

The First Barrier: Ignorance



Identification (Part 17)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we continue to explore together all the treasures contained in the special theme that we've been studying over this Easter season: the theme of Identification.

In my talk yesterday I emphasized that the death of Jesus on the cross was not an accident, but the fulfillment of a divine purpose, conceived in eternity, then worked out on the stage of human history.

This divine purpose was worked out through a two-way identification, which is really the theme that I have been dealing with for the past three weeks, this theme of identification, a two-way identification. First, Jesus was identified with us in our sin and all its consequences. He became the sin offering, He became the last Adam. As a representative of the whole human race He took upon Him all the evil that was due to our entire race. That's the first side of the identification. Finally He died our death. He tasted death for every man.

Then the other side of the coin, the opposite side of identification, through faith in His death on our behalf we are invited to enter into all that followed for Him after death; that is burial which is baptism, then resurrection and then ascension to the very throne of God. We're invited, actually, to share the throne with Jesus.

Now in my talks today and throughout the rest of this week, I'm going to explain just how you can make these truths work in your own daily living. It's one thing to hear them, it's one thing to say, "Amen," it's one thing to say, "That's wonderful!" but it's another thing, so to grasp these truths, that you can apply them and make them work in your daily living. That's what really matters and that's going to be the purpose and thrust of my talks throughout this week, how you can make these truths real in your own life.

I believe there are two great barriers that commonly keep God's people from their inheritance, from entering into all God has provided for us through the death of Jesus. These two great barriers are first, ignorance and second unbelief.

Today I'm going to deal with the first of these barriers, the barrier of ignorance. This is no new problem. The problem of ignorance already troubled God's people under the old covenant. Under the old covenant, too, God had made total provision for the needs of all His people that they might live in peace, in prosperity, in health, in joy and in thankful worship and praise to God. But because of ignorance, the majority of God's people never enjoyed God's provision. I'll just read you two passages from the prophets that emphasize this problem of ignorance. The first is in Isaiah 5:13, where God says:

> "Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge..." (KJV)

They were living as captives, as slaves, as oppressed, when they should have been living as free, and ruling as kings with God. They had gone into a satanic captivity because they had no knowledge.

And then the same thought in Hosea chapter 4 verse 6, where God says:

> "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..." (NASB)

So that was there initial basic problem, lack of knowledge. Lack of knowledge of God's word, lack of knowledge of God's provision, lack of knowledge of how to live in God's provision.

Now this carries over into the New Testament. The same problem troubles God's people in the New Testament just as it did in the Old. The problem of ignorance, of lack of knowledge. I want to read the words of Paul in Colossians chapter 2, verses 1 through 4, where we can see he is struggling against this spiritual ignorance which is such a tremendous, almost universal problem to the people of God. He speaks about a struggle for them to come into the knowledge and understanding of what God has provided. This is what he says:

> "I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ. [See, Paul's purpose there that they may have the full riches of complete understanding and that they may know the mystery, the hidden secret provision of God which is in Christ. And then Paul goes on to say of Christ:] in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. [We must continually bear in mind that all the treasures of God's wisdom and knowledge are contained in Jesus. We never need to look outside of Jesus. And Paul goes on to say:] I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine sounding arguments." (NIV)

There's a lot of fine sounding language that's used from pulpits and in churches which sounds very good, sounds very learned, but it just doesn't open up for us the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which are hidden in Christ. And so we are kept from our real inheritance.

This was a problem in the time of Jesus and Jesus rebuked the teachers of the law because they were not meeting the needs of God's people. In Luke 11:52, He says:

> "Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered and you have hindered those who were entering." (NIV)

That's a terrible condemnation, but I'm afraid it's true of many who profess to interpret the truth of the gospel today. They have taken away the key of knowledge, they haven't entered in themselves, they're not living in the fullness of God's provision, and they actually hinder those who would try to enter in with their find sounding arguments and reasoning, all of which is not in line with the simple truth of the gospel of Jesus. They've taken away the key.

What is the key? I believe the key is the cross. That's the only key that we can use to enter into the fullness of God's provision in Christ. If we don't avail ourselves of what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross, then we have not key. The treasures are there but we can't enter it. And anyone who in any way takes away from the truths revealed in scripture concerning the death of Jesus on the cross and its purpose, anyone who does that is taking away the key of knowledge and keeping God's people from their inheritance.

How then can we enter into this knowledge which is so essential? I believe the answer is simple and practical. We must give ourselves to the study of God's Word. The knowledge is contained in God's Word, the Bible, it is not contained anywhere else. There is no other book which is a substitute for the Bible. I want to read to you three passages from the book of Proverbs which emphasize our need for this kind of knowledge. The first is in Proverbs, chapter 2, verses 1 through 6, and I want you to understand as I speak these

words, the tremendous emphasis that these words place on making the appropriate effort to receive what God has for us in His Word. And these words are spoken to the child of God, by God Himself, they begin with the words, "My son…"

> "My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding." (NIV)

There's a tremendous build up of words, all of which indicate tremendous earnestness and concentrated effort to achieve this knowledge. There are eight successive phrases that are used: to accept, to store up, to turn your ear, to apply your heart, to call out, to cry aloud, to look for, to search for. In eight different ways God says, "If you're going to get this kind of knowledge, you're going to have to devote yourself with your whole heart to finding it. It's in My Word. It's available. You've got to get it."

And then in the next chapter of Proverbs, Proverbs chapter 3, verses 1 and 2, again it's addressed to the child of God:

> "My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity." (NIV)

The emphasis there is not so much on acquiring as on retaining. The warnings are, "Do not forget, but keep." How important that is. And then in the next chapter of Proverbs chapter 4, again the same emphasis. Proverbs 4:4-5:

> "Lay hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands and you will live. Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget or swerve from them." (NIV)

The language could hardly be more emphatic. Just note the words that are used. "Lay hold… keep… get." Those are the positives. The negatives, "Do not forget… do not swerve from…" In other words, it's all there in the Word of God. It's available, but it's not granted to those who do not apply themselves. We have to apply our heart, we have to turn our ear, we have to call out, we have to cry out, we have to look for, we have to search as for hidden treasure. It's something so precious and wonderful that God will make it available to one's heart attitude is right, to those who earnestly seek Him. The scripture says in the New Testament, "God is a rewarder of those who earnestly seek Him. It's this earnest seeking of the truth of God's Word, prizing it above all other forms of knowledge, that's the way into this inheritance of ours in Christ.

And I want to say frankly, I cannot think of any better way that you could acquire this knowledge than by obtaining the cassettes of this series of messages of mine on identification. You will hear at the end of this talk how you may obtain those cassettes. I believe just the kind of knowledge that you need, recapitulated emphasized, clear, brief and to the point, is found in these cassettes. I recommend you to obtain them.

Well, our time is up for today but I'll be back again with you tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be dealing with the second great barrier which is unbelief.

Radio Program

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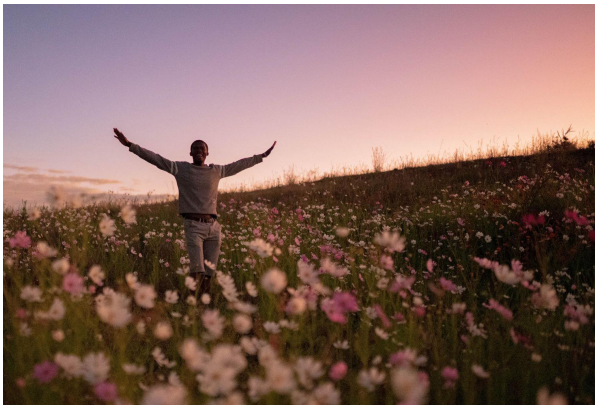

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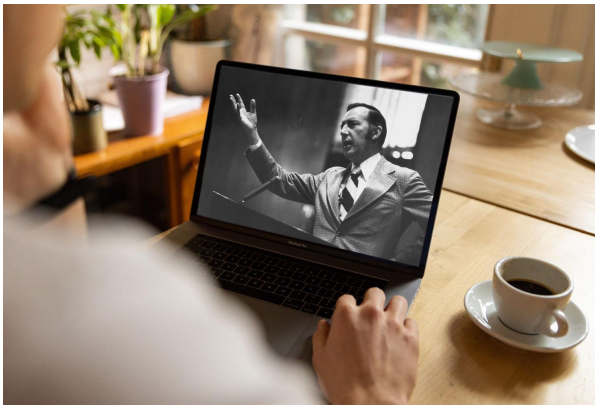

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