

### ***Act on the words of Jesus...***

Jesus spoke about people who hear His words and who act on those words. He compared these people to the wise man who built his house on a rock. The foolish ones, Jesus said, are those who hear His words and do not act on those words. They are like the man who built on the sand. (Matt. 7)

The rains descended and the floods came to both the wise and the foolish, regardless of where their house was built. In fact, Jesus said, the winds SLAMMED against both houses! Life is like that. Jesus never guaranteed life without problems. On the contrary, he seemed to indicate we'd all get some wind and rain.

So, the rain and the flood and the wind hit both houses. The house on the rock stood firm. The one on the sand collapsed.

Both the wise and the foolish had heard the words of Jesus. Hearing the words of Jesus was not what made the difference in their lives.

*Acting on His words.* That is what made the difference. That was the key, Jesus said.

What we actually believe is most clearly seen in what we do, not in what we think. What we do is a declaration of what we believe.

This is not to be confused with a life of religious self effort or legalism. The kind of "doing" that Jesus was talking about is not self effort. It is obeying His commands because we trust Him completely.

This is the life of faith, the life of total trust in Him. If we really trust Jesus, we will obey Jesus.

The things that Jesus commands are beyond the ability of our flesh or our natural strength. They are not beyond His strength, however. This is why Paul said *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*

With all His commands, Jesus provides the supernatural energy necessary to obey. His life flows into all those who trust Him enough to obey what He says. The Bible calls this the "obedience of faith". Paul gave this as his job description in Romans 1: *"to bring about the obedience of faith among the nations"*. The obedience of faith is to actually do what we believe. It is to act on our convictions. Such action -- obedience to Jesus -- requires divine assistance. And that divine help comes *during* the action of faith and obedience!

Peter knew he could not walk on water. But when he saw Jesus walking on the water, something inside of him saw the possibility of doing that himself. He shouted, *"Lord, if it is you, command me to come!"* Jesus said *"Come!"* And Peter stepped out and walked on the sea. (Matt. 14)

How could he do such an impossible thing? He could do it because Jesus commanded Him to do it.

Jesus commanded the man with the withered arm to *"stretch out your hand..."* The man probably could not do this, but at the command of Jesus He obeyed, and during the action of the "obedience of faith", the supernatural power flowed into his arm and it was restored. (Mark 3)

Peter, James and John had been fishing. They had fished all night and caught nothing. Jesus came by on shore, and called out to them: *"Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch."* Peter said, *"Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I WILL DO AS YOU SAY and let down the nets."* They caught so many fish that the nets began to break! (Luke 5)

In the action of obeying a command of Jesus, miracles happen.

At a wedding, the wine ran out. Mary the mother of Jesus told the servants *"Whatever He says to you, DO IT."* Jesus told them to fill the waterpots, draw some out and take it to the headwaiter. (Wouldn't they have looked foolish bringing water to the headwaiter?) During the action of faith and obedience, the water turned to wine. (John 2)

...whatever He says to YOU, DO IT!

We may shy away from some of the words of Jesus, because they call us to a life beyond our natural strength. That is the point. Putting our trust totally in Him is to obey whatever He says to do. That obedience releases the very life of Jesus within you.

When Jesus talked about hearing "these words of Mine" and doing them, he had just finished the Sermon on the Mount. That sermon is mostly about our inner life -- attitudes and responses to life around us. Every part of that Sermon on the Mount calls us to live far above the dictates of our flesh.

While delivering that message, Jesus repeatedly referred to the common understandings of the Old Testament, using the phrase *"you have heard that it was said..."* Then he challenged people to a higher way of living with the phrase *"but I say to you..."*

For example: *"You have heard that it was said do not commit adultery. But I say unto you, everyone who looks on a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."* In that statement he calls every man to a life far different than his natural tendencies. He calls men to a life of holiness in the most secret place of his thoughts. For many, obeying these words may seem as impossible as walking on water, but remember: Jesus commanded it. During the action of faith and obedience to His command, His very life within you rises to meet the command. You CAN do all things through Christ who strengthens you!

Many Christians pass over the words of Jesus because they frequently demand action. His words are consequently sometimes uncomfortable. It is necessary to focus clearly on His words, whether they bring us comfort or not, since He is our Lord and Master!

Remember this: His commands are spoken, not to your flesh, but to your born again spirit that is joined to the Lord. New Testament commandments are spoken to the life of God in you. You cannot respond to them in your flesh, but you can obey by drawing on the life of God inside of you. This life is released by faith and experienced only in obedience.

*"Forgive everyone." "Be anxious for nothing." "In everything give thanks." "Love one another." "Repent and believe the gospel." "Go into all the world and preach the gospel."* These are New Testament commands, not suggestions. Acting on these words in faith and obedience will find you "walking on the water" -- living above the dictates of the flesh, living "in the Spirit". You will discover the reservoir of His life within you, the resource of His presence and His holiness in your heart, as you trust and obey.

Act on the words of Jesus. Miracles happen.