, or the woman who simply touches the hem of His garment, it is that kind of faith that Jesus sees and responds to.

It is Faith that is lived daily and shapes the way a person thinks and behaves. It is about receptivity to God's presence in our daily lives, and it is seen in our consistently faithful behavior. It is not reserved for emergencies.

At this stage in their relationship with Jesus, the apostles are beginning to see their limitations for the work ahead. The apostles recognize their need for a deeper and stronger faith. And they ask for an increase.

When Jesus discusses the role of the servant in regard to his Master, the point is that one cannot expect a reward if he is only doing his duty. In the social contract of the time, the Master does not owe the slave anything for his obedience. The apostle does not just obey; he asks for more faith to serve more fully.

Obedience is not a means to some reward. It is simply what being a disciple is about. We do not expect a reward for our work as disciples, but the faith the apostles handed on to us promises much. Apostles know that it is the power of faith that can hurl mulberry trees into the sea and keep them thriving. Apostles beg for more and more faith, so they can serve more.

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