

How Faith Comes



What God's Word Will Do for You (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be back with you again today, sharing with you the wonderful secrets of "What God's Word Will Do for You."

Yesterday I spoke about the nature of God's Word. I said that God's word is alive, energetic, penetrating. That God's Word and God's Spirit, working together, contain in them the total creative power of God. But I said also that the results that God's Word will produce in us depend on the way we respond to it. To receive the results that God intends, we must put aside filthiness and wickedness and receive it with humility, as being indeed a message that is not merely of human origin, but comes to us direct from God Himself.

Today I'm going to speak to you about the first specific result that God's Word will produce in us, and the result is faith. I'm going to begin by sharing with you out of my own personal experience. I'm going to tell you just how I myself learned this lesson.

In World War II, I was serving as a hospital attendant with the British forces in North Africa and I became sick. I laid in hospital month after month and I came to realize that the doctors did not have the means to heal me in that climate, in those conditions.

I had recently come to know the Lord in a personal way and I'd come to believe that the Bible was indeed the Word of God. But there were many, many things in the Bible that God had not yet opened up to me. and so as I lay in that hospital bed day after day, week after week, and month after month, I really plunged into what John Bunyan calls the "Slough of Despond"—the dark lonely valley of despair.

I lay there thinking to myself, "I know if I had faith God would heal me." But the next thing I always said to myself was, "But I don't have faith." And when I said that, "I don't have faith," there I was right down in that dark lonely valley.

But one day, as I was sitting up in bed with my Bible propped on my knees, a brilliant piercing ray of light from God penetrated that darkness and brought hope to me. Now I'm going to tell you where that ray of light came from. I had in front of me the bible opened to the tenth chapter of Romans and in the 17th verse I read these words:

> "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (NAS)

There were two words that leaped out of the page at me: "faith comes." I said that to myself over and over again: "Faith comes... faith comes. If you don't have it, you can get it. There is a way that faith will come."

Then I went back and looked at that verse over and over again and I analyzed what it was saying to me and I saw this: that in God's dealings with us to being us to faith there are three successive stages. First of all, we have God's Word. The next stage is hearing: we have to hear God's Word. We have to open up our whole heart and mind and just listen to what God is saying and, in a certain sense, exclude everything else. Let God talk to us through His Word. And then, out of that process of hearing, faith comes. So those are the three stages: God's Word, hearing, and then faith.

Now I want to tell you that that result is guaranteed. If you do not have faith, if you're struggling for faith, if you are in that dark and lonely valley, I want to tell you this: "faith comes."

I want to say just one more thing about that verse. The word that we have there for the Word of Christ, the Greek word rhema. Now I happened to have studied Greek and be qualified to teach it at the university level. Rhema means specifically "a word that is spoken." That's obvious when you think that it says "hearing." Because if a word isn't spoken, you can't hear it. So it's not just talking about reading your Bible and seeing black marks on white paper in front of you, but somehow those black marks have got to be transformed into a voice that you can hear. Faith comes by hearing, not just by reading the Bible. What is it that transforms those black marks into a living voice that speaks to you personally? The answer is, of course, it's the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit quickens God's Word, makes it individually real and personal to you, then as you listen to that imparted to you by the Holy Spirit, faith comes.

And the Holy Spirit is so wise. He knows just the Word you need at any given moment. He directs you to that Word and then He makes it live for you. And you hear in that Word the very voice of the living God speaking to you personally. And out of listening to that voice faith comes. Faith for whatever it is you need at that time, and that God wants you to have.

Now I want to give you one of the most beautiful examples in Scripture of how faith comes through hearing the Word of God. I'm going to give you the example of the Virgin Mary. I'm sure the story is familiar to you how she was there in the little village of Nazareth. And one day an angel from God appeared to her with a message from God. I'm going to read just part of that incident in Luke 1, beginning at verse 30:

> "And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.' And Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' And the angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God. For nothing will be impossible with God.' And Mary said, 'Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.' And the angel departed from her." (NAS)

Now I believe that incident is the key to the most remarkable miracle that ever happened in the experience of a human being. Of course this is a matter of opinion. But I believe that when Jesus the Son of God was born of the Virgin Mary, the virgin experienced the greatest miracle that's every happened in the life of a human being. And I want to show you the key to that miracle.

First of all, the angel came with a word from God, a rhema, a spoken word. Something that Mary herself would never have dreamed of. If she had sat there and prayed for months, it would never have entered her head what God promised her. So the initiative was with God. God's purpose for her was much higher than she could ever have imagined or worked out for herself. and it came to her in the form of that word, that rhema, that spoken word.

The first thing that happened was Mary received the rhema. She opened her heart. She didn't resist. She didn't argue. She didn't explain that it was quite impossible. She said, "Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; be it done to me according to you word." So she opened her heart to God's Word, to God's rhema, His spoken word.

Secondly, the rhema imparted to her faith. Do you remember what we said from Romans 10:17, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." So when we open our hearts and we allow in that word, it imparts to us faith.

The third stage in Mary's experience was this: her faith released the miracle-working power of God that was in the Word that God had sent her. The angel said, "Nothing will be impossible with God." But the Greek says, "No spoken word of God will be void of power." That's a more literal translation. Or, to turn it around and put it positively, every spoken word of God contains in it the power for its fulfillment. So when we

receive it, it imparts faith. And our faith, in turn, unlocks the miracle-working power of God that's in that word.

And so this is a most beautiful and perfect example of how faith comes. Faith comes through the rhema, the Word of God, that the Holy Spirit quickens to us. That the Holy Spirit makes alive and real and personal. As we receive that Word, it imparts faith and then our faith releases the power that's in its word to do what God has promised. Every word of God, every spoken word of God, every word that comes to us direct from God, contains in it the power of its own fulfillment.

Now, let me ask one question before I close my talk today. Why is faith so important? The answer is stated in Hebrews 11:6:

> "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." (NAS)

God demands faith and He will not vary His demand. But God is so gracious and merciful that not only does He demand faith, but He shows us how to receive faith. He makes it available to us. So He enables us to fulfill or to meet His demands.

How does faith come? I'm going to say it once more before I close this talk. I want to leave it with you. Faith comes by hearing the spoken word of God. The word that God the Holy Spirit quickens to you and makes it individual and personal to you. If you will receive it, that will impart faith to you. And the faith will release the power that is in God's Word to accomplish what He promises.

Now our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. I'll continue to share with you on "What God's Word Will Do for You." The specific subject I'll deal with tomorrow will be "The New Birth."

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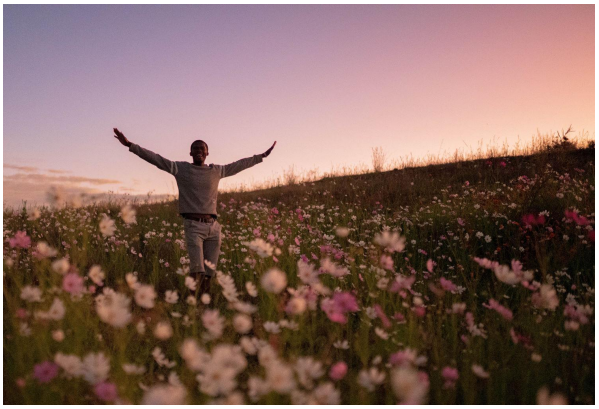

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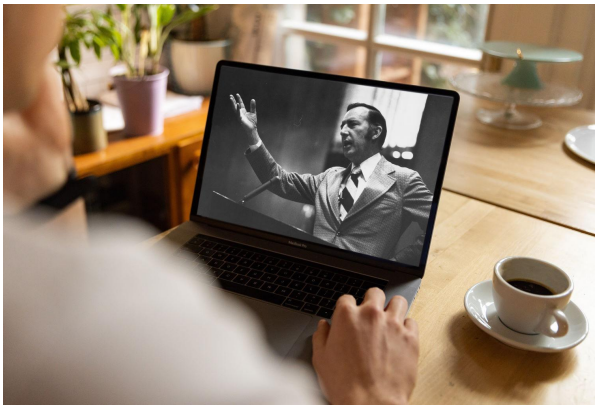

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