

How Faith Comes



Faith (Part 6)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you some of the Keys to Successful Living that God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry.

First, let me say "Thank you" to those of you who have been writing to me. Before I finish this talk we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. Feel free to share with us your personal needs, your problems, your prayer requests.

All last week I was sharing with you on the rich and exciting theme of faith, and this week I'm going to continue with the same theme. There's so much more to discover. In particular, today I'm going to share with you one of the most important secrets that I've learned in my long walk with the Lord. I'm going to tell you how faith comes. For our first Scripture, we'll turn to Romans 10:17, which really is the key Scripture for this particular aspect of God's truth.

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

Notice first of all, that faith comes. Lay hold of that fact. Faith comes. If you don't have it, you can get it. You don't need to stay without it, it comes. How does it come? It comes by hearing. By hearing what? The word of Christ.

It's important to notice that the word is "hearing," not "reading." Faith does not necessarily come just by reading your Bible. Many people read the Bible and really acquire little or no faith from just reading the Bible. The Scripture doesn't say faith comes by reading, it says "faith comes by hearing," and that's an important difference. You can't hear a Bible by just looking at its pages. A Bible consists of black marks on white paper. You can't hear them. So something else has to happen. Those black marks on the white paper have to become something that you can hear, a spoken word. And incidentally, that's the real meaning of the word. In Greek, that's translated "the word of Christ." It means a spoken word specifically. So faith comes by hearing God's word spoken. Of course, God's Word may be spoken through a preacher, but that's not the only way that it comes. And again, you may

listen to a preacher and still not acquire faith.

What is it that makes the Bible, the Scripture, a spoken word that contains the voice of God? The answer is: there's only one thing that can produce that result and that is the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is not in it, there will be no faith. Ultimately, the Holy Spirit is the source of faith. Faith comes from hearing God's Word when it's quickened, made alive and made personal and direct to us by the Holy Spirit. So there are three stages in this process. First of all, God's Word comes to us by the Holy Spirit. Out of God's Word there develops hearing, an attitude of careful attention, focused attention, on what the Spirit of God is saying through the Word of God. And out of that hearing, that focused attention, there comes faith. So there are the three stages in the process: God's Word brought to us through the Holy Spirit, our response which is hearing the Word that God brings, and the result which is faith.

Now, hearing is not just idly letting something pass your ears but it is receiving something within by our positive response and that's what we have to cultivate, the attitude of hearing as God speaks to us through His Word. Many years ago, I saw a remarkable demonstration of this truth. I was preaching, at that time, in a street meeting in the center of London. There was a group of maybe a hundred people gathered around listening, some of whom were believers supporting the meeting. It was a fine autumn evening and a young man in his early twenties was sauntering past, not interested in spiritual things, that was very obvious. He stopped for a moment to hear what I was saying and a kind of sneer came across his face as if he was to say, "What foolishness." But he didn't move on. He stood and listened and, all the time I was speaking, I was watching his face. And I saw after a while the sneer moved off his face and he began to be attentive. And there was an attitude of attention and even respect. When I came to the end of my message, I said that if there were those who did not know Jesus Christ in a personal way, I was going to lead them in a prayer and that if they wanted to know Jesus in a personal way, while I prayed the prayer out loud, they could pray it under their breath, to themselves, sentence by sentence after me. So I led a prayer acknowledging sin, confessing faith in Jesus Christ and asking Jesus to save. When I'd opened my eyes, the first person I looked at was the young man and as soon as the meeting broke up just a moment or two later I walked over to him (I'd never met him before) and I said, "You've just prayed that prayer in your heart, haven't you?" And he said, "Yes, I did." And I said, "Do you know you're saved?" And he looked at me and he said, "Yes, I do." We didn't spend more than a few minutes together but about six months later, I was in the same situation again preaching and the young man came and stood around the ring and listened to me. Afterwards I talked to him for a while and he said, "Definitely something happened in my life. I'm a changed person. I know I'm saved." That all happened in the course of about twenty minutes in that street meeting.

Why I relate that incident is because it's a beautiful example of faith coming by hearing. First of all, he just stood by idly, not receiving anything. But the Holy Spirit began to move upon him as he stood there and he began to hear, he began to give attention, respectful attention. And as he began to hear, faith began to come. And so at the end of maybe fifteen minutes, he had enough faith to receive salvation that very evening.

So, that's the process. God's Word is brought to us by the Holy Spirit. We respond with hearing. And out of hearing develops faith. There's one advice that I want to emphasize in this connection. It's the importance of stillness. Psalm 46:10 says:

> "Be still and know that I am God..."

But the New American Standard Bible has a very interesting alternative translation:

> "Cease striving and know that I am God..."

And in the margin it says, "Let go, relax." That's the key: let go, relax, open up your being, receive and you'll get to know God. Faith will come and it will reveal God to you. We're talking about the need to be still before the Lord and hear, as the Holy Spirit speaks through the Word of God. There's a beautiful example of this in 1 Chronicles 17. David was established in his kingdom and he was living in a beautiful palace of cedar and he realized that the Ark of God's covenant was still in a tent, so he conceived the idea that he would build a temple, a permanent dwelling place for the Ark. He shared this with Nathan, the prophet, and Nathan encouraged him to go ahead, but that night the Lord spoke to Nathan and told him that that wasn't what he had planned for David and he sent Nathan back with the message, "It was good you wanted to build me a house, but that's not how it's going to be. You're not going to build Me a house," God said, "I'm going to build you a house." That's a marvelous example of how God's ways and God's thoughts are higher than ours. Well, when David received this beautiful and unexpected message from the Lord, it says that, "David went in and sat before the Lord... (NAS)." That's always gripped me. There was David, sitting before the Lord. He wasn't kneeling, he wasn't praying, he was just sitting. He was absorbing what God had sent to him through the prophet. And, as you sit before the Lord, as you absorb, as you are quiet and still, faith comes. Listen to the advice that Jesus gave about

prayer in Matthew 6:6:

> "But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you." (NAS)

What's the "inner room"? I think it's the place of stillness; the place where you are shut off from all other voices and influences and you can really hear the voice of God, and when you're in that relationship with stillness in your inner room, then God speaks to you, you receive faith, you receive revelation and your prayer has a different quality to it.

In my closing talk last week I spoke about the tremendous danger of unbelief. The main passage of warning that we looked at was taken from Hebrews 3, and I want to read part of that again. Hebrews 3:7–17:

> "Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, 'Today if you hear My voice, do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tried Me by testing Me, and saw My works for forty years. therefore I was angry with this generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; and they do not know My ways;' as I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter into My rest.' Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God.'" (NAS)

You see the error of Israel that's referred to there by the writer of Hebrews: they didn't hear God's voice. The Holy Spirit was speaking but they didn't take heed, didn't give attention, and so they didn't receive faith. Failing to receive faith, the only alternative was unbelief and unbelief cut them off from all the blessings and provisions that God had made for them. So we see there are just two opposites. On the one hand, faith comes from hearing God's voice. On the other hand, unbelief comes from not hearing God's voice. And it's only the Holy Spirit who can make the Bible, the Scripture, a living voice, a living Word from God. So faith comes as the Holy Spirit speaks to you and you open your heart and hear and receive what the Holy Spirit says and what He imparts. Out of that comes a living, real, personal faith.

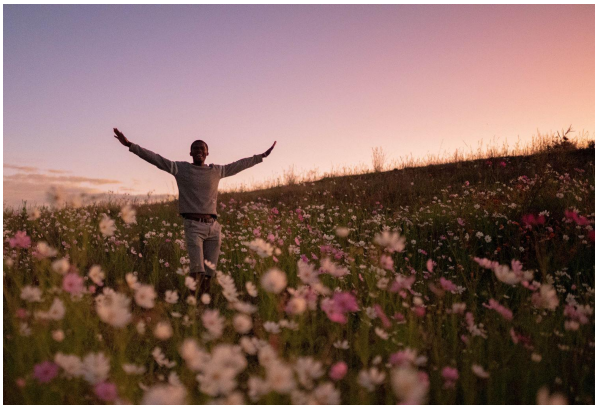
All right. Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. I'll be dealing with the three great must's of faith, three things that must go together with faith.

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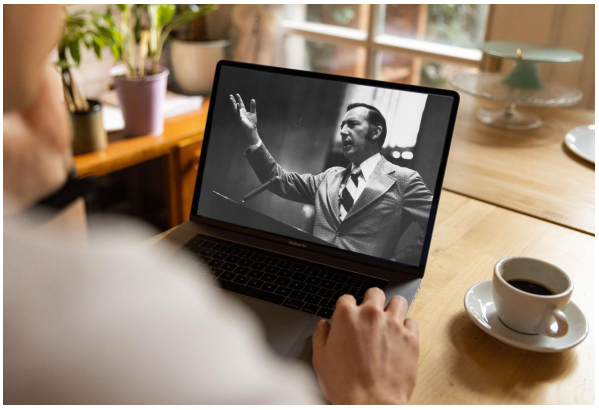
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