



Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

Parables Bookshelf - Series 1.9.4

This issue of PARABLES BOOKSHELF concludes the book *The Divine Quest*. It also contains an additional writing titled *The Shattered People*.

Is your life one of sorrows and difficulties? Take comfort in knowing that these things are only temporary. Even if your entire life on this earth should be one of trials and heartache, it will pass in a moment, and new things will come.

God has a very different perspective of man's life than most men do.

Psalms 39:5

You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you.

Each man's life is but a breath.

What lies ahead of man is far greater in extent than that which we are passing through at this moment. There are long ages to come. If we will embrace the afflicted path now, and gain all that we can from it, then we will more quickly enter into the joys God has planned for His overcoming sons and daughters.

Many are spurning the path of suffering today. They kick violently against the path God has chosen for them. Though they may indeed suffer, they cry out bitterly and murmur their complaint. They express great dissatisfaction with the

course God has chosen for them.

These ones are deriving no benefit from their sorrows, and will perish without gaining the wisdom and character that these experiences were intended to bring to them. They are like the generation of Israel who murmured against God in the wilderness and died without entering their inheritance.

Attitude toward suffering makes a great difference. Are you like Christ who in His suffering was compared to a lamb that is silent, being led to the slaughter? Or are you like a wild donkey braying forth your complaint in the wilderness?

Food for Thought

"Humble yourself and cease to care what men think. A meek man is not a human mouse afflicted with a sense of his own inferiority. Rather,... he has stopped being fooled about himself. He knows well that the world will never see him as God sees him and he has stopped caring. He has obtained a place of soul rest. The old struggle to defend himself is over."

A. W. Tozer

Scripture Memory

I Thessalonians 2:4

As we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who examines our hearts.

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The Prayer of Faith

Beginning at the wedding of Cana, the disciples of Christ had seen Him perform one miraculous work after another. He had turned the water into wine. He had healed the sick. He had cast out devils. He spoke with a wisdom that was divine in origin, and the disciples rightly connected all of these things with the prayer life of Yahshua. It was the Father working through Christ that performed all of these things (John 14:10).

It is understandable then, that the disciples should come to Christ and ask Him to teach them how to pray. The saints today also need to

The saints today also need to know how to pray...

know how to pray if they want to see God working through them in power. We have mentioned that there are many wrong ideas about faith today, such as is

evidenced in the prosperity doctrine which I would define as ‘conceive it and believe it,’ but others have called ‘name it and claim it’, or a host of other unflattering titles. Where do such false doctrines arise from? Often they arise from taking a single Scripture in isolation, without comparing Scripture to Scripture to get the full understanding of the mind of God. One such Scripture is as follows.

Matthew 7:7-8

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

Let us suppose that these two verses are the only verses in the Bible that give instructions about prayer. If we were to take them by themselves we could well support the conceive it and believe it doctrine, and we could proclaim to all the saints

that they can have anything their heart desires if they will simply ask, seek and knock. No other stipulations are listed here, so we could teach that the saint will receive a positive answer to their prayer every time that such a prayer is uttered.

Some in the prosperity camp do teach such a thing, and this passage above is often cited, yet some go a bit further by adding one more verse as a requirement, for they realize that not every prayer is answered. If every prayer is not answered, then it would be quickly obvious to all who have the least discernment that something is wrong with this teaching. Therefore, the following Scripture is cited.

Matthew 21:22

“And all things you ask in prayer, **believing**, you will receive.”

Ah, this adds one more requirement to prayer! One must not only ask, seek and knock, but they must believe that they will receive what they ask for. Now we have the two main tenets of the conceive it and believe it camp. There are a host of people who are proclaiming that Scriptural prayer that pleases God can be taught from these two passages I have cited. No other conditions apply, and any prayer that meets these two conditions will receive an answer. Many poor saints have been harangued by ministers and Christian brothers and sisters when their prayers were not answered. They have been told that they must be doubters, and that they have not prayed the prayer of faith.

Many years ago I read the book “*Joni*” that told the story of Joni Eareckson Tada. As a teenager she was involved in a diving accident and was paralyzed from the neck down. She has a worldwide ministry today and has impacted the lives of millions of people with a positive witness of

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the love of God in the midst of suffering. In the book she told of some saints who told her that she would be healed of her paralysis if she only prayed believing. Condemnation was put upon her, and she was told that her unbelief and sin were what prevented her from receiving healing.

There is an expression that speaks of ‘kicking someone while they are down,’ and this speaks of a very low and diabolical action. It is something that the saints should not do, and certainly not to another child of God. Yet as Joni struggled to come to grips with the devastating physical suffering that had come upon her, she had saints add to her trial by heaping condemnation upon her. Joni testified that she did pray fervently for healing, yet God did not grant her request. Instead a great work of grace was wrought in her life where she learned to live joyfully before Christ without being delivered from her physical condition. The apostle Paul demonstrated this same thing many hundreds of years earlier.

II Corinthians 12:7-10

Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me -- to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

What was Paul's thorn in the flesh? I believe it was a physical condition that affected his eyesight and rendered him practically blind. I would not be contentious about this identification of his thorn in the flesh, but there is much evidence

which I base this conclusion upon.

We can get an idea of what type of thorn in the flesh Paul had by reading the context of this passage. After stating that he was given a thorn in the flesh, he then states that he has learned to be content with it, and then he mentions specific things he is content with: weaknesses, insults, distresses, persecutions, and difficulties. We can then understand that Paul's thorn was one of these things, and he actually experienced all of them from time to time, and they are all types of messengers of Satan that keep us from exalting ourselves.

I think we can actually pinpoint Paul's specific thorn in the flesh by examining his writings to other churches. We know that when Paul first encountered Christ that he was blinded, and later something like scales fell from his eyes. He also refers to the awesome visions he was given in this same passage where he speaks of his thorn in the flesh. As mentioned, I believe his thorn was that his physical eyesight was impaired. It was so bad that he could not even write most of his own letters, but had to dictate them to others. We see evidence of his visual impairment in the following verses:

When Paul first encountered Christ that he was blinded.

Galatians 4:12-15

I beg of you, brethren, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong; but you know that it was because of **a bodily illness** that I preached the gospel to you the first time; and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Yahshua Himself. Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness that, **if possible, you would have plucked**

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out your eyes and given them to me.

Galatians 6:11

See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

Paul spoke of a bodily illness to the Galatians, and he says that he knows the Galatian believers would have given him their own eyes if they

Are we to accuse Paul of lacking faith to believe he would be healed?

could have, so the illness was one that affected his sight. He further gives evidence that it is he that is writing to them because he is writing in such large letters,

again being evidence of his poor eyesight. In his epistle to the church in Rome we also read:

Romans 16:22

I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.

Speaking of taking verses by themselves, this one is a good example of the trouble we could get in by coming to false conclusions. How many saints today have been taught that Tertius was the author of the book of Romans? If we took this verse by itself, we could certainly conclude this was true. However, Tertius was not the author, he was merely the scribe. Paul dictated and Tertius wrote. This again is owing to Paul's poor eyesight. Paul did not even pen the book to the church in Corinth. He dictated it, and the only part he actually wrote was the greeting.

I Corinthians 16:21

The greeting is in my own hand -- Paul.

So we see from these words that Paul was troubled by poor eyesight that today would have been

as bad as many who are considered legally blind. One can imagine how such a malady could be used to keep Paul humble. He could have the same reproach hurled at him that the Jews used to insult the Messiah, "He healed others, let him heal himself." Perhaps he even had to be led around by the hand when he met with the saints, in the same way that he had to be led to Damascus when he first encountered Christ.

Acts 9:8

Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus.

This would certainly be a humbling thing. Consider then, whether I have correctly identified Paul's thorn or not, that Paul prayed three times for this thorn in his flesh to be removed, yet God did not remove it. This messes up the conceive it and believe it doctrine that is very popular today. Are we to accuse Paul of lacking faith to believe he would be healed? We know a lack of faith was not the reason, for Paul has declared that God spoke to him regarding this matter. God told him that it was His will for Paul to bear this infirmity to keep him from being exalted.

There must be more to godly prayer than just asking and believing. Some have gone a bit further and have added one more verse to their understanding.

I John 5:14

This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, ***if we ask anything according to His will***, He hears us.

Now we are making some real progress in coming to discern what constitutes the true prayer of faith. It must be according to the will of God. In

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the previous chapter called “*Faith Comes by Hearing*” we saw that all faith arises out of a word from God. We must have a word to stand upon. We must know God’s will in a matter. When we align ourselves with the will of God in any matter, and we pray according to the will of God while believing, we will have an answer. When the disciples asked Yahshua to teach them how to pray he began:

Matthew 6:9-10

Pray, then, in this way: “Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. **Your will be done**, on earth as it is in heaven.”

With these words, Yahshua revealed to His disciples that right prayer is that which seeks the will of the Father. When Paul discerned that it was not the will of the Father for his thorn in the flesh to be removed, he quit praying for God to remove it. He accepted the will of God, knowing that God is not obligated to answer any prayer that is not in accord with His will. How foolish we would be to continue seeking something that we know is not God’s will for us.

I have been led to read some books about the life of George Muller recently, and towards the end of his remarkable life he preached a message on prayer. What he shared is exactly what the Spirit has been expressing to my own heart. He did not hold to a conceive it and believe it attitude regarding prayer. He knew that other matters were involved. In 1880 he preached a sermon where he shared the following:

Had it been left to us to make promises concerning prayer, I do not know that you or I could have done any more than say, “Ask, and ye shall receive.” Yet, while the promise is so full, so deep, so broad, so precious in every way, we have here, as becomes us with other parts of the word

of God, to compare Scripture with Scripture, because in other parts additions are made, or conditions are given, which, if we neglect, will hinder our getting the full benefit of prayer.

George Muller then went on to detail a number of conditions that were attached to the simple “Ask, and ye shall receive.” First, our petitions must be according to the will of God as is revealed in I John 5:14. Second, we must not ask on behalf of our goodness or merit, but in the name of the Lord Yahshua the Messiah.

John 14:13-14

“Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.”

This is a very critical point. We are not to present our petitions, asking for an answer based upon our obedience or faithfulness to God, for this is to come to God in pride. We have nothing that He did not give to us. If we are faithful and obedient, it is because He has caused us to stand. We are to present our petitions in the name of His Son alone. We are accepted because of the work of Christ, and we need to humbly acknowledge this fact. We must all conclude that we are unworthy in ourselves to merit any favor from God, but in Yahshua we are considered worthy, and in His name the Father is pleased to bestow great favor upon us.

Right prayer is that which seeks the will of the Father.

Mr. Muller also mentioned Psalm 66.

Psalms 66:18

If I regard iniquity in my heart, Yahweh will not hear...

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Mr. Muller expounded on this verse, “That is, if I live in sin, and go on a course hateful to God, I may not expect my prayers to be answered.” He went on to share that we must also exercise faith in the power and willingness of God to answer our prayers. This has been the central theme of

We must believe that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

this book. We must believe not only in God’s power, but in His willingness to act on our behalf. We must believe that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Mr. Muller pointed to the love of God in not withholding His own Son, but in sending Him to the cross on our behalf as the evidence of His love for us. He then gave one more point that is equally important, and failing in this point has led to many aborted answers to prayer.

We have to continue patiently waiting on God till the blessing we seek is granted. For observe, nothing is said in the text as to the time in which, or the circumstances under which, the prayer is to answered. “Ask, and it shall be given you.” There is a positive promise, but nothing as to time...

Moreover, we are never to lose sight of the fact that there may be particular reasons why prayer may not at once be answered. One reason may be the need for the exercise of our faith, for by exercise faith is strengthened. We all know that if our faith were not exercised it would remain as it were at the first. By the trial it is strengthened. Another reason may be that we may glorify God by the manifestation of patience. This is a grace by which God is greatly magnified. Our manifestation of patience glorifies God. There may be another reason. Our heart may not yet be prepared for the answer to our prayer.

I have often found that God will delay in answering my prayers, and at times He will be uncomfortably late and I will be tried severely. Yet as I

have waited, and have not abandoned the course, but have continued looking intently at God to meet my need, my faith has been strengthened when the answer arrived. Back in November of 2002 I was working at the job God had provided for me, and He would allow me to seek no other employment even though my hours had been cut to only ten hours a week. Our bills were getting behind, and we were daily praying for the Father’s provision.

At this time I was particularly concerned about our power bill, as the power company was known to not show much grace to their customers who had fallen behind, and with the bill only a few days late they would send out a notice that service would be discontinued if payment was not received in the next week. When the bill was due the Father had not yet provided the means to pay it. The notice came, and I was still unable to pay. The day that the notice said our power could be cut off on came and went, and still there was no money to pay the bill. I was expecting to see an employee of the power company show up any day to cut our power off, yet I continued to pray for God’s provision to be manifested.

I only received a paycheck from my job once a month, this being on the last working day of each month. This date was several weeks past the cut-off date on the notice we received. Yet one week went by, and then two, and no one showed up to cut off our power. As the last week before I was to get paid arrived I thought we would perhaps make it, and no one would show up before I received my paycheck and was able to pay my bill.

On the day before I was to get paid my son came running into my room and said a man was in our yard, and he was from the power company. I looked out the window and I saw that he was at our meter and he was about to cut off our power, leaving us unable to cook, and all of our groceries in the refrigerator would spoil, and since it was November, we would also be left in a cold house.

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I walked out in the yard and spoke with the man. I told him I was to get paid the very next day and would be able to pay my bill then. He said that since he had never been to our house before on a similar call, that he would give us grace and not cut the power off. In the end, we never knew a loss of power, and God did meet our need, though He tested us severely. A couple days later we celebrated Thanksgiving, and we truly had much for which to be thankful.

God has tried us in similar ways many times, yet not once has He failed in providing what we needed. He has testified to us that He is our shepherd, and we will not want for any necessary thing.

The prayer of faith that pleases God is not one that is based upon a formula, but that which is founded upon our relationship with Him as our loving heavenly Father. All of the things spoken of prayer in this chapter will lead the saint to press into relationship with God. Prayer begins with discerning His will, and this requires an understanding of God, and His will for us. We must often press in to Him to discern a specific word for our circumstance, and this also necessitates communion with Him. Having discerned His will, we must then believe that He is able and willing to meet our request. Finally, we must wait patiently, trusting in His character, as we look for the answer to come. All of this leads the saint to an ever deepening fellowship with their heavenly Father.

The conceive it and believe it pattern of prayer does not bring forth this same intimacy with the Father. Instead, it causes men and women to focus upon themselves as they determine for themselves what they want to pray for, and they then look inside themselves to find the faith necessary to obtain their desire. God is merely a distant and impersonal being who, not unlike a vending machine, provides the thing that the seeker requests. They put in their coin of faith, and out

pops the answer.

I would think that anyone who truly desires to know God, Who called them to be His child, would find this latter form of prayer to be totally unsatisfying. It is also often ineffective, and leads people to many doubts about God's presence and care for them. Some have even abandoned the faith when they met with great disappointment and God did not meet them according to their expectation.

Prayer:

Father, we thank You for Your many tremendous assurances of Your love toward us. We thank You for so designing prayer that we are forced to seek Your face when we are seeking something from Your hand. As we come to You with our needs we are blessed by receiving much more than our petition, for we also gain a greater intimacy with You, learning of Your will, Your love, and Your faithfulness. May you receive glory as we wait patiently for Your provision and blessing.

A Final Word

In the pages of this book I have shared how my heavenly Father has wrought a number of tremendous deliverances in my life and that of my family. From healing my son of a hereditary bone disease that has no known cure, to healing my body from diabetes, to providing financially for us over the course of many months when He had called me out from wage earning, in all of these things we have seen the mighty hand of God supporting us and providing help in the time of need. We have also looked at examples found in Scripture of men

*We must wait
patiently, trusting in
His character...*

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like Abraham, Gideon, Joseph and David who have received children, won battles, received promotion and seen the faithfulness of God in a myriad of ways as they have stood firm in their confidence in Yahweh's love for them.

I do not want any child of God to think that such faith is the heritage of a few select men and

Our faith, can be exercised and grow over time.

women. The faith spoken of in this book is that which God desires to see present in the heart of ALL of His children. It is not some supernatural gift of faith,

as that gift mentioned in I Corinthians 12:8 and 9, that is spoken of here, but rather that faith that is allotted to EVERY child of God.

Romans 12:3

For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, **as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.**

The saints do not need some supernatural gift of faith to manifest confidence in the love of God. They need only the measure that is given to them to follow Christ wherever He would lead them. Christ will not lead us into places that are beyond the measure of our faith to follow. Yet our faith, can be exercised and grow over time. We need not remain with the same measure of faith that we began with. The principle of God is true that those who are faithful with little things will be given greater things. Christ spoke a parable to His disciples that revealed the way to a greater faith.

Luke 19:12-26

So He said, "A nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then

return. And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas and said to them, 'Do business with this until I come back...' When he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him so that he might know what business they had done. The first appeared, saying, 'Master, your mina has made ten minas more.' And he said to him, 'Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.' The second came, saying, 'Your mina, master, has made five minas.' And he said to him also, 'And you are to be over five cities.' Another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I kept put away in a handkerchief; for I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down and reap what you did not sow.' He said to him, 'By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow? Then why did you not put my money in the bank, and having come, I would have collected it with interest?' Then he said to the bystanders, 'Take the mina away from him and give it to the one who has the ten minas.' And they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas already.' I tell you that to everyone who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away."

If we take the measure of faith we have been allotted and we exercise it in obedience to God, bringing Him glory, He will bestow upon us a greater faith. However, if we take what we have and hide it in the dirt of this flesh (Matthew 25:25), bringing no increase or benefit to our Father in heaven, then even that which we had will be taken from us.

Matthew 25:29

For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one

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who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.

The Scriptures are plain that our faith can grow, and it is the normal course of things for faith to do so. Paul wrote to the Corinthian saints:

II Corinthians 10:15

But with the hope that **as your faith grows**, we will be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you...

George Muller was a man who lived an extraordinary life of faith, and he has given much hope and encouragement to the saints who have heard of his life, and read about him in the many books that were written by him and about him. Mr. Muller was intensely interested in seeing the faith of God's children built up, and he gave much advice on the matter, including the following quote taken from a biography of his life written by Roger Steer.

Muller's answer to those who asked how they might have their faith strengthened was as follows. He would begin by quoting James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning." Then he would point out that as the increase of faith is a good gift, it must come from God, and therefore He ought to be asked for the blessing. But, in addition, he recommended four steps which those who wished to see their faith increased could take to help the process along.

First, he advised 'the careful reading of the word of God, combined with meditation on it.' This, he said, is how the believer learns more of the nature and character of God and 'thus sees more and more, besides His holiness and justice, what a kind, loving, gracious, merciful, mighty, wise

and faithful being He is,' and therefore when difficulties arise 'will repose upon the **ability** of God to help him', having 'seen instance upon instance in the Holy Scriptures in which His almighty power and infinite wisdom have been actually exercised in helping and delivering His people; and he will repose upon the **willingness** of God to help him, because he has not only learned from the Scriptures what a kind, good, merciful, gracious and faithful being God is, but because he has also seen in the word of God, how in a great variety of instances He has proved Himself to be so.'

Secondly, he warned that 'it is of the utmost importance that we seek to maintain an upright heart and a good conscience, and, therefore, do not knowingly and habitually indulge in those things that are contrary to the mind of God... All my confidence towards God, all my leaning upon Him in the hour of trial will be gone, if I have a guilty conscience, and do not seek to put away this guilty conscience, but still continue to do things which are contrary to the mind of God. And if, in any particular instance, I cannot trust in God, because of the guilty conscience, then my faith is weakened by that instance of distrust; for faith with every fresh trial of it either increases by trusting God, and thus getting help, or it decreases by not trusting Him; and then there is less power of looking simply and directly to Him, and a habit of self-dependence is begotten and encouraged.'

In our natural state we dislike dealing with God alone...

Thirdly, he advised those who wanted their faith increased not to shrink from situations where their faith might be tested and thus strengthened. 'In our natural state we dislike dealing with God alone... This cleaves to us, more or less, even after our regeneration. Hence it is, that, more or less, even as believers, we have the same shrink-

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ing from standing with God alone - from depending on God alone - from looking to Him alone - and yet this is the very position in which we ought to be, if we wish our faith to be strengthened.' It is in trying situations, depending on God alone, that Muller said the believer 'may see the hand of God stretched out on his behalf.'

Finally, Muller said it is important that 'we let God work for us, when the hour of the trial of our faith comes, and do not do a work of deliverance of our own... However weak our faith may be,

When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?

God will try it; only with this restriction, that as, in every way, He leads on gently, gradually, patiently, so as with reference to the trial of our faith... God never lays

more upon us that He is willing to enable us to bear. Now when the trial of faith comes, we are naturally inclined to distrust God, and to trust rather in ourselves, or in our friends, or in our circumstances. We will rather work a deliverance of our own somehow or another, than simply look to God and wait for His help... Would the believer, therefore, have his faith strengthened, he must especially, **give time to God**, who tries his faith in order to prove to His child, in the end, how willing He is to help and deliver him, the moment it is good for him.'

(From "George Muller - Delighted in God!" by Roger Steer.)

I have found my own faith strengthened as I have meditated on the lives and words of men of faith, such as Mr. Muller. It should be our aim to edify one another in this way, and I hope that this book in some measure has accomplished that aim. Paul wrote of the effect that the saints have on one another as the faith of one is brought into contact with the faith of another.

Romans 1:11-12

For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; that is, ***that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.***

Faith is such a precious thing. It is what Yahweh is searching for in the hearts of men and women. May Christ receive a positive answer to the question that lingers with such pregnant expectation to this day,

Luke 18:8

"When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"

May it be so, Father!

Amen!

The Shattered People

Joseph Herrin (9-8-2002)

Matthew 21:44

"And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."

Mankind has no way of escaping the breaking process of God. Either man will agree with God that he needs breaking, and he will submit himself to this process, or he will resist it and the breaking will be incredibly more severe and without reward. The child of God can choose to fall on the Rock, which is Christ, and be broken, or the Rock will fall on them and they will be scattered as dust.

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About four years ago I did one of the wisest things that a man can do. I asked for the judgments of God in my life. It was not because I was so wise that I did this thing, but because the Spirit brought me to the point of understanding that all of those who would go further with Him and be accounted as overcomers must undergo a crucifixion of their soul life. The outer man must be broken open to allow the precious life of Christ contained within these earthen vessels to be poured forth.

About four years ago I had been reading a book by Rick Joyner (I believe it was "The Harvest") and in the book he spoke of a prophetic experience he had. In this vision he saw Christ on an island. On this island there were two distinct types of people. There were some glorious people who were involved in godly works, and there were those who were not glorified, and many of these were involved in all manner of evil works. Rick Joyner wrote that He saw Christ standing with a sword in His hand, and that people were coming up to Him, and as they did Christ would thrust the sword into the individual and then remove it. What happened next was remarkable.

Some of those whom Christ thrust the sword into would fall down and they would quickly die. When they were dead they would then arise and they would have the appearance of those on the island who were glorified. Others, however, having been thrust through with the sword of Christ would fall down and enter into great agony. This agony would continue on and on, and it was evident that some of these people went on for great amounts of time in the throes of death, yet not dying.

Mr. Joyner asked the Lord what the difference was between those who died quickly and those whose agony went on and on. The Lord replied, "Those who die quickly are those who ask Me to put them to death. Those to whom death is delayed are those who resist and seek to avoid this

process."

After reading this book, the Spirit would not let me get away from this vision. I understood that there were many areas of my life that were not surrendered to the will of God, where my soul life pursued the things it desired. I also understood that this soul life had to be put to death in order for the life of Christ to be revealed in and through my life.

Mark 8:34-35

34 And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.

35 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it."

For a number of weeks I thought on this matter, and I clearly saw that standing between myself and a deeper experience in Christ was this place of death. My flesh recoiled from what it saw, and loudly made known its protest. Yet even more pressing was the desire of my spirit to go forward with Christ. To turn away from Christ was something I feared even more than physical and emotional suffering. The thought of falling short of God's will for my life was the most dreadful thought of all.

The thought of falling short of God's will for my life was the most dreadful thought of all.

Hebrews 10:36-39

36 For you have need of endurance

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ance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

37 For yet in a very little while,
He who is coming will come, and will not delay.

38 But My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

As I considered that this cross before me could not be avoided, I came to the conclusion that if I must go this way then I wanted to get it done quickly. I did not want a long agonizing death. I much preferred a quick death.

Shortly thereafter, my wife and I had a man, who is a Christian author, and his wife come and visit us in our home. They were very serious about

*I would like you to pray
that I would have a
quick death.*

their walk in Christ, and just before they left they asked if they could pray for us about anything. I replied affirmatively saying, "I would like you to pray that I would

have a quick death." This couple understood my intent, and they became very serious. The husband asked me, "Are you sure you know what you are asking for?" I assured him that I did. This couple then asked my wife if she were willing to walk with me through the experiences the Father would lead me through. She also said she was willing.

This was a watershed day in our lives, and I understood that some threshold had just been crossed over. Our Father was not long in answering this prayer. The Spirit quickly began to lead

me down roads that can only be described as the valley of death. For a period of eighteen months I was subjected to one experience of suffering after another as the independence of my soul life was dealt with. Many were the instruments of death during this process. I was cast out from my place of ministry in the body of Christ when I refused to compromise in obedience to God. I was rejected by family members and saints alike. My family went through a stripping process from all of the things of the world. Things I had accumulated in disobedience through debt were all removed. Our path was very painful, even to the extent that my wife said she regretted ever agreeing to go this way with me, yet she remained nonetheless.

The end of this intense death experience found us living on a street bearing the prophetic name of Kingsbury, where the King was separating away and burying the soulish powers that had ruled in our lives. The community we lived in at this time equally bore a prophetic name, for it was called "Payne City," and great was our pain in this place. Never had I felt more vulnerable or helpless than during these many months of dying. Even as a man on a cross is unable to deliver himself, so I too was at the mercy of God.

For months my heart felt like it was being torn apart and I wept many tears in my distress, yet before we had gone far down this path the Father spoke prophetically to me and said, "Though the path will seem long and sorrowful, seemingly without end, when it is over it will seem to have been but a moment in time that passed swiftly by." As I now look back on this experience, it does appear to have passed swiftly, and the sting of it is no longer in my memory. It is like a mighty firestorm has passed over me, and I am now filled with peace and joy to know that I am still standing, and I have not been destroyed. The only things that have been consumed are those things that bound me.

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I have no illusions about having been completely delivered from the evil in my soul and flesh. Even now the Father is doing a further refining and purifying in my life, yet it is not with the former intensity that was required to shatter the strongholds that had gone uncontested for so long.

As I have traveled the path before me the Father has allowed me to see that there have been many others who have been experiencing similar fiery trials. I have had the honor to correspond with a number of these saints, and it is evident that a brokenness has come in their lives that is now allowing the sweet savor of Christ to come forth, when formerly it had been hindered.

All of us are like the seed of an oak, or even the seed of a grain of wheat. The life within the seed is there with all of the potential to grow into the pattern of that which it came from. Yet the outer shell restricts this life from coming forth. Even as a seed must fall into the ground and die, being subjected to freezing, flood, heat and pressure, resulting in the outer shell being broken open, so too must the lives of the saints be subjected to great stress in order for the life of Christ to be revealed.

Christ Jesus said we had but two options: we can fall on the Rock and be broken to pieces, or the Rock can fall on us and scatter us like dust. Recently, the Spirit revealed this truth of the necessity for brokenness in a most poignant way. I know of a man in his sixties who has been a child of God nearly forty years. There was much hardness in this man's life, and the outer shell of his natural man greatly constricted the flow of the Spirit within him. He was prone to speak very cutting and hard words to members of his family, wounding many of them.

About a year ago this man had to undergo major surgery, and he nearly died. After his surgery he

was left in a very weakened state physically, and emotionally. His natural strength was abated, and in his weakened condition the Spirit was able to move in his life and to express qualities of meekness, gentleness, humility and love. In his vulnerability and weakness he expressed many words of regret towards his past hardness, and the failures of his life. He called up family members, and with tears he spoke of his regret over his hardness, and he asked forgiveness of those whom he had hurt.

Over time this man's strength began to return, and as it has so has the former hardness that was a characteristic of his natural man. He has returned to speaking hard and injurious words to those around him. As I contemplated this I saw clearly why the Spirit must bring all of God's children to places of brokenness. We all "have this treasure in earthen vessels," even the very life and Spirit of Christ. Yet this life will be as a bottle of precious and costly perfume that has never been opened if we protect it and do not allow it to be shattered. The scriptures give us a beautiful picture of this.

*The lives of the saints
be subjected to great
stress...*

Mark 14:3

While He was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, and reclining at the table, there came a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard; and she broke the vial and poured it over His head.

John 12:3

Mary then took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; **and**

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the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

Alabaster is a white, marble-like mineral that people used to store ointments in. While the alabaster vial remains sealed and unbroken, the contents are completely hidden, closed off from the world. When Mary broke her alabaster vial we are told that “the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.” If we want our environment to be filled with the fragrance of Christ, then we too must be broken vessels.

This breaking does not seem joyous at the time, but sorrowful.

contents are completely hidden, closed off from the world. When Mary broke her alabaster vial we are told that “the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.”

This breaking does not seem joyous at the time, but sorrowful. It involves pain, yet those who humble themselves before God and make themselves pliable in His hands will find that the breaking is more easily attained than if they had resisted and were hardened in pride.

I believe the time is nearly up for the saints of God and the nations to humble themselves before God and to ask for His judgments. Precious few have availed themselves of the opportunity. The Father has sent many warnings of judgment to come. He has given the church time to repent, and she has not availed herself of the chance before her.

Revelation 2:21

"I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality."

The hour to fall upon the Rock and be broken is nearly at an end. All that remains is for the Rock to fall upon the people and to scatter them as dust. Turn to God while there is still time. Much

is being shaken in this hour, and a greater shaking is to come. Seek God while He may be found. Do not turn away from Him in the hour of mercy.

As I end this article, to my remembrance has come a prophecy that Hollie Moody shared with the body of Christ on October 6th, 2001. The word was entitled “A Closing Door.” Below is an excerpt from this word.

I have been under a tremendous burden this week, but especially today. It has been building up and intensifying within me. The Lord has been showing me a door opened a crack, but slowly closing.

When I asked what this could mean, I felt the Lord replied that after the terrorist attacks on America on September 11th, He allowed a period of grace and mercy towards not only America, but also other nations who were also troubled and shaken by the tragedy which occurred on our shores. Now, the door I saw in this mini-vision was closing, and was almost totally closed.

In the vision, I cried out to the Lord to keep the door open just a little longer. I tried to reach into the space between the closing door to keep it from closing completely. I was weeping and crying, pleading for a little more time.

"I granted a little more time," the Lord replied. "I heard the cries and saw the tears of many after your country was attacked. I then waited for the cries and tears to turn to true and lasting repentance. While many truly repented, there were so many of My children who remained unmoved. And they remained unchanged..."

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"This is a troublesome time. I am shaking mightily all things and all people. He that endures to the end, the same shall be saved."

I then saw vast numbers of people stooping down to the ground and picking items up from the ground. With their arms full of bits and pieces of what they had picked up, the people came to the Lord. They put the items in their arms on the Lord and began to build something with these items. I watched and beheld as a beautiful building began to emerge.

"I am the foundation upon which all other things must be built," the Lord said. "My people are broken. When they bring the broken pieces of their hearts and lives to Me, and begin to build upon Me, I will put the brokenness back together and raise up a glorious and victorious Church. My Church shall stand triumphant when it is built upon Me. I will have a people called by My Name. I will have a Church."

[end excerpt]

A broken and shattered people are those whom the Father can use to build His glorious church. If you have been resisting the brokenness, then do so no longer. The door is nearly shut. The opportunity to fall on the Rock is almost fulfilled. How grievous it will be for those upon whom the Rock falls. He will scatter them as dust.

*A broken and shattered
people are those whom
the Father can use...*

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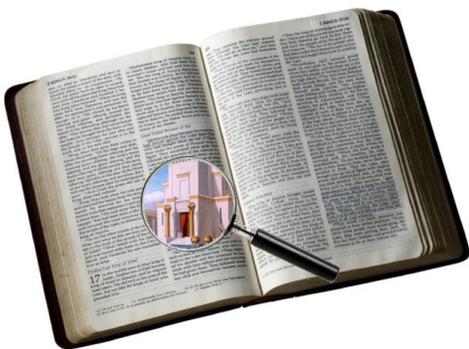
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PARABLES PRECEPT— The Bible



In this issue we are continuing to look at the names of the books of the Bible and how they differ from the Jewish Scriptures, which are called the Tanakh. In the previous issue we looked at the first three books of the Bible. We will now look at the fourth book.

Numbers is the next book in the Christian Bible. This book con-

tains a census of the people of Israel. The Jews call this book *Bemidbar*, which means “in the wilderness.” As we have seen, the name the Jews have given to these books is related to the opening sentence of each book.

Numbers 1:1

Then Yahweh spoke to Moses **in the wilderness** (bemidbar) of Sinai...

The last of the five books of Moses is called Deuteronomy in the Christian Bible. Deuteronomy is a word of Greek origin meaning “second Law.” In this book Moses is reviewing the previous forty years Israel has spent in the wilderness. He also recounts many of the Laws Yahweh gave to his people.

The Jewish Tanakh names this book Devarim, which is a Hebrew word translated “words.” As we might expect, this is also taken from the opening line of the book.

Deuteronomy 1:1

These are the **words** (devarim) which Moses spoke to all Israel...

We see then that the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures open in the following order:

Bereishit - Genesis

Shemot - Exodus

Vayikra - Leviticus

Bemidbar - Numbers

Devarim - Deuteronomy