

Fanning it into Flame
Sunday, July 11, 2010
A Tangible Demonstration of Faith

Can faith be measured? When a person says they have faith, are there tangible demonstrations to attest to this fact? Jean Francois Gravelet (aka The Great Blondin), on June 30, 1850 successfully crossed Niagra Falls on a 3" manila rope stretched 2000' across the gorge some 160' above the lower rapids. While that is amazing, the following is as well and serves to illustrate the point. During the summer of 1859 Blondin's manager, Harry Colcord, agreed to step up to the challenge Blondin gave, "Is there anyone who believes I can cross the gorge with a man on my back?" While many might have thought he could do it after seeing him cross with many different objects, Colcord was the one who got on his back. He was the one who showed that he really believed.

James 2:14-18

*14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. 18 But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." **Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.** (NIV)*

Another tangible demonstration of faith that I spoke about this morning is in the area of finances. Some feel that the tithe (meaning 1/10th) is just an Old Testament law and does not apply today. While it did become part of the Law, the Bible reveals that it superseded the law. Consider Abraham, who in Genesis 14:18-20 gave Melchizadek a tenth of the spoils of his defeated foes. Then in Genesis 28:19-22 Jacob made a vow to God saying that if God would be with him, protect him, provide for him, and bring him safely home to his father's house he would give him a tenth of all that was provided. These two events were before the law was given. There was something about the tenth that was a standard of faithfulness. Giving is a response of the heart.

Then consider Jesus' comments to the Pharisees in **Luke 11:37-42** *When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him; so he went in and reclined at the table. 38 But the Pharisee, noticing that Jesus did not first wash before the meal, was surprised. 39 Then the Lord said to him, "Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. 40 You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? 41 But give what is inside to the poor, and everything will be clean for you. 42 **"Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.** (NIV)*

Jesus was telling them that paying their tithe was something they needed to do, yet not neglect justice and the love of God. Paying our tithe and giving offerings is a tangible demonstration of faith. God even uses this one area to test him in his faithfulness. (See Malachi 3:8-18) We can say we trust God, but if we are not giving because we fear that we just won't have enough to get by on, then our lack of faith is being revealed. The tithe is a measurable evidence of trust in God. He is our provider. He is our source of supply. He will meet our every need.

The tithe is what supports the local church and as such should not be designated where we want it to go. It goes to the "storehouse." Offerings, on the other hand, are above the tithe and may be designated anywhere you like. God wants both. Not because he lacks funds, but because he wants us to participate in the advancement of his Kingdom. Without faith it is impossible to please God and giving is part of the A,B,C's of faith. If this has been an area of difficulty with you, then make it a matter of prayer. Confess your fears and ask God to help you. Then take that step of faith and trust that he will pour out a blessing that you cannot contain.