

Matthew 17 & 1 Cor. 4

33. According to the Gospel, the person who is simply a man of faith can remove the mountain of his sin through the practice of the virtues (cf. **Matt. 17:20**), thus freeing himself from his former attachment to the restless gyration of sensible things. If he has the capacity to be a disciple he receives fragments of the loaves of spiritual knowledge from the hands of the Logos and feeds thousands of people (cf. Matt. 14:19-20), demonstrating by his action how the power of the Logos is increased and multiplied by the practice of the virtues. If he also has the strength to be an apostle he cures every disease and infirmity: he casts out demons (cf. Matt. 10:8; Luke 10:17), that is, he banishes the activity of the passions; he heals the sick, through hope restoring a state of devotion to those who have lost it, and through his teaching about judgment stiffening the resolve of those who have been softened by sloth. For, since he has been commanded 'to tread on serpents and scorpions' (Luke 10:19), he destroys the beginning and end of sin.

[V2] 121 St Maximos the Confessor Two Hundred Texts on Theology and the Incarnate Dispensation of the Son of God Written for Thalassios First Century

10. The Logos of God is like a grain of mustard seed (cf. Matt. 13:31): before cultivation it looks extremely small, but when; cultivated in the right way it grows so large that the highest principles of both sensible and intelligible creation come like birds to revive themselves in it. For the principles or inner essences of all things are embraced by the Logos, but the Logos is not embraced by any thing. Hence the Lord has said that he who has faith as a grain of mustard seed can move a mountain by a word of command (cf. **Matt. 17:20**), that is, he can destroy the devil's dominion over us and remove it from its foundation.

[V2] 140 St Maximos the Confessor Two Hundred Texts on Theology and the Incarnate Dispensation of the Son of God Written for Thalassios Second Century

9. Since man is composed of body and soul, he is moved by two laws, that of the flesh and that of the spirit (cf. Rom. 7:23). The law of the flesh operates by virtue of the senses; the law of the Spirit operates by virtue of the intellect. The first law, operating by virtue of the senses automatically binds one closely to matter; the second law, operating by virtue of the intellect, brings about direct union with God. Suppose there is someone who does not

doubt in his heart (cf. Mark 11:23) - that is to say, who does not dispute in his intellect - and through such doubt sever that immediate union with God which has been brought about by faith, but who is dispassionate or, rather, has already become god through union with God by faith: then it is quite natural that if such a person says to a mountain, 'Go to another place', it will go (cf. **Matt. 17:20**). The mountain here indicates the will and the law of the flesh, which is ponderous and hard to shift, and in fact, so far as our natural powers are concerned; is totally immovable and unshakeable.

[V2] 190 St Maximos the Confessor Various Texts on Theology, the Divine Economy, and Virtue and Vice Second Century

I weep and grieve when I think of death and see man's beauty, created by God in His own image, lying in the grave, ugly, abject, its physical form destroyed. What is this mystery that has befallen us? How have we been given over to corruption? How have we been yoked to death? Truly it is by God's command, as it is written. Ah, what will I do at the moment of my death, when the demons encircle my unhappy soul, bearing the indictment of the sins I have committed, consciously or unconsciously, in word, act and thought, and demanding from me my defense? But alas, even without any other sin, I am already condemned-and rightly so-for not having kept the commandments-Tell me, my wretched soul, where are your baptismal promises? What has happened to your covenant with Christ and your renunciation of Satan? Where is your keeping of God's commandments, your imitation of Christ through the virtues of body and soul? Because of this you were called a Christian. What has happened to your profession of the monastic habit? Should you blame bodily weakness, where is the faith that casts all care upon the Lord, the faith by which, even had it been no bigger than a mustard seed, you would have been able to move mountains (cf. Matt. 17:20)? Where is the complete repentance that repels every evil word or action? Where is the contrition of soul and the deep inward grid? Where is the gentleness, the generosity, the heart's freedom from evil thoughts, the all-embracing self-control that restrains each member of the body and every thought and desire that is not indispensable for the soul's salvation or for bodily life? Where is the patience that endures so many tribulations for the sake of the kingdom of heaven? Where is the gratitude in all things? The ceaseless prayer? The recollection of death? The tears of distress for my failure to love? Where is the moral judgment attuned to God, that keeps the soul from the snares of our enemies? Where is the self-restraint that prevents anything contrary to the will of God from being done or deliberately thought? Where is the courage that endures terrible sufferings

and that advances full of hope against the adversary? Where is the justice that gives to each thing its due, the humility that knows its own weakness and ignorance, and the godlike compassion that would have saved me from all the wiles of the demons? Where is dispassion and perfect love, the peace that excels all intellect (cf. Phil. 4:7), whereby I should have been called a son of God (cf. Matt. 5:9)? Even without bodily strength he who wishes can possess all these things simply through his own resolution. [V3] 115 St Peter of Damaskos Book1 A Treasury of Divine Knowledge The Third Stage of Contemplation

St Paul said that faith was the basis of all actions that conform to God's will, and that we have received it through holy baptism by the grace of Christ and not through works (cf. Col. 1:23; Rom. 11:6). According to St Isaac, this is the first kind of faith, and it engenders the fear that is inherent in it. Such fear leads us to keep the commandments and patiently to endure trials and temptations, as St Maximos has explained. Then, after we have begun to act in this way, a second kind of faith is born in us, the great faith of contemplation, to which the Lord was referring when He said; 'If you have faith as a mustard seed... nothing will be impossible for you' (**Matt. 17:20**). Thus there is, first, the ordinary faith of all Orthodox Christians, that is to say, correct doctrinal belief concerning God and His creation, both visible and invisible, as the Holy Catholic Church, by God's grace, has received it; and there is, second, the faith of contemplation or spiritual knowledge, which is not in any way opposed to the first kind of faith; on the contrary, the first gives birth to the second, while the second strengthens the first.

[V3] 213 St Peter of Damaskos Book II Twenty-Four Discourses II The Two Kinds of Faith

123. Blessed is the monk who regards himself as 'the off-scouring of all things' (**1 Cor. 4:13**).

[V1] 69 **Evagrius the Solitary** On Prayer: **One Hundred and Fifty-Three Texts.**

35. There are times when a teacher falls into disgrace and undergoes trials and temptations for the spiritual benefit of others. 'For we are despised and weak,' says the Apostle, 'brought to disgrace by the thorn in our flesh; but you are honored and made strong in Christ' (cf. **1 Cor. 4:10**; 2 Cor. 12 :7).

[V1] 306 St John of Karpathos For the Encouragement of the Monks in India who had Written to Him One Hundred Texts

90. Only God is good by nature (cf. Matt. 19:17), and only he who imitates God is good in

will and purpose. For it is the intention of such a person to unite the wicked to Him who is good by nature, so that they too may become good. That is why, though reviled by them, he blesses; persecuted, he endures; vilified, he supplicates (cf. **1 Cor. 4:12-13**); put to death, he prays for them. He does everything so as not to lapse from the purpose of love, which is God Himself.

[V2] 112 St Maximos the Confessor Four Hundred Texts on Love Fourth Century

Not only those on earth, but the angelic choirs themselves were amazed at these children. For the angels are not absent when the saints perform their acts of courage, but keep them company, as St Paul confirms when he says: 'We have become a spectacle... to angels and men' (**1 Cor. 4:9**). Another example of how saints are to be distinguished is that of Elijah who, though but a single man, prevailed over a great number of false prophets when the fire came down from heaven (cf. 1 Kgs. 18:38). And Moses prevailed over all Egypt and Pharaoh the tyrant (cf. Exod. chs. 5-13). Similarly Lot (cf. Gen. ch. 19) and Noah (cf. Gen. chs. 6-7) and many others, despite their apparent weakness, overcame many powerful and notable people.

[V3] 331 St Symeon Metaphrastis Paraphrase of the Homilies of St Makarios of Egypt v Love