

Servants and Ministers



Glimpses of the End (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

In Acts chapter 4 we remember there was a time when the apostles and their coworkers were forbidden to preach in the name of Jesus, and they came together and had a prayer meeting. And this is what they prayed about, in Acts 4 verse 29 they said this,

> "Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."

So what was to bring the signs and the wonders? The preaching of the word. "Preach your word that signs and wonders may be done." And then in Acts 14, this happened in Iconium when Paul and Barnabas were there on their first ministry, and it says in Acts 14 verse 3,

> "Therefore they stayed there [that's in Iconium] a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands."

Notice the signs and wonders were God's witness to the word that was preached. They never had signs and wonders apart from the preaching of the word. And then in Hebrews chapter 2 verses 2 and following, Hebrews chapter 2 beginning at verse 2.

> "For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which is the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him. God also bearing witness [to what? to the word] God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit,"

I would say that includes the whole realm of the supernatural; signs, wonders, gifts and healings. Why do they come? They were God's testimony to the word of salvation. Let's never get

away from salvation. Everybody needs salvation. And we are called to minister to it. If we do it faithfully God will bear testimony to that word. And then just one final thought in Luke chapter 1. This came to me when I was preaching in France only recently. Because the French translation brings out something which is obscured really at least by the standard English translation. These are the first two verses of Luke's gospel.

> "Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which are most surely believed among us just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us."

So Luke got his record from those who were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word. Now unfortunately in our religious jargon the word minister has lost its real meaning. Because all it means is a servant. In Acts 13 it says, "John Mark was the servant of Paul and Barnabas." You see the problem with many of us, when we think of the word minister we think about somebody standing behind a pulpit and preaching. That's not what it means. It means a servant.

Some people say, "Do you believe in women's ministry?" I certainly do. I believe in women's service. But we've got such a false picture of what it is to be a minister. You know you have to wear a certain kind of suit, be in a certain kind of place on Sunday morning. That's nothing to do with it.

Some years ago when I was married to Ruth, this helps me get the date approximate, we went to Pakistan to preach. Had a very exciting time. I'd like to tell you more about it but I can't. But anyhow, just to say that we had about eight thousand people that responded to the gospel in Pakistan. God opened a little window of opportunity. You couldn't go there and do that now. It would be impossible. But as we were immigrating through the immigration authorities, this man asked me what is your occupation. And I thought if I say a preacher that's not going to sound good. If I say a Bible teacher that's not going to sound good. So I said I'll tell him I'm a minister and just leave it at that. Well after that I noticed that he was treating me with unusual deference. I thought what has happened. And then I realized he thought I was a minister of the United States. But that showed me how false the picture is we have of the word minister. A minister is a servant.

You see when I was preaching in France, this was translated minister of the word _____ _____ [in French]—"servants of the word." And I said, "That's it. That's what a minister is. It's a servant of the word."

Now I would like to ask you and I'm coming to a close. What is your view of your function in the Body of Christ? Are you a servant or are you quote "a minister?" Are you a servant of the word? Because that's what you're called to be. That's what you're called to be. I want you to consider that question and I want to move on to something else.

I spoke about the conditions that Jesus laid down for being a disciple. "If any man will come after Me let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me." It means saying "No" to you own selfish demanding ego. It means laying down your plans and ambitions. It means an unreserved commitment to follow Jesus, and that is what it is to be a disciple.

Now I want to give an opportunity to any here who have been confronted for the first time maybe with this challenge and you really never have laid down your life. You've got quote "saved" which is wonderful, but you're not a disciple. You're still doing your own thing. You're pleasing yourself, you're making your own plans. But tonight you've been confronted with the reality of the demands of Jesus. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, the place where he's to die, and follow Me." And you cannot follow Jesus until you've done those two things.

So tonight, just pause for a moment, meditate on what I've said, and then if you are prompted to make this decision here tonight, "I want to take up my cross. I want to follow Jesus. I want to give my life unreservedly to Him." And you'd like to make that decision here tonight then just stand to your feet wherever you are. Anybody who feels prompted to make this decision. "I want to lay down my life. I want to give up my ego, my self-will. I want to follow Jesus without reservation." Let's just wait a moment of two. I think there are more that need to make that decision. God bless you. God bless you. Stand right up and be counted. Amen. Amen.

Well, those of you that have stood, I'd like you to come out to the front, stand before me here. I can't see you all because of the light is such that I can only see a small portion of the auditorium. Now please be praying for this because it's a very, very important moment for the lives of people. All right. I want to lead you in a simple prayer addressed to Jesus. I want you to say the words after me. Then when you've said the prayer and said Amen, I just want you to communicate directly with Jesus. Say or do whatever He puts in your heart to do. So will you say these words after me:

"Lord Jesus Christ, I believe that You're the Son of God, that You died on the cross for my sins, and rose again from the dead. I turn now from sin and pleasing myself and doing my

own thing. And I come to You, Lord Jesus, and I lay down my life before You. I give myself unreservedly to You to become all that You want to make me. And I thank You that I believe You've received me because I come in simple faith based on Your word. Thank you, Lord Jesus. Thank You, thank You, thank You."

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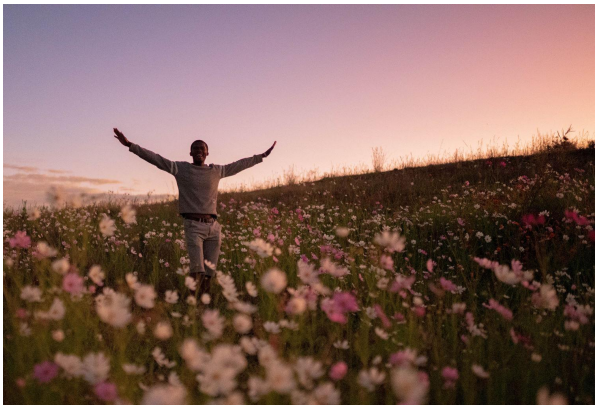


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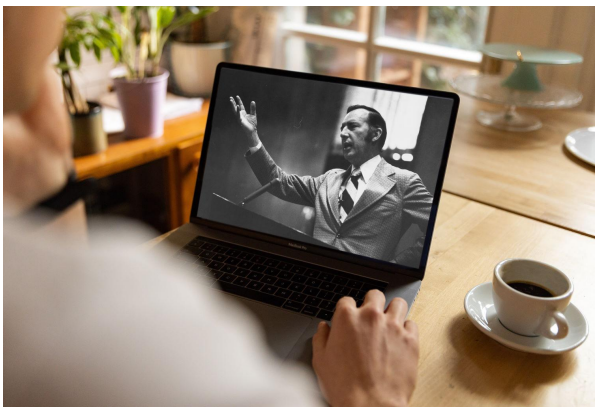
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