

Meeting Jesus



Pages From My Life's Book (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again. The main aspect of my life that I'm sharing with you this week is my personal search for truth as a young man.

From my teen years upwards, I'd always had a deep, inner conviction that somehow there must be a meaning and a purpose to life, if only I knew where to find it. I had hoped to find it in Christianity, but I'd been disappointed. Then I turned for the answer to philosophy and to various Oriental systems; in particular, yoga. But, although I was academically successful and achieved a position as a professor of philosophy at Cambridge University, I still hadn't found what I was looking for.

Then World War II broke out and I was drafted into the British Army. I bought a Bible and took that with me to study as a work of philosophy. But once again I was baffled. I couldn't find any coherent message in the Bible.

Then I met a Christian family who were different—humble, uneducated, but different. Being with them in their home, I realized two things about them: The first was that for them the Bible was a meaningful, up-to-date book; the second was that they had a real, personal relationship with God. I felt somehow cheated that after so many years at Britain's largest university I couldn't understand the Bible and they could. But I asked myself, "Is this what I've been looking for?" But when I asked that question, a number of other questions immediately came to my mind. I began to think about the implications of getting involved in whatever it was that these people had and I saw that it was something that took up their whole lives.

The questions were something like this: If you get involved in this, what will happen to your university career? What will your friends say? And worst of all, what will your family say? It was a disgrace when you became a conscientious objector, but suppose you become a religious fanatic on top of that?

So these questions somehow bombarded my mind and I walked around for a time almost unconscious of my surroundings. I was going through some kind of deep, internal conflict between the desire for what these people had and fear as to the consequences of getting involved in it, continually saying to myself, "Well, what about my career?

What about my friends? What about my family?"

But after about four or five days (I don't recall exactly how long), I reached a decisive point. I made a decision. I could sum it up this way: I don't care what happens to my career. I don't care what my friends say. I don't care what my family says. I want this thing, whatever it is. I don't understand what it is but whatever it is, I want it.

Well, then when I made that decision I thought, "Well, how do I get it?" And I decided that the only thing I could think of was to pray. So one evening quite late, I went back to the Army barrack rooms which I shared with one other soldier and I said to myself, "Now, I'm going to pray until something happens." We didn't have beds at that time, we just slept on straw mattresses on the floor. So I waited until the other soldier was stretched out and asleep on his mattress. Then I decided to pray. I had a little folding canvas stool. I placed it in front of the window, sat on the stool, placed my elbows on the windowsill and decided to pray. And, once more I was baffled.

I realized that I had no idea how to pray. I didn't know whom to pray to, I didn't know what to say, I just couldn't begin. And I suppose I sat there on that stool for maybe one hour as darkness descended because it was the middle of the summer, it became dark only very late at night. And there in the darkness, sitting on the stool, with my elbows on the windowsill, I was trying to pray. And, once again I was baffled.

And then something happened that I find hard to explain. Just when I was ready to give up, an unknown power contacted me, made itself real to me. And when I say a power, I'm talking about something that was extremely powerful. The first thing that happened was my arms began to go up in the air and, as they went up in the air under the influence of this power, I noticed that the palms were upwards, towards the ceiling. And something in me said, "Now why with the palms upward?" And something else within me answered, "Power from on high." I didn't even know that phrase was in the Bible, "Power from on high." And then I realized suddenly, by a kind of revelation that I'd been in touch with a power from below but never up to this time in my life had I made contact with this power from on high.

And then in the moving of this power upon me, I became aware of a person. It was as though through the power a person was coming to me. I didn't know who the person was, but I knew that this was the person who had the answer for me. And words began to come out of my mouth that I was not choosing. I began to say, "Unless you bless me, I will not let you go!" And when I got to those words, "I will not let you go!", something took over and I couldn't stop saying them. "I will not let you go! I will not let you go! I will not let you go!" And then this mysterious power that was moving my arms upward took my whole body and, as it were, lifted me off that stool and deposited me on the floor with my arms still in the air and still saying, "I will not let you go! I will not let you go, unless you bless me!" And somehow I knew that I had met a person for the first time, a person whom I'd never met and never known before, the person who was the answer to my searching.

As I lay there on the floor with my arms in the air speaking to this unknown person for the first time in my life, this power seemed to flow over me like a sea. In fact, I seemed to be submerged beneath this mysterious, invisible, but very real power. It was going over me like waves of the sea.

And then something else happened. Something broke loose inside me right in the innermost part of my being, as though there was a release, as though a knot that had been tied there for many years was undone. And this power began to flow out of my own body like a river carrying all sorts of debris and unclean things before it. It was like—I pictured a river that had broken loose and was carrying everything before it, a flood of all sorts of things. It was as though unknown, evil forces were being flushed out of my body by this river—this strange, mysterious river of power. I was fearful. I really didn't know where I was being carried, what was going to happen next. And yet, I kept saying to myself, "I've got this far. If I try to stop now, I may never get this far again." Strange things happened inside me. I began to sob. Tears flowed out of me. I had no idea what I was sobbing about. I had no consciousness in my mind of anything that I needed to cry about but the tears flowed out of me. That was strange enough, but after maybe an hour of this river flowing through me, the tears began to change to laughter. And again, I had no conscious reason to be laughing. In fact, it wasn't really I who was laughing. Laughter was somehow just flowing out through me and I felt myself, as it were, submerging in this sea of laughter.

And then, over the top of my head, from the floor, I saw the blanket move where the other soldier was stretched out asleep. And gradually he emerged from under the blanket. He was wearing only his underclothes. He got to his feet and rather slowly and reluctantly he walked towards me. He walked around me two or three times and I remember him saying, "I don't know what to do with you. I suppose it's no good throwing water over you." And I couldn't answer him but something inside me said, "Even water wouldn't put this out!"

And then a strange thing happened. Words came to me, I didn't know where they came from, that "man must not

blaspheme against the Holy Spirit." And, contrary to all my reasoning, I knew that what was in me was the Holy Spirit. And so I decided that I wouldn't allow my friend to say anything wrong about it. With great difficulty I got onto my knees, crawled to my mattress, took my place in it, drew the blanket up over me and lay there but still this laughter was flowing through me.

And in that way, somehow or other, I came to know that truth is a person. I'd always been looking for an abstraction. I'd been looking for a theory. I'd been looking for an explanation. But now I'd found a person. And without any process of reasoning, I knew that that person was Jesus of Nazareth. From that day to this, I have never doubted that Jesus is alive. I had discovered what I had so long failed to understand, that truth is not just an abstraction, it's not just a religion, it's not just a creed, but it's a person. And in Jesus I resolved that awful conflict that had troubled me for so many years between the ideal and the actual. In Jesus I discovered the ideal is actual. His life, His words, His teaching, but above all His person—they were the answer to that unsatisfied craving that had driven me for so many years.

Well, our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll continue where I left off. I'll tell you the tremendous changes that immediately took place in my life.

Radio Program

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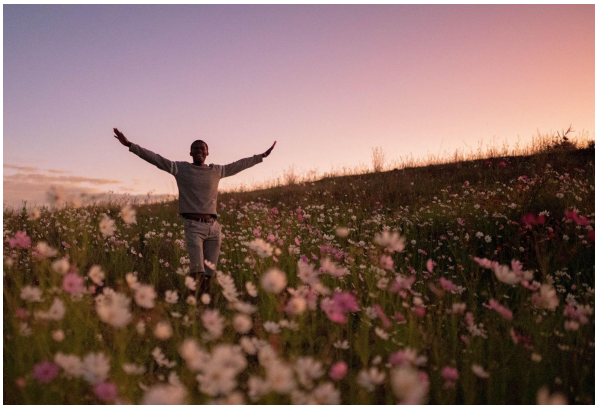
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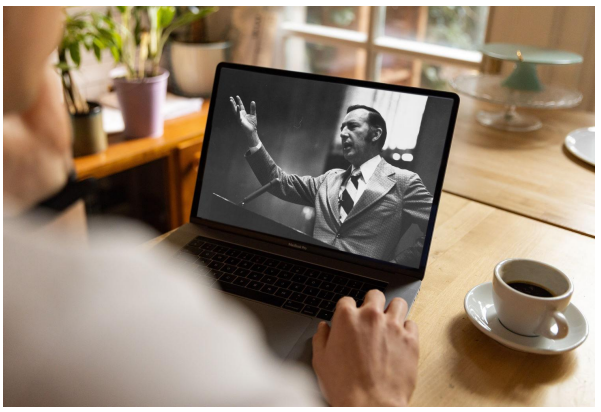
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