

Faith And Disbelief Are One In The Same

By Mark E. Benjamin

Disbelieving Faith

Faith and disbelief are the same thing. To the outside observer, at times they may look completely different and easy to spot one from the other. This is true in simple situations like having faith in the sun rising tomorrow; as seen against the disbelief of someone being panic-stricken over the possibility that tomorrow may never come. But believe me when I say that faith and the absence of faith, disbelief, can be and very often are the same thing. At least to the outside observer that is.

Let me show you what I mean by sharing with you a very painful story. It is one I experienced first hand. It started back on the 22nd of June 2006.

What A Great Woman

I'm sure you have heard a mother-in-law joke or two, maybe even told a few of them yourself. But if you would take every mother-in-law joke ever told in malice and anger about your spouse's Mom, put them all together, multiplied by the severity of them a thousand times, you would end up with the mother of all mother-in-laws. Some one you would never wish to come in contact with her. However, if you would take that quantitative amount and go in the exact opposite direction, you have the most absolute perfect woman. That of course is the description of my mother-in-law. My mother-in-law is the very best women ever placed on this earth. Her love for Y'shua was beyond any imaginable. Her faith was insurmountable. Her personality and kindness towards other, endless. She was truly a great woman.

I sadly say, "was", because it pains me tremendously to say this, she is no longer with us. June 22nd was her last full day here on earth with waken eyes. She spent that day working in her garden and being with her husband of 56 years. She lived life to the utmost until the very end. For the next morning, my father-in-law found her collapsed in the bathroom.

Rushing her to the hospital while paramedics attempted to restart her heart, I started my one and a half hour trip home from work. After many tests, monitors, tubes, wires, breathing machine, doctors, nurses and prayers surrounded her for five days while she was in a coma; she breathed her last breath on 28 June 2006.

She was the best. I miss her terribly.

And although she was the most fantastic mother-in-law you could hope for, I must admit that my wife's mother-in-law is even better... For those that didn't catch that, my wife's mother-in-law would be my mom... Try to keep up here.

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I Have Great Faith, I Think

It was during those long days and nights by the bedside of that wonderful woman that I began to see a surprising trait in me. One moment strikes me in particular. My father-in-law was either getting something to eat at the hospital cafeteria or at home for a breather. My wife, taking a nap in the recliner chair next to the hospital bed, that left me alone to think, watch and pray.

I would just stare at the monitor comparing the breaths forced on by the machine and those taken naturally from time to time. I prayed for the ones taken on her own to become stronger and more frequent. Knowing the medical staff was of the opinion that we should remove the breathing machine and let whatever happens to take place, I wanted to stall, to give her a fighting chance. I saw the numbers on the computer screen and I believed the doctors to be wrong. My faith was so strong through the entire ordeal that it actually scared me to think I had such a high level of belief in me.

Finally, they removed the machine and those of us in that dimly lit room waited for Mom to slip away from us. She didn't. I knew she wouldn't. Every minute, hour and day that my mother-in-law was off all machines, my faith grew even more. She was going to make it through this. God was going to perform a miracle here and prove the doctors wrong. I had no doubt, none.

But then, again in the morning hours, I received that dreadful phone call. It was my wife, "Mom's gone."

The Error Of Faith

What went wrong? Nothing, my faith was unwavering. Even then, on the longer than usual ride home, I still thought, "No, she's not gone. Something wonderful is going to happen here." It didn't. My sweet mother-in-law's body may now rest in a new grave, but her spirit dances before our Lord in heaven. Why is she not here to call me "Five o'clock shadow" (an inside and long story.) I had such strong convicting faith. Or did I?

No, I didn't. I look back over the very short time from now to when this all happened and see the truth and I don't like what I see. It wasn't faith at all, it was disbelief. I'm not saying my faith wasn't strong enough or I had some small doubt. It was all pure disbelief. To the outsider it may seem as if I had large, heaping quantities of faith. I knew without any reservation that my mother-in-law was going to not only survive this ordeal but also be the jovial, spirit filled compassionate woman I knew and loved. How is that not faith?

My belief in her healing wasn't because I thought God was going to do a great miracle. I believed in her healing because I would not allow myself to believe that my mother-in-law needed healing in the first place. I didn't have faith in miracles, I had

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disbelief that there was a need for a miracle. My thinking was that my mother-in-law just had some sort of minor situation no matter what the tests and doctors said. She would be perfectly fine any moment now. It only looked bad for her.

Real faith is the belief that God will heal the sick, feed the hungry, house the homeless. Faith is not the belief in healing of the healthy, feeding the gorged, and housing those that have three homes already. I disbelieved that my mother-in-law was near death and therefore knew she was going to be all right. It looks like strong faith from afar, but up close, it's still just disbelief. If I had real faith, I would have known that without any doubt my mother-in-law was going to die and there was no hope for her survival and at the same time knew that she would walk out of this hospital. That's real faith.

What A Great Example

Let's look at an example of true faith. The only man that had constant unwavering faith, Y'shua ha-Mashiach (Jesus the Messiah). Read **Mark 11:12 – 24**. It tells of a story of a fig tree that did not produce fruit. Y'shua says to the tree to wither and die, and it died. He had no doubt what he commanded would come true. He had such strong faith that he said it, I believe, with tongue-in-check mannerism. But still even with such a small quantity of faith a miracle occurred. Now that is "...faith as small as a mustard seed..." (Luke 17:6) with powerful results.

Compare that with a time He showed the most powerful of faith. In **Luke 22:42 – 46** we see ha-Mashiach praying with all earnestness for God to take away what was in store for him. He knew if it was the will of God it could have been removed, but the faith shown was even bigger than that. He knew the will of God to be perfect and although seeming to be an impossible task, it would be not just doable but miraculous in nature. Death was the only reasonable conclusion but boundless faith showed life.

The powerful conclusion of this unsurpassing faith – the receiving of a saving grace to all those that ask for it.

Faith Beyond Faith

As far as the death of my mother-in-law and my own personal faith, all I can say is this. That special lady that I will miss dearly is gone. Taken from us. There is no reason to entertain even the slightest notion that I will ever see her again. That is a fact. It is undisputable. I know that with all that is in me. Therefore, I know beyond any inkling of uncertainty that I will see her smiling face again. She will be one of the ones welcoming me into the New Jerusalem.

Now that's true faith.

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This article is dedicated to the honor and memory of my dear mother-in-law;
Susan Lord (12 July 1929 – 28 June 2006).