

The Word and the Spirit



The Power of Proclamation (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

I'll just give you a few Scriptures revealing the power of the word of God. Psalm 33:6:

> "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth."

But the Hebrew word translated breath is the normal word for spirit. Ruach. So all creation took place through two agents: the word of God and the Spirit of God. Everything that exists or has ever existed or will ever exist owes its origin to just two forces: the word and the Spirit of God working together.

You see, the word must work with the Spirit. I think that's maybe why the psalmist translated it breath and not spirit. Because, I don't know whether you've ever studied this, but I had to learn elementary phonetics when I was teaching English as a second language to African students. I discovered some interesting things about words. If you think of the tremendous power of words and yet how simple they are. How do you speak? You release breath out of your lungs, it passes through your mouth and maybe through your nose, and the various things that it's subjected to in your mouth and nose determine the word that comes out. But the basic truth is you cannot speak without breathing. You have to breathe to speak. And this is a picture of God. Every time God speaks His breath goes with His word. His breath is His Spirit. So the word and the Spirit of God always go together. The word and the Spirit of God brought the universe into being. And they sustain the universe in being. There's a very powerful scripture in 2 Peter 3 which tells us three things: that the word creates, the word maintains and the word abolishes. 2 Peter 3, beginning in verse 5:

> "By the word of God the heavens were of old and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which word the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which now exist are kept in store by the same word reserved for fire, until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

So by the word of God the heavens, the earth were brought into being. By the word of God they are maintained in being. And by the word of God when God's time comes, they will pass away. So the word of God creates, maintains and abolishes.

I think sometimes when I look at the mess that man is making of this planet I'm glad that the word of God can abolish that mess one day. The word of God brought it into being, the word of God keeps it in being and the word of God will cause it to pass out of being. All that God does by His word.

Now a scripture that Ruth and I quoted at the beginning, we might as well quote it again. Isaiah 55:10–11 points this out which I've just explained that the word must come out of God's mouth. Otherwise, it's not effective. So there we are, how do we begin?

> "For as the rain comes down and the snow from heaven, and do not return there but water the earth and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."

Now notice God says "my word out of my mouth." In other words, "my word when it's propelled by my breath." In 2 Corinthians 3:6, Paul says:

> "...the letter kills..."

In other words, the bare word without the breath doesn't bring life. It has to be the word and the Spirit together. So you can get some dry sermon which is all scripture but has no breath in it and it doesn't give life, it gives death. See? The two must operate together. The word and the Spirit.

Now I want to parallel with Moses' experience the way that we can make the word of God effective by proclaiming it. Proclaiming it is releasing it into a situation. It takes confidence, it takes boldness. It's not for the timid. You have to make up your mind I believe this. It's God's word and when I say it, if I say it with a believing heart and through believing lips, it's just as effective as if God Himself said it when His Spirit says it through me. Can you believe that? It doesn't have to be God speaking. If the Spirit of God propels the word of God through your mouth, it's as effective as it was when God spoke the universe into being.

The first thing that happened to Moses was he got frightened. He threw his rod down on the ground and it became a snake and he ran from it. want to say to you that before we can be effective in proclaiming, we have to learn to be afraid of the word of God. We have to learn to tremble at the word of God. Isaiah says this,

d says it through Isaiah, in Isaiah 66, the last chapter of Isaiah. The first two verses of Isaiah 66:

> "Thus says the Lord: Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool. Where is the house that you will build me? And where is the place of my rest? For all those things my hand has made, and all those things exist, says the Lord."

In other words, the Lord says, "You can't build me any temple or building that will impress me because I built the whole universe." But He says, "There's one thing that does attract my favor, just one thing." He says:

> "But to this one will I look."

Another translation says "will I have respect." Whom will God respect, whom will He take into account?

> "Him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at my word."

So you see, like Moses, our first reaction has to be fear and awe at the word of God. There is far too little fear of the word of God in the church today. We are too familiar with it, we bandy it about and we quote it but we don't show real reverence for it. And we have to change that attitude.

Now let me give you two reasons found in the gospel of John why we should tremble before the word of God. The first is in John 12:47–48. Jesus is speaking, He says:

> "If anyone hears my words and does not receive them [or keep them], I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects me and does not receive my words has that which judges him; the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day."

So Jesus says I'm not going to be your judge. You're going to be judged by the word of God. Imagine yourself standing before Almighty God having to give an account of your life, which I believe all of us will have to do one day. You would tremble, you would be very concerned. What Jesus says is you should have the same attitude toward the word of God.

For it's the word of God that will be your judge. Every time we open the pages of this word and read it, if we can understand it we're looking at the thing that will judge us one day. No wonder we should tremble at it.

And then further on in John 14:23 Jesus makes another amazing statement. He says:

> "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."

It's one of the very few places in the Bible where the plural noun is used about God. We, Father and Son, will come to him. How will we come? Through what? Through His word. In other words, when we open up to the word of God, if we can believe it, God Himself, the Father and the Son, is coming into our lives willing to make His home with us. If it should ever be that somehow, even in a vision, you were to see the Lord Jesus maybe coming into your home, you would be overwhelmed. You would have a sense of awe. You'd want to fall at His feet. Jesus says, "Not only will I come but the Father will come. We will come." Through what? Through what? Through the word of God. You see?

I have to say that most of us today in the contemporary church have got to change our attitude towards God's word. We need to show a reverence, and awe and a fear. And it won't be effective in our lives in the way that I'm speaking about until we've learned to reverence the word of God.

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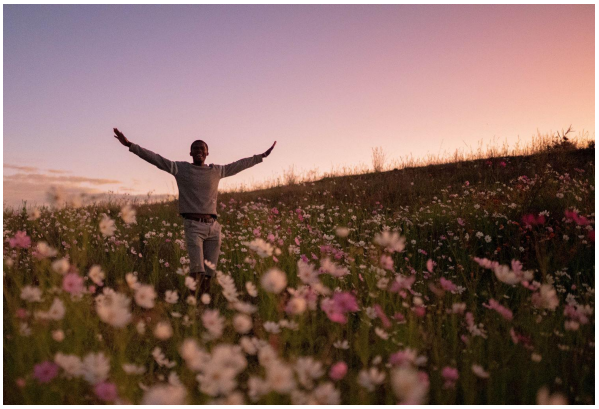

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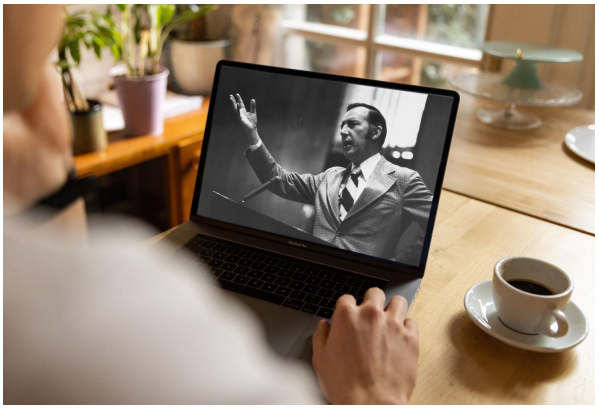

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