

The Word of Faith

by Norman Grubb

It was a big surprise for me when I found I had things upside down in my prayer and faith life. Formerly I had thought that living life was mainly my responsibility, and that it was God's responsibility to lend a hand when the going got rough. But when my eyes were opened, I realized that living life primarily means being aware of what God wants me to do, and being certain to go along with Him as He brings His purposes to pass. As soon as I was aware of that, I felt relieved of a heavy burden.

It was no longer, "*Lord, move into this or that situation and change it.*" It now was, "*Lord, what are you working out in this situation? You caused it, so you have a perfect purpose in it.*"

In other words, the primary functions of prayer and faith do not involve my trying to get God to move into action. Instead, they are means by which God gets me ready to let Him through in His already purposed action.

I saw that in the first revelation given us in the Scriptures of the spoken word of faith by "The Word" at creation. He merely said, "*Let there be ...*" nine times over. As a result, the Father's love-purposes in creation came into nine forms of manifestations. "*Let there be*" does not indicate that the Son was in some way trying to persuade the Father to do something. On the contrary, the Father was pressing His love-purposes into visibility, and the Son's word of faith was letting Him through — His universal self coming through in particular forms.

We are not afraid of following our own thoughts and assessments of our problems and challenges, as we look at them with His eyes. And so we come to the place where we say, "*This seems to us what God calls us to take action about.*" We boldly say with the church at Jerusalem, "*It seems good to the Holy Ghost and to us*" (Acts 15:28).

So to me prayer and faith have taken these simple forms. I always start with, "What are you doing in this situation?" Or, if we are a company of people, we seek the answer as a company. Our guidance comes not as a voice from heaven, but by the fact that we have the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5), which must mean that He is doing His thinking by our minds.

If we believe He is stirring us to ask and take something, we do not hold back. Did He not say to His disciples, "*Whatever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive.*" (Mark 11:24). Not whatsoever He desires, but what we desire!

When we see ourselves as He sees us, His Spirit-indwelt Sons, we know that our desires will be His desires; and that He awakens desires in us in order that He can fulfill them.

Too often we have been suspicious about our motives. Basically we do not accept ourselves as His liberated sons, and we unconsciously adopt the idea that our God is rather niggardly. Consequently we are wary of expressing our desires to Him, because we think that He will ignore them and that we will never receive what we want.

Then the crisis moment is that "word of faith." What do we mean by that Pauline phrase? (Rom. 10:8) We don't move into action by abstract thoughts, but by selecting from our thoughts what to do, and we say, "I'll go here. I'll do that ..."

That is the word of faith, for faith is my free capacity of attaching myself inwardly to something I believe in and I can make my own; something I will do, or take, or go to. The

word of faith is the decisive moment of inwardly uniting myself to something about which I then take action.

Now lift that to the levels of the Spirit in the prayer of faith. We have been on the thought level in finding out what God wants to make of a particular situation. Now we move onto the word level. We boldly maintain that if God has given us certain desires in certain situations, if God has put us there and thus caused us to have these needs and desires, then it means that He already has purposed to supply those needs. "Before they call, I will answer."

So now we move right on by the spoken word of faith. We "*say unto this mountain, be you removed ...*" And we see it already accomplished. With God, we "*call the things that be not as though they were*" (Rom. 4:17); and we do this against all soul-feelings of its absurdity, and all human reasonings.

It is quite evident that this is how the men of the Bible operated. Moses at the Red Sea said, "*Stand still and see the salvation of God; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you shall see them again nor more forever.*" Joshua at Jordan said, "*Prepare you victuals for in three days you shall pass over this Jordan.*" Before Jericho he said, "*Shout, for the Lord has given you the city.*" David said to Goliath, "*You come to me with sword and spear; but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts. This day will the Lord deliver you into my hand.*"

Elijah said to King Ahab, "*As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew or rain these years, but according to my word.*" The Lord Jesus again and again spoke the word of faith. To the storm He said, "*Peace, be still*". To the demons He said, "*I charge you, come out of him.*" To the fishermen He said, "*Launch into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.*" Peter, too, spoke the word of faith. To the lame man at the Beautiful Gate he said, "*Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.*"

We have spoken the word of faith in these ways in our missionary crusade ever since I learned something of the secret of faith through my friend Rees Howells. We were at the bottom of things 40 years ago, and our small mission was about to collapse. But through Rees Howells I had caught the secret of listening first for what God had to say, and then following through by taking positions of faith according to need.

On that basis, instead of giving up in our almost helpless position — we had at the time 35 missionaries and hardly \$10 each for the whole month's needs — we were reminded, as we waited on God, that the commission given to our founder C.T. Studd, was to the whole unevangelized world. Recognizing this to be God's word to us, we took steps of concrete faith, not just to continue the small existing work in the heart of Africa, but advance worldwide.

Specifically in that first year we spoke the word of faith in Mark 11:24, faith that we should be receiving ten new workers that year. We declared this in print, praised God in faith, and did not appeal for funds. Within three days of the end of the year the ten workers, with full financial support, had joined us. The next year 15 joined us, the next 25, the next 50 and the next 75. All of them came by the end of the year and all went to newly opened fields. From these beginnings, without appeal to men or special church backing, we proved in uncountable instances that "*faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*" (Hebr. 11:1). Since that time, 40 new fields, almost one each year, have been opened to us, and hundreds of national churches, with many Spirit-filled members, have been formed. Our missionary staff has increased to 1200 and, through our Literature Crusade, millions of dollars' worth of Christ-centered books are reaching 35 different countries.

It is no idle thing to say that the biblical principles of achieving faith are as operative today as in the days when the Letter to the Hebrews was written. This is true because they are the principles of the Eternal Spirit operating through human spirits.

In the final simple terms, it means first, the startling Bible-based recognition that all things that happen in this world, good or evil, are God's determined happenings, and are part of the workings of His perfect will. We, as His functioning sons, recognize that as inner spirit-persons nothing can touch us from without except insofar as we inwardly accept it. We are solely controlled by the way we inwardly see and believe things to be.

If we allow our believings to be dependent on the distorted outward appearance of things or people, that negative believing is master of us and binds us as its slaves. If instead we determine to take our established place in "the heavenlies" and to see everything with the eyes of God, as His perfect way and purpose, then we can praise Him for everything. "In everything we give thanks."

We are now free from negative thinking and can consider why God has put us in this situation, and what we would like Him to do about it. ("*Whatsoever you desire*"). Having got that desire clear, we then take our royal prerogative as Sons with all the resources of the Father at our disposal (John. 17:10) and speak the word of faith.

The supply already is there. The victory is won. To all those who may accuse us of being presumptuous, or say that we are tempting God, we may point to Matthew 6:25-35: ... *Take no thought....*"

With this we move into whatever action goes along with the situation — for faith is acting on facts. This means moving forward to our next objective, accepting it as ours by faith. The same thing should happen in a church fellowship moving forward in faith-action, or any of the forward movements of the Spirit these great days.

If it is a matter of a more personal faith transaction, then our word of faith may release us from anxious human pressures on a soul in need; for we are seeing Him as already among the redeemed by faith; or we release a sick person to God on the word of faith; or whatever else.

Once we have understood that speaking the word of faith is the living Spirit in action by our spirits, we go forward without looking around to see how or when it happens, or still less, what if it hasn't happened. It is God in action, and He hasn't been found to fail in fulfilling His own perfect purpose in His own time. That's my best understanding of prayer and faith.