

The Gift of Faith



Gifts of the Spirit (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again. All this week I've been sharing with you on the precious and wonderful gifts of the Holy Spirit. In my last three talks I've been dealing with the three gifts of revelation: the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, distinguishing (or discerning) of spirits.

Today I'm going to speak about the first gift of power, the gift of faith. In many cases I've found by experience that this gift of faith is a kind of stepping stone to bring us into the exercise of the other two gifts of power; that is, the effecting or working of miracles and the gifts of healings.

When I turn now to the gift of faith, it is necessary, first of all, for me to point out that faith is presented in the New Testament in a number of different forms. And it is necessary to distinguish between the various forms of faith. I would point out three main different forms of faith. First of all, what I call "faith to live by." Paul says, "The just [or the righteous] shall live by his faith." This faith is an ongoing, personal relationship of commitment to God and it supplies the ability and motivation and the direction for the whole Christian life. This is a kind of faith that every Christian has to have to be a Christian.

Then there's the fruit of faith which is listed in Galatians 5. Now, fruit is always an aspect of character. And in due course in my talks I'm going to be dealing with the fruit of the Spirit. But that's not what I am speaking about today.

The third kind of faith is the gift of faith. The supernatural faith, a faith above the human level, God own faith which is imparted according to the sovereign will of God by the Holy Spirit. In a certain sense the gift of faith is analogous to the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge. It's a supernatural impartation of just a tiny portion of God's own faith to accomplish God's purpose in a certain situation. Jesus spoke at one point about faith like a mustard seed. So this is a mustard seed of God's faith that He imparts to us.

I want to begin with an example from the ministry of Jesus. In Mark 11:

> "And on the next day, when they had departed from Bethany, He [that's Jesus] became hungry. And seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if perhaps

> He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. And He answered and said to it [He spoke to the fig tree], 'May no one ever eat fruit from you again.' And His disciples were listening." (NAS)

Then a little later on in the chapter, we find what happened when they passed the fig tree again the next day.

> "And as they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up. And being reminded, Peter said to Him, 'Rabbi, behold, the fig tree which You cursed has withered.' And Jesus answered saying to them, 'Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast in the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him.'" (NAS)

I want to point out just some simple facts about that incident. First of all, Jesus simply spoke to the tree. He didn't do anything else. But He spoke with faith and what He said happened. When He was questioned about it by His disciples, He answered them "Have faith in God." Now that's the English translation, but the original Greek what it actually says literally is "Have the faith of God," or "Have God's faith." And that's the real explanation. This gift is God's faith. It's a tiny mustard seed of God's faith imparted at a given moment for a specific purpose. It's supernatural faith. It's not faith on the human level, it's divine faith, supernaturally imparted by the Holy Spirit. It's rather like the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge. It's a mustard seed of faith.

Then Jesus said, "When you have that kind of faith, you can say to a mountain, 'Be removed and cast into the sea,' and it will happen." Whatever you say with that kind of faith is just as effective as if God said it Himself, because it's God's own faith. And a mustard seed can move a mountain. You see, the emphasis there is not on the quantity of faith, but on the quality. It is God's own faith it just takes a mustard seed to move a mountain.

Now I want to give you some other examples of this gift of faith from the New Testament. It's the gift that is normally exercised in the casting out of evil spirits. Normally it's a word spoken in faith that produces this result. For instance, it says about the ministry of Jesus in Matthew 8:16:

> "And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill." (NAS)

When He confronted evil spirits, He spoke to them the word of faith and authority, they had to obey them.

Yesterday I was speaking to you about the gift of discerning of spirits and I referred to the incident in Acts 16 where Paul and his company were followed by the slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and we read there how Paul spoke to the spirit. He said, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." The spirit had to obey him. He spoke with divine faith, with divine authority.

Also there are a number of cases in the New Testament of persons being raised from the dead, being brought back to life. In almost every case you will find it was this gift of faith that produced this result. For instance, Jesus met the funeral procession of the son of the widow of Nain, he stopped the procession, touched the bier and said, "Young man, I say to you, arise!" The dead man sat up and began to speak. The word of authority and faith brought the man back to life.

Again, when Jesus stood outside the tomb of Lazarus who had lain four days in the tomb, Jesus simply cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" And immediately the dead man began to move out of the tomb. The gift of faith expressed in a word of authority.

And again in Acts 9:40, Peter is confronted by Tabitha lying dead on a bed in the upper room. All the widows are mourning and weeping. Peter goes up by himself, kneels down, prays, and he turns to the body and says, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes and when she saw Peter she sat up.

So you see that in almost every case of a person being raised from the dead, the gift that produced that result, is the gift of faith.

Now I am going to give an example from my personal experience. I want to say and I hope you will be able to receive it, that while I was serving the Lord in Africa some years ago, my first wife and I saw two cases of students in our college who had died and were brought back to life. So I know that that still happens today. But I am not going to speak about that. I am going to take another example of my own ministry of the gift of faith which is a rather unusual one. I hope you will be able to receive it. I hope we will still be friends after I have told you this incident.

I was serving as a minister of a certain church in Chicago and right on the corner where the church was located there was a liquor store. It was built absolutely wall to wall with the

church. Now it not merely sold liquor, but it dealt with prostitution, peddled drugs, it was a very wicked and evil place and like a sore in the whole neighborhood.

About October one year, we were having a prayer meeting in the church and somebody mentioned the problem of this liquor store. A little later in the course of the prayer meeting without premeditation, as I was praying I said, "I put the curse of God upon that liquor store in the name of Jesus." And really I didn't think more about it.

About a month later, I was asleep out in Park Ridge where we were living at the time. It was about 2 a.m. and the phone rang and I was awakened and there was a very agitated voice on the other end of the phone saying, "Brother Prince, Brother Prince, the church is burning down!" So I leapt out of bed and put on some clothes. It was a bitterly cold night. I drove down into Chicago and there was the whole sky filled with flames and smoke and they were all over the church. But when I got right up close, I noticed that the church actually was not on fire, it was the liquor store. And the wind was blowing north from the lake towards the church and the flames were billowing over the church. But suddenly the winds changed 180 degrees and blew the flames away from the church. The liquor store was demolished, the church was completely unharmed except for smoke damage which was easily remedied.

And as I really meditated on what God had done, I was filled with a sense of fear and awe. Let me mention that the chief of Chicago's fire brigade, when he inspected the situation and analyzed what had happened, said to the elder of the church in his own worldly language, "You must be on good terms with the Man upstairs." Because that sudden, dramatic change of the wind had saved the church from certain destruction by fire.

Afterwards, I said to myself, "I'm going to have to be pretty careful how I pray." I didn't feel an exalted sense of my own importance and power, I felt a tremendous sense of responsibility. I realized that in a certain sense, God has committed to us a kind of power that's almost frightening. You remember we read how Jesus cursed the fig tree and it withered from the roots? And Jesus said specifically to His disciples, "You can do what is done to the fig tree. You can even say to a mountain, 'Be removed and cast into the sea.' If you have the right kind of faith, God's faith, whatever you say will happen."

So that's just a little picture of the gift of faith and the way it works.

Now I am going to have to close for today, but I'll be back with you again next week at the same time, Monday through Friday. I'll continue to speak about these wonderful gifts of the Holy Spirit. I still have five more of these spiritual gifts to tell you about next week.

Radio Program

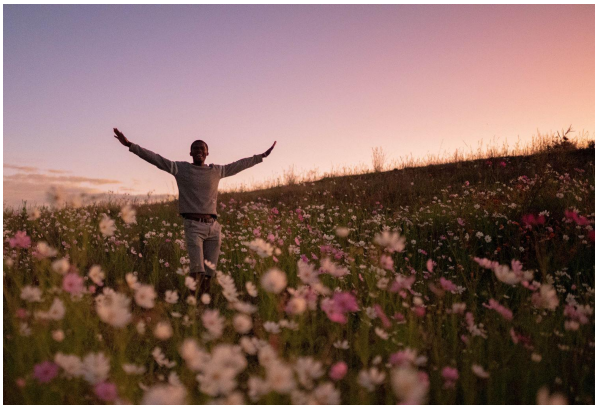
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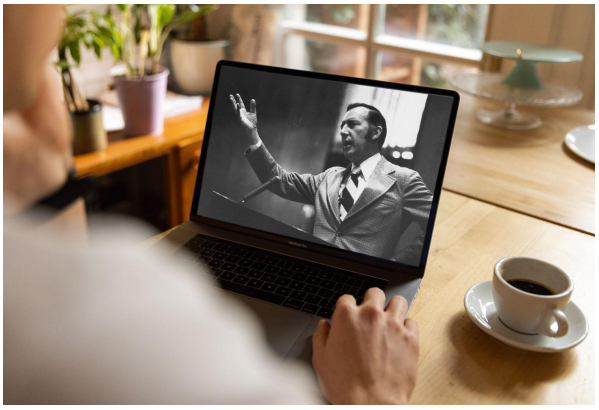
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