

Perfected Forever



Atonement
By Derek Prince

In our last session I explained that the death of Jesus on the cross was a sacrifice, that Jesus as the high priest offered Himself as the sacrifice to God through the Holy Spirit. And, that by that sacrifice He put away sin forever.

I also mentioned that I had come to the Lord from a background in which I was not really familiar with the teaching of the gospel or the truths of salvation. The Lord didn't deal with me on an intellectual basis, He was like somebody who throws you into the deep end and says, "Swim." I got thrown into the deep end. I got baptized in the Holy Spirit before I knew there was a baptism in the Holy Spirit. And before all the people who were against it had time to warn me against it, I got into it. I got into all this through studying the Bible. To my astonishment I discovered that the Bible is true, relevant and up to date, it still happens. In fact, I had to look in the Bible to find an explanation of the things that were happening in my life.

This happened while I was a soldier in the British Army in World War II, serving in Britain. Shortly afterwards my unit was sent overseas to the Middle East and I spent the next three years in the deserts of Egypt and Libya. I was with my unit through the Battle of El Alamein and after that I developed a condition on my skin, on my feet and my hands, which doctors called by various different names, each longer than the previous one. But none of them could heal. And because I was unable to wear boots any longer I had to be released from my unit. I was placed in military hospitals in Egypt. I spent the next year, one full year, in military hospitals in Egypt.

Well, I wouldn't want to spend a year in hospital anywhere but a military hospital in Egypt would be very low down on my list if I had a choice.

There I lay week after week in a hospital bed. I knew that I was saved. I had received the Holy Spirit and I had come to believe that the Bible really is true. That's as far as I'd come. I'd had no other teaching. In a way I'm rather grateful that God took over the job and taught me Himself, as He certainly did. So, I would lie there in the bed day after day saying to myself, "I know if I had faith God would heal me." But then the next thing I always said was, "But I don't have faith." And when I said that, I understand what John Bunyan meant in Pilgrim's Progress when he spoke about the

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slough of despond, the dark valley of despair. I was right in that valley, totally dark.

Now I'm telling you all this because I want you to understand that what I'm going to be teaching is not based on theory, it's not the product of theology; it's based on experience. It works. As I lay there in the darkness, a little book dropped into my hands—a dear lady sent it to me, let me add that—called Healing From Heaven by a lady called Lillian Yomans who had been a medical doctor, had become addicted to morphine, was in an incurable condition and through faith in the Lord and the Bible was wonderfully delivered, and devoted the rest of her life to preaching and teaching on healing. In this book there was just one sentence—actually it was a direct quotation from the Bible. It was from Romans 10:17, which says:

> "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

And as I read that it was like a brilliant ray of light penetrated the darkness. I laid hold of two words, faith cometh. If you don't have it you can get it. How does it come? By hearing. Hearing what? What God says in His word.

So having laid hold of that I decided I am going to hear what God says. And so I armed myself with a blue pencil and read through the whole Bible underlining in blue everything that related to four themes: healing, health, physical strength and long life. It took me several months to do it but I had nothing else to do but that. When I finished, got to the end of the Bible, you know what I had? A blue Bible! So, this convinced me that healing is provided for by God through the Bible through Jesus Christ.

But I still didn't know how to lay hold of it. Well, I was transferred from one hospital to another at a place called Alballah on the Suez Canal. And there was a dear lady in Cairo, a very unusual lady, she was a brigadier in the Salvation Army. She was a brigadier because her husband who had died had been a brigadier. And in the Salvation Army the wife takes the husband's rank. She was still more unusual—this was in the early l940s—because she was a tongue speaking Salvationist, and there weren't many of them in that time. And she was a militant about what she believed, speaking in tongues and divine healing, as Salvationists are about salvation. Also, she'd been a missionary in India and had been incurably sick with malaria, had trusted the Bible and received complete healing from malaria, and never taken another mouthful of medicine ever since—which was something like 20 years.

Well, this dear lady, I had met her once in Cairo, she heard about this British soldier in hospital, and God bless her memory, she took a rather difficult journey to come and visit this one soldier there on the Suez Canal. Well, she got hold of a little four-seater British type car. She got a New Zealand soldier to drive the car. I say that because I was in New Zealand a few years ago and I was telling this story. Outside the meeting somebody came up to me very excited and wanted to get my attention. It was the very soldier that had driven that car! And she also had a coworker who was a young American lady from the state of Oklahoma. So these three, the soldier driving, the Salvation Army brigadier in the front seat with him and Minta the lady from Oklahoma in the back seat, arrived at the hospital. Her name was Mrs. Ross. She marched into the ward in her bonnet, robes and all this, overawed the nurse and got permission for me to go out and sit in the car and pray with them. I mean, I wasn't really consulted whether I wanted to sit in the car and pray, it just happened. I found myself in the back seat of this very small car beside this lady from Oklahoma. We started to pray. Well, I mean, I was a praying person. After a little while the lady beside me began to speak in tongues. But she spoke very fluently and forcefully, and the power of God came down upon her that she was vibrating physically with the power. And then I found myself vibrating. And then everybody in the car was vibrating. And then the whole car was vibrating. Now, it was stationary and the engine was not running, but the car was vibrating as if it had been going about 50 miles an hour over a rough road. I knew somehow God was doing that for the benefit of me.

Then this lady came out with the interpretation in English. Now, I had been a student of Shakespeare and I was appreciative of Elizabethan English and the King James and all that. I don't need to tell people from America that you put a British professor of philosophy beside a young lady from Oklahoma, you've got a sort of clash of cultures and languages. But what astonished me was this interpretation was in the most perfect Elizabethan English. I don't remember all that was said but the certain passage I have never forgotten, it's as fresh for me today as it was in l943. These are the words: "Consider the work of Calvary: a perfect work, perfect in every respect, perfect in every aspect." Now you'll agree that's pretty elegant English. I immediately appreciated it. But because I had a background in Greek it meant a lot more to me because instantly my mind went to the last thing that Jesus said on the cross, which is translated in most versions "it is finished." But in Greek it is one single word, tetelestai. And that is the perfect tense of a verb that means to do something perfectly. You could translate it is perfectly perfect. Or it is

completely complete. And here was the Lord saying to me a perfect work, perfect in every respect, perfect in every aspect. I said tetelestai. That's the Holy Spirit interpreting that word to me. I was overawed because I knew that God was doing it for my sake. I knew God had spoken but I got out of the car just as sick as I got in. Nothing happened physically.

However, I had a word of direction from the Lord. I understood that God was showing me that if I could understand what Jesus did for me on the cross it contained all I would ever need for time and eternity: physical, spiritual, material, emotional. Perfect in every respect, perfect in every aspect. No matter what point of view you look at the cross, it's perfect. Nothing has been omitted, everything is provided for.

That's exciting. I hope I can communicate to you that in this theme we're studying, if you can comprehend it and apprehend it by faith, everything you will ever need, not only in time but in eternity, whether it's spiritual or physical or financial or material or emotional or relational, it has all been provided by one sacrifice. He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. I'd like you to say that with me. "By one sacrifice He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified." Notice that word perfected. See? Perfect.

So, I went back and I said if I could only understand what God did on the cross for me through Jesus. And I began to see that on the cross Jesus not merely bore my sins but He also took my sicknesses and bore my pains. And by His wounds I was healed. Now we'll be looking at this out of the scripture a little later in this series. I mean, I'm a trained mind when it comes to analyzing the meaning of things. I said to myself there's no getting away from it. It's stated again and again and again in the Bible, Jesus on the cross bore our sicknesses, our pains, our infirmities. And by His wounds we were healed. I tried every way with my philosophic mind to get away from the implications of that. I tried to think of every possible way that I could interpret it without meaning physical healing. And I would say in those weeks the devil brought to my mind every objection that has ever been raised against divine healing. I don't think he left out one. But every time when I went back to the word of God it said the same. I remembered my blue Bible. All through the Bible, starting in Genesis and ending in Revelation, healing, health, physical strength, long life.

Well, from my background in the Anglican church—and this is not a criticism of the Anglican church but it was my impression because I attended church compulsory eight times a week for ten years while I was at school. I didn't like much of what went on. So I had formed the conclusion that if you are really going to be a Christian you had to be prepared to be miserable for the rest of your life. And my conclusion at the age of eighteen was I wasn't prepared to be miserable for the rest of my life. Furthermore, if I was going to be miserable I'd be less miserable as a sinner as I would be as a Christian.

So, I had this mental block. Every time I read these promises and statements of healing I would say, but that's too good to be true, it couldn't really mean that. If it really means it, God wants me to be healthy, successful and live a long life. It couldn't be, that's not my picture of religion. Well, when I was arguing this way the Lord spoke to me inaudibly but very clearly and He said, "Tell me. Who is the teacher and who is the pupil?" I said, "Lord, you're the teacher and I'm the pupil." And He said, "Well, would you mind letting me teach you?" And I got the message.

After that the Holy Spirit directed me to the particular scripture that got me out of hospital. I want to say the Holy Spirit deals with all of us individually. It doesn't follow that He'll deal with you exactly the same way but I can illustrate what I'm saying from the way that the Holy Spirit dealt with me. The scripture, if you want to turn to it, is Proverbs 4:20–22. I will quote it in the Old King James.

> "My son...

And I realized God was talking to me as His child. This is not addressed to unbelievers, it's addressed to God's people.

> "My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh."

When I got to that phrase "all their flesh" I said that settles it. Not even a philosopher can make flesh mean anything but flesh. And if it says all my flesh it means my whole physical body. God through His words has provided that which will impart health to my whole physical body.

And then I looked at the marginal translation for health and it was medicine. So it's either health or medicine. I said to myself, that's wonderful. I'm sick, I need medicine. God has provided the medicine which will provide health for my whole body. I was what they call in the British Army a medical orderly. In other words, a hospital attendant. One of

my jobs was giving out medicine when I wasn't sick myself. I said that's it, I'm going to take God's word as medicine. When I did that, God spoke to me again inaudibly but clearly. He said, "When the doctor gives a person medicine, the directions for taking it are on the bottle. This, that's Proverbs 4:20–22, is my medicine bottle and the directions are on it. You'd better study them." I went back and I saw that there were four directions.

Number one: Attend to my words. Give undivided attention to what God is saying.

Number two: Incline thine ear. Bow down that stiff neck of yours and be teachable. You don't know it all and some of the things you think you know you don't know! And a lot of the traditions that you've inherited from your church background are not Biblical.

The third thing was: Let them not depart from thine eyes. Keep unwavering focus on the word of God.

And then: Keep them in the midst of thine heart.

And the next verse of Proverbs says this:

> "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

In other words, whatever you have in your heart will determine the course of your life. You cannot have the wrong thing in your heart and live right. And you cannot have the right thing in your heart and live wrong, because what's in your heart determines the course of your life. And God was saying, "If you'll take my word through the ear gate, through the eye gate, admit it to your heart; it will do everything that I've claimed."

So I made up my mind I would do that. I would take God's word as my medicine. I went to the doctor and I thanked him for trying to help me. And to some extent he had helped some areas. I said, "From now on I'm going to trust God. I don't want any more medication." I narrowly escaped being sent to a psychiatric hospital and I was discharged on my own responsibility.

Now, the worst thing for my condition was heat. Egypt is hot. But the army sent me to a much hotter place which was the Sudan, Khartoum, where the temperature regularly goes up to 127 degrees every afternoon. So here I am in the Sudan struggling for healing, determined to take my medicine. You understand, because of my philosophic background this was a ridiculous thing for me to do. I had to decide whether I was going to be clever and stay sick or silly and get healed. I decided to be silly. And thank God I got healed.

What I did was this. I said to myself, how do people take regular medicine? The answer normally is three times daily after meals. I said that's what I'm going to do. After each main meal I would go aside by myself, open up the Bible, bow my head in prayer and say, God, you have promised that these words of yours will be medicine to all my flesh. I'm taking them as my medicine now in the name of Jesus. And then I would read the Bible and I would do my best to read it with careful attention not to be distracted and to listen to what God was saying to me.

And I would have to say not merely did I receive physical healing but I got a whole lot more. By the time I was healed I was a totally different person. The Bible had got into my mind and renewed my mind, it had changed my priorities, my values, my attitudes. See, it's wonderful to be healed by a miracle, I thank God I've seen many people miraculously healed. But in a certain sense, there's a lot to be said for getting healed by taking the medicine because you get a lot more than physical healing. You get changed in your inner being.

I didn't receive immediate healing. As a matter of fact, I would say it was three months before I could say I was fully healed. And that in the worst possible circumstances. One of the things that God made clear to me was when Israel was in Egypt the more the Egyptians afflicted them the more they prospered and grew. So I saw circumstances are not significant. God's promises do not depend on circumstances. They depend on meeting the condition.

There's a certain principle I'd like to close with because I'm leading up to, in due course, helping you to appropriate whatever it is you need out of the sacrifice of Jesus. James said in his epistle faith without works is dead. Works, appropriate actions. So, it's not sufficient just to sit there and say I believe. You have to activate your faith. Smith Wigglesworth, who was a friend of the people who took me to my first service, though I never met him personally, they were the strange people I got involved with—thank God—Smith Wigglesworth used to say faith is an act. As a matter of fact, he didn't say it that way because he was one of those English people who put H's in where they shouldn't be and leave them out where they should be. So he would say faith is a hact—and he wouldn't even say it like that. One day he was teaching somewhere but the people weren't really receiving it. He said, "Faith comes by hearing. They've got to hear everything twice." So he said to the other minister on the platform, "You say it over there and I'll say it over here and then they'll get it." Well, the other

minister happened to be a teacher of elocution. So Smith Wigglesworth said, “Faith is a hact.” And this man would say, “Faith is an act.” But they got the message, faith is an act.

And you see, that’s what it was for me. I could have sat in bed and said I believe, but I had to do something to activate my faith. And God in His wisdom showed me, take the Bible three times daily as your medicine. Don’t just be passive but appropriate it by the appropriate action.

Sermon
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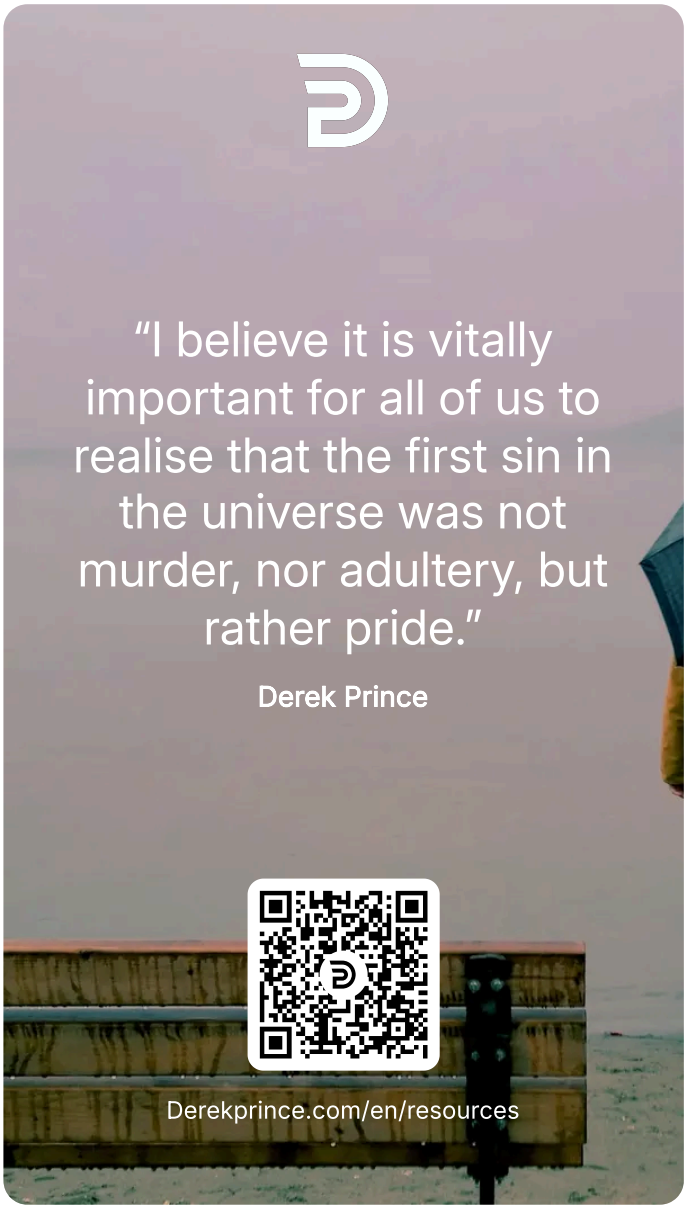

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