

Results of Meeting Jesus



Pages From My Life's Book (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

This week I have been sharing with you my personal search for truth as a young man. From my teen years upwards, I had always had an inner conviction that somehow there must be a meaning and a purpose to life, if only I knew where to find it. I looked for the answer in Christianity as I knew it, but failed to find it there. Then I looked in philosophy and yoga but again, I was disappointed. When World War II broke out, and I was drafted into the British Army as a hospital attendant, I took a Bible with me hoping to find the answer in it. But once again, I was disappointed. I could not 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.

Eventually, I decided to pray and ask God for whatever this family had. Once again, I was baffled and on the point of giving up. Then, suddenly, I made contact with two things: a power and a person. Finally, I identified both the power and the person. The power was the Holy Spirit; the person was Jesus. I discovered that truth is a person and the person is Jesus of Nazareth.

Today I'm going to share with you the tremendous changes that immediately took place in my life as the result of meeting Jesus. I want to describe these changes as far as possible in an objective way.

The first change was that I have never been able to doubt, since that time, that Jesus is alive. I might be tempted to disobey Him or be disloyal to Him, but I absolutely cannot doubt that Jesus is alive. He rose from the dead and, from that moment until now, this has been the most important single fact in my life—that Jesus of Nazareth, the One who hung on a cross, was buried in a stone tomb, is alive and I know Him. This is not the result of reasoning. It is not the result of study. It is not the result of ministerial training. It is the result of an encounter. I met Him. He met me. And I know Him. Every day I know Him. Every hour I am conscious of His presence.

The second main result that I would point out was that prayer became as natural to me as breathing. The night that I tried to pray until the Holy Spirit came into my life, I didn't know how to pray, I didn't know what words to say, I didn't know whom to pray to. The next day, as I went about my ordinary military duties, I discovered that I was just praying all the time. I didn't have to make an effort. Each breath was a prayer. I remember going to a tap to draw some water to drink. Now, normally that would have been a very ordinary thing to do and I would have attached no importance to it, but I just could not drink that water till I had thanked God for it. It seemed so natural to talk to God, to thank Him. I had always thought of prayer as something that you have to do in a religious building and in some kind of religious attitude, but I had discovered that prayer is communication with God, and that, since the Holy Spirit came into me, it was easy, as natural for me to communicate with God. And this communication with God gave me a source of inner strength. No matter what was going on around me, I had this inner communication with God going on all the time that I was awake.

The third result that I would point out was that the Bible suddenly became a meaningful book. I had been reading it for nine months trying to make sense of it. I'd got from the beginning of Genesis to somewhere in the book of Job. I'd made quite a lot of progress as far as reading was concerned but I couldn't classify the book. I couldn't understand it. I didn't know what it was saying. The next day after I had met Jesus and the Holy Spirit had come into my life, there was a total, immediate change in my relationship to the Bible. This was something gradual, it was not the result of a process, it didn't come from an intellectual struggle, it came from this relationship. I remember that I decided I'd go on reading where I had stopped, somewhere in the book of Job, and so I was turning through the pages of my bible and I happened to open, without seeking it, at Psalm 126 and I read the first two verses:

> "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing..."

And when I read those words, "Then was our mouth filled with laughter," my mind instantly went back to my experience the previous night when that river of laughter had flowed out through me as the Holy Spirit came upon me and I saw how accurate the description. It didn't say, "We laughed," it said, "our mouth was filled with laughter." It was as though the laughter came from another source and filled them and flowed out through their mouths. And I saw that that was exactly what had happened to me. And I have to confess, my reaction was, "Why did I go to church all those years and no one ever tell me that this kind of thing is in the Bible?" And, as I went on reading the Bible then, after that, again and again I found that the things that were happening in my life through the Holy Spirit were described there in the Bible. In fact, I found that there was no other place to which I could go for a meaningful explanation of what was happening in my life.

I would have to say this: That from that day until this, in most cases, when I begin to read the Bible it's like this: it is as if there are just two persons in the universe, God and me, and the Bible is God speaking to me.

I've never had a theological or an intellectual problem about believing that the Bible is the Word of God since I got to know the author. As a matter of fact, with my intellectual background, I would have to say that I personally do not feel in any way intellectually inferior to people who don't believe the Bible. I was a professional logician, I excelled in that particular field, and I would have to say, on the basis of my own examination, the Bible is the most intellectually sound and logical book that I have ever read. And for me, it's a meaningful book. It's the Word of God. It's a personal God speaking to me with a living voice, as a person.

Let me now relate two other objective results of my meeting with Jesus, two things that changed my life. The first one that I'm going to mention now is, in a certain sense, rather comical but it's very real. The next evening, after I'd had this encounter with Jesus, I went, as my custom was, to the pub, the bar, the saloon, to get my usual quota of whiskey. I had no moral or religious scruples about drinking whiskey. In fact, I'm not trying to press that point at all. But when I got to the door of the pub intending to walk in, the most extraordinary thing happened—my legs locked. And no matter how hard I tried, I could not get them to carry my body into that place. At first I felt indignant and frustrated. But then I suddenly realized that I no longer was interested in what that place had to offer. I no longer needed whiskey to relax. I'd found something that was deep and permanent and its effects were far more enduring than those of some glasses of whiskey. So I just turned around and walked out of that place. That mysterious power that had come upon me the previous evening had taken control of my legs and, as it were, forbade my legs to walk into that place.

The final result that I will mention I will express in the words of Jesus in John 7:37–39. It says:

> "...on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, `From his innermost being shall flow

> rivers of living water." But in this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

Let me go into those words, "If any man is thirsty..." Looking back I realized that I had been a thirsty man for many years but I didn't know where to quench my thirst. You see, the Bible reveals that man is made up of three elements: spirit, soul and body. Now the predominant feature of Plato's teaching is his emphasis on the soul. So I had sought satisfaction for my soul in many different ways: in philosophy, in music, in art, in travel. I sought satisfaction for my body in many ways. But when I sought all those satisfactions, I remained unsatisfied.

As a result of this experience I realized that the part of me that was thirsty was not my soul or my body, but my spirit. And that when the Holy Spirit came in, instantly He supplied the satisfaction for that thirst. And I became just like Jesus said, "a channel for rivers of water." But that's what happened in my life.

Our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. Next week I'll be opening up some more pages of my life's book. My theme next week will be "Discipled in the Desert." I'll be speaking about three years that I spent in the deserts of North Africa.

But please write and let me know that you have been helped by this radio ministry. Upon receipt of your letter, we will send you a copy of a talk I gave in a large university where the philosophy professors had ridiculed those who believed in God and the students had asked for a Christian minister to respond to their attack. My talk was entitled, "Philosophy, the Bible, and the Supernatural."

Also we'll tell you how you can order a single, sixty-minute cassette entitled "Search for Truth," that contains all five talks that I've been giving this week. Stay tuned now for this information.

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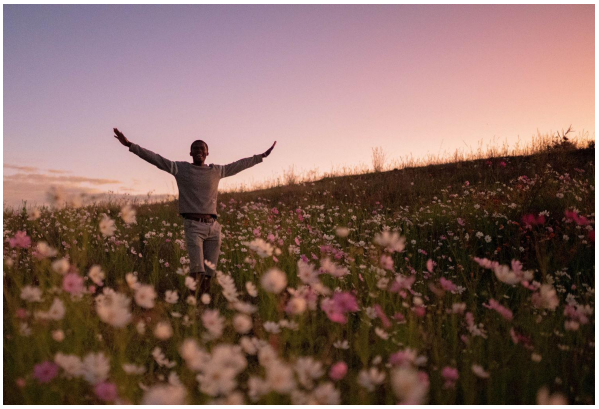
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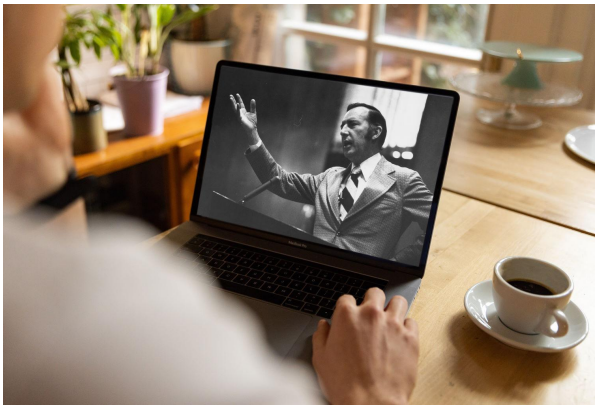
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