

Liberation Through Confession



Atonement
By Derek Prince

In this session we're going to continue with the theme of making the right confession. We're going to go on immediately with some more examples from the scripture.

The next one is Galatians 3:13–14. Those of you that have been following will be familiar with a good many of these scriptures, they've already been referred to in the outline previously. Galatians 3:13–14:

> "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, 'Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree': [that is the cross] that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus; that we [both Jew and Gentiles] might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

We've seen already the exchange: the curse came upon Jesus that the blessing might be made available to me. I'm going to ask my wife Ruth to come forward because this is one of our said pieces. I think we've already done it, but we do this, I would say, at least every other day. And we need it. I mean to say, I tell you, we have been through a spiritual war and we've had to learn to use our weapons. We're on the winning side. To give you another one that isn't here, 1 Corinthians 15:57:

> "But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that you labor is not in vain in the Lord."

What are you to be? Steadfast, immovable.

All right. Now we'll do the one that's in Galatians 3:13–14. We've done it with you, I think, already. Some of you may remember it. We'll give you a chance to do it with us the second time. All right.

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> "Through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, we have passed out from under the curse and entered into the blessing of Abraham, whom God blessed in all things."

Okay. Would you like to do that? Remember this is not just a ceremony, this is something that's affecting the spiritual world. I think we better do it phrase by phrase because there's difficulty in remembering it. We'll do it and you do it after us. "Through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, we have passed out from under the curse and entered into the blessing of Abraham, whom God blessed in all things." What do you do next? "Thank you, Lord." I got one student who is always with it, she's the first one. See, if you don't say "Thank you," you don't really believe it. I mean, otherwise you're the most ungrateful person. But you're not ungrateful, you're slow to believe, that's all.

Galatians 2:20, this we don't have to change, it's in the first person.

> "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Then Philippians 4:13. You can turn to it if you like.

> "I can do [a few things, I can do some things, I can do] all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Now you find your modern translations don't have Christ because there's different texts. I'll give you the Prince version of that, which I'm not going to go into.

> "I can do all things through the one who empowers me within."

All right? I'll let you do that. "I can do all things through the one who empowers me within." That's right. When it says "I can do all things," it doesn't mean you can do anything you choose or like, it means you can do anything that God says you can do.

2 Corinthians 12:10. Here's a real test of maturity. Are you prepared to make this confession? I'll tell you honestly, I always take a deep breath before I say this one. You need to read verse 9 first, 2 Corinthians 12:9, the Lord said to Paul:

> "My grace is sufficient for you: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

Have you ever pondered that? What's the greatest demonstration of God's strength? It's what He does in us when we're weak. Then everybody knows the strength comes from God and not from us. So the weaker you are, the better opportunity you are for God to display His strength. You see? Paul says—now I have to admit I've pondered a long while on verse 10:

> "Therefore I take pleasure in [blessings, in victories? No. I take pleasure in] infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong."

I'm not going to ask you to say the first part of the verse because that's a real major decision. I mean, you have to come some way along the road of faith before you see that it's worth saying it. But we can all say, "When I am weak, then I am strong." Let's say that. "When I am weak, then I am strong." Then we can go on, "For God's strength is made perfect in my weakness." "For God's strength is made perfect in my weakness."

There are endless other scriptures that we can turn to, but those are just a few examples. Remember what I said? You have to be led by the Holy Spirit. You can't follow the example of someone else necessarily. The Holy Spirit will show you which are the important confessions for you to make at any given time.

I wrote here, which got a little bit incomplete in the outline, "Confessing strengthens believing, believing strengthens confessing." The more you confess it, the more you believe it. The more you believe it, the more you will confess it. See? But if you get out of the cycle, then you're in trouble. If you stop confessing, very soon your faith will grow weak. When your faith grows weak, it's much harder to confess. Do you understand? There's really no neutrality. You're either on the winning side or on the losing side.

Some people would say, "Well, that's too easy. You mean all I have to do is just say it and keep on saying it?" People say that because they don't realize how decisive our words are. I could take two hours to preach out of the scripture on

nothing but the importance of our words. But let me just show you what Jesus said in Matthew 12:37:

> "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

In other words, your words will either take you into righteousness or into condemnation. One or the other, it'll be determined by the words you use.

And then James 3:4–5, which is not on your outline but it important. James 3:4–5, talking about the tongue:

> "Look also at ships, although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so, the tongue is a little member..."

So the tongue corresponds to what in the ship? The rudder. What determines where the ship will go? The rudder. What determines where we will go? Our tongue, that's right. We settle our destiny with our tongue. Use your tongue aright, you'll get safely into harbor. Use your tongue awrong, you'll make shipwreck. The tongue is the rudder that determines. To use your tongue aright is to make your tongue agree with the word of God.

Now let's look in Hebrews for a moment, Hebrews 3:1:

> "Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our confession, Christ Jesus..."

Notice Jesus is the high priest of our confession. Do you want a high priest? You have to make the right confession. He's the high priest of your confession. No confession, no high priest.

On the other hand, if you make the wrong confession, not Jesus but some dark, evil power begins to draw close to you and say, "I can get her" or "I can get him." Understand? There's a whole unseen world around us and our words determine what happens in that unseen world. You make the right confession and Jesus says to the Father, "There's my brother or my sister. Listen to what he or she is saying. We've got to stand by them because they're saying the right thing." But if we persist in making negative confessions, confessing unbelief, first of all, we become prisoners of our unbelief. The more often you confess a thing, the more power it has over you. Secondly, instead of attracting the glorious high priest in heaven, we attract some nasty, dirty, dark, negative demon. For instance, this is very common. The people who say, "I wish I were dead, I wish I were dead, what's the good of living?" They're beckoning a demon called the spirit of death. And he doesn't take many invitations. See? There's no neutrality with the tongue. You either use it right or you use it wrong. It's either righteousness, justification or condemnation. It's either life or death.

One of the most powerful half verses in the Bible is Proverbs 18:21 which says:

> "Death and life are in the power of the tongue."

Let's go on in Hebrews, Hebrews 4:14:

> "Seeing then that we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession."

First of all, you confess. Then what do you do? You hold fast your confession. You keep on saying the right things. That's suggests that there might be forces opposed to you which will try to stop you from saying the right thing. Is that right?

But that's not the end. You turn to Hebrews 10:21, and you'll notice every time it speaks about confession it speaks about Jesus as high priest. Hebrews 10:21:

> "Having a high priest over the house of God... [then go on to verse 21:] Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering."

Why does it say without wavering? Well, why does it say on an airplane "fasten your seat belts"? Because you can expect turbulence. Why does it say without wavering? Because you can expect a lot of things which would make you waver. Because, here's the battle. So you make the right confession, Jesus is your high priest. You hold fast your confession, that's Hebrews 4. But when you get to Hebrews 10 and you're advancing spiritually, it's hold it fast without wavering. Don't let the devil take away your confidence. Don't let him discourage you. Don't let him shut your mouth, keep on saying the right things.

Notice also that in Hebrews 10:23 it's the confession of our hope. It starts with faith, goes on to hope. Because faith, Hebrews 11:1, is the substance of things hoped for. So, out of faith, Biblical faith, there develops hope. So out of your repeated confession of your faith, you have now come to have not only faith but also hope. But, you have to hold fast the confession. Keep your seat belt fastened.

That's about believing and confessing. I think you understand now why I found it difficult to know which to put first. Believe and confess, confess and believe. Really, you can't separate them, that's the truth of the matter.

Now we come in the very brief closing period to the fourth requirement which is to act. James 2:26 says:

> "Faith without works is [what] dead."

Works, I would say, corresponding actions, appropriate actions. And James gives a number of examples in that chapter. It's no good saying it if you don't act according to what you say. If you say, "I believe God loves me," then you've got to act as if God loves you. Don't walk around saying, "Nobody loves me." Don't yield to depression because that's contrary to the truth that God loves you.

There are an infinite number of possible actions, appropriate actions in any given situation, in any given need. How will you know the right action? Who will show you what's the right thing to do? The Holy Spirit. See, we cannot leave the Holy Spirit out.

Earlier on in this series I gave my own testimony of how I came to believe that Jesus had borne my sicknesses, taken my infirmities, I could be healed. But I just sat there in bed and believed it. Then I began to confess it. I had to go to the doctor, that was the hardest thing, believe me. To go to the doctor and say, "I believe Jesus is going to heal me." I won't go into that but it was a battle. Actually, I'll just tell you this. I've never said it before anywhere. I don't think even my wife has heard this. I got this condition on my skin which eventually was called chronic eczema, and I prayed and God healed me. In the desert while I was still in my unit. Then my fellow soldiers said to me, "I see you're wearing boots again. What happened?" And there's where I made my big mistake. I was afraid to tell them Jesus healed me and so I said, "I got all right without medicine." God, when I think about that. So what happened? One year in hospital. I didn't get out until I was willing to tell the doctors that Jesus would heal me. Understand? God has his ways. You're not going to get by without making the right confession. Sooner or later it's got to come out.

Now, when I'd made the right confession, I still had to act. Faith without acts is dead. What was I to do? I was very inexperienced in the Christian faith. I didn't have a lot of preachers talking to me—I didn't have any preachers. But God showed me I was to take his word as medicine. So, for several months from that time onwards I took the Bible as my medicine, three times daily after meals. And I was perfectly healed. That was the appropriate act that the Holy Spirit gave to me. It does not follow that He will give you the same act. Do you understand? It depends on you, it depends on your situation. But in some way or other, you're going to have to act it out.

Some people say, "Well, I'm trusting God, I'm not taking medicine." That may be and may not be. But not taking medicine in itself is negative. You've got to have some kind of faith that expresses itself in positive action. Do you understand? People say, "Well, I'm trusting God, I'm not going to the doctor." I've had a lot of people say that but I've discovered some people don't go to the doctor not because they have faith but because they're afraid. They don't want to hear what the doctor might tell them. So you have to be very sensitive as to the kind of act that the Holy Spirit will lead you to. And it's usually very simple. It is not complicated. There's something between you and God. I'm glad. I have to step out of the way at this point, I can tell you what I think is the principle, you have to find out from the Holy Spirit how to apply the principle.

I'd say as a matter of interest that Ruth and I take the Bible daily as our medicine today. But you know, that's because it's so real to me. It doesn't follow that it will be the same with you, although I would recommend that. When you read the Bible, say, "Thank you, God. These words are life to me and health to all my flesh." You can't really go wrong with that. The more you thank Him the more it works.

But what I want to point out to you is the simplest act is giving thanks. That's one thing we can all do. I've already quoted—I think we better turn to 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Otherwise you might not really believe it's there. 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Some of the shortest verses in scripture, verse 16:

> "Rejoice always."

Verse 17:

> "Pray without ceasing."

And then verse 18 begins:

> "In everything give thanks..."

And then it says:

> "...for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

I've met Christians who said, "I don't think I'm in the will of God, I'm not satisfied, I'm not happy." And as I've examined their condition I've discovered that they were in the will of God, they were doing the right thing, they were doing what they were called to do. But you know why they were out of the will of God? They weren't giving thanks. You can't be in the will of God if you're not giving thanks. Did you get that? Because this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. What is this? Giving thanks in what? In all things, that's right. That doesn't leave out anything, does it?

I promise you that the lives of many of you would be changed if you just start to obey that. When you get into your car, thank God for the car. When you drive along the highway, thank God for the highway. When the speed cop catches up with you, thank God for the speed cop. I mean, in everything give thanks. All right? You'd be a different person. Basically, thankful people are happy people and the kind of people other people want to be with. Very few people want to be with complainers. So, if you want a lonely life, be a complainer. I wouldn't recommend it.

I'm going to give you a couple of examples of the importance of giving thanks. The first is from the prophet Jonah. Jonah comes right after the prophet we were looking at recently, which was Obadiah. You remember that? Everybody knows in outline the story of Jonah. God called him, he turned his back on the call, God said go east, so he went west. It's important to know he the money. The fact that you've got the money doesn't always prove you're doing the right thing. From the moment that he disobeyed, every step that he took was a step downwards, it's interesting. He lived on the mountains of Galilee, he went down to the lowland plains. He went down from the plains to the harbor. And down from the harbor to the ship. And from the ship he went down into the sea. That's right. So every step you take when you turn your back on God is a downward step. But God, as you know, dealt with him and he ended up inside the fish. Chapter 2 describes what he did inside the fish. You don't have many options inside a fish. I doubt whether you can even clap your hands. You can't get up and dance. Jonah began by praying, if you look here, chapter 2, verse 2. He says:

> "I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction."

And he goes on crying out to the Lord for several verses. He gets as far as verse 8 and he says:

> "Those who regard worthless idols forsake their own mercy."

But he's still inside the fish. And in verse 9 he says:

> "But I will sacrifice to you with the voice of thanksgiving."

And what happened? The fish let him go, that's right. What got him out? Not praying but giving thanks, that's right.

And then you look in the ministry of Jesus, a remarkable example. John 6, the feeding of the 5,000, one of the great miracles of Jesus. One which is recorded, incidentally, in every gospel. John 6, how did it happen? Verse 11:

> "Jesus took the five loaves... [and it says] when he had given thanks, He distributed them to the disciples..."

He didn't pray, He only gave thanks. Giving thanks changed five loaves into enough food for 5,000 people: men plus women and children. And John must have been very impressed by that fact because a little later in the same chapter, describing things that are happening he said in verse 23:

> "Other boats from Tiberius came there near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks."

So it really registered with John. He didn't even pray! He just gave thanks and it changed five loaves into all that food. See the power of giving thanks?

Let me close quickly by pointing out that God has an arm that cannot be twisted. You don't get God to do things by using techniques against him. Let's look in Matthew 6, the Lord's prayer, verses 9 and 10 very, very quickly.

> "This is what Jesus taught us to pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your name."

First of all, we approach God as Father. Second, we approach Him with reverence. That's the approach. Then the first petition is:

> "Your kingdom come."

It's not for anything we want, it's not for our needs, it's for what God wants. What's God's aim? What's God's great purpose? That His kingdom should come to earth. We have to align ourselves with God's purpose. Then we say:

> "Your will be done..."

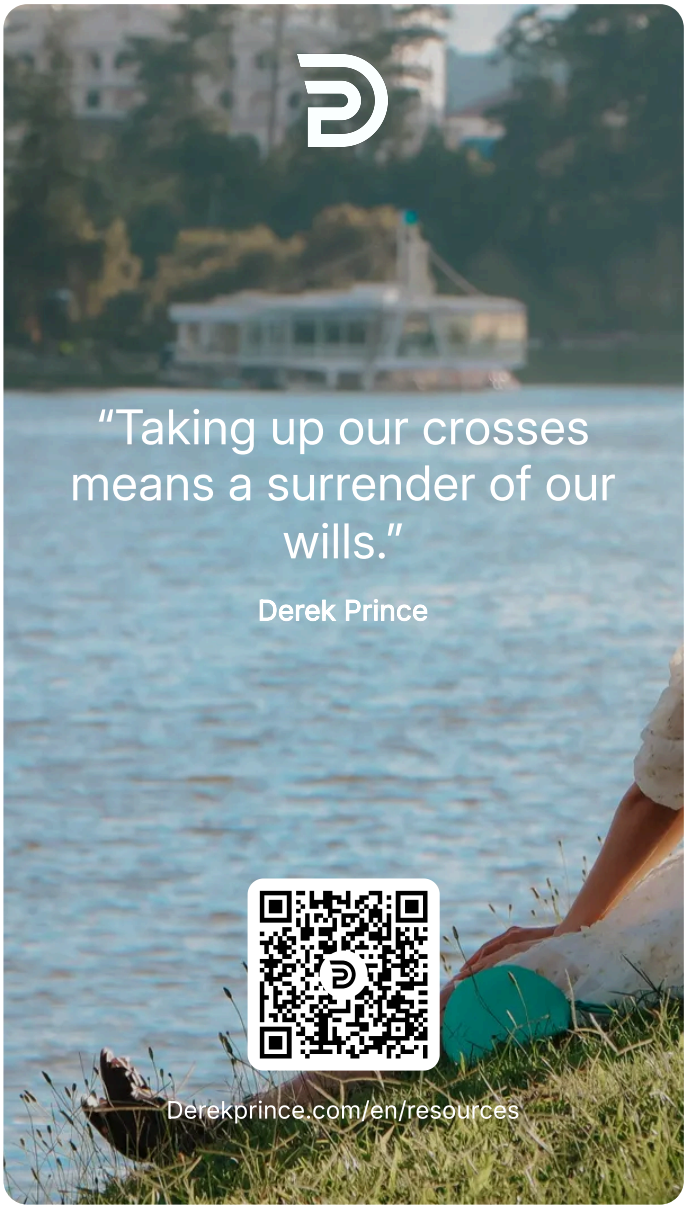
That's not asking for anything for ourselves. Only after that do we come to the petitions, forgive us our sins, give us our daily bread, et cetera. Understand? That's the pattern prayer. If you want your prayers to be effective you have to first of all align yourself with God's purpose and secondly with God's will. Do you understand? Then you can pray effective prayers.

I give you this example and we have to close. You are praying for healing. What is your motive? Are you praying to be healed because you want to be healed or because God wants you to be healed? Understand? The first is self will, the second is faith. This applies in every area. We cannot twist God's arm but we can align ourselves with God's will.

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Sermon

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