

FAITH AND VICTORY

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Church of God Servant



ROCKS

A message delivered by Bro. Daniel Adams
 Transcribed and condensed by Sis. LaVerna Probst

The Lord has put on my heart some thoughts about rocks. First, if you are digging a water line or a foundation for a house you will find that rocks can hinder your progress.

The area where I lived as a child had very sandy soil. I remember on one occasion deciding to take a shovel and dig a hole in the back yard. I was rather small at the time, but using that shovel and a posthole digger I was able to dig a good sized hole. I didn't run into any rocks that hindered my digging. But I later learned that the ground was not very stable because of a lack of rocks. In certain times of the year the doors of our house would open and close without binding but at other times, it became necessary for my father to take the doors down and plane them so they would close and open again. I have found that homes built on rocky soil have greater stability during weather changes.

What do rocks represent in your life? They come in all sizes. Some are hard and sharp, most have dirt on them, they will hurt if you stub your toe on them and they are not usually what we would call pretty. For the most part, we feel we just need to get rid of them. That is true of some rocks in our life, but some we need to build on. We all have these rocks of difficulties in our lives, hard and sharp circumstances that we oft times pray to just disappear. We feel oppressed by our rocks and beg for them to be removed. Sometimes they do disappear and the Lord gives us relief, but other times He wants them to remain and be built into the foundation of our life that we may become strong and stable because of them.

In Genesis we have an outstanding story of a young man that had some rocks—hard, sharp, grievous, heavy rocks—in his life: Joseph ran into some very hard places. He seemed to be favored—was given a coat of many colors by his father—and God spoke to him in dreams and visions. Yet no one seemed to appreciate it.

As the story unfolds we find Joseph thrown in a pit, sold as a slave to some traders, then sold again into Potiphar's house. Here he was far from home and family, in a country of foreign customs and language. What did he do with those rocks in Potiphar's house? He used them to build on. He seemed to be advancing and then another rock came into his life. Potiphar's wife made false accusations against him because

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Joseph refused her advances. He then was thrown in prison, not only a slave, but now a prisoner in this strange land. Now what did he do with that rock? He began to build again and it was only a matter of time until the jailer put him in charge of all the prisoners. He had the whole run of the place. He built on his rocks!! Ultimately, we find that because Joseph was willing to build on the hard, heavy difficulties of life, God used him to provide a way of salvation for his people and a reconciliation of Joseph's family. The people that threw the rocks into his life were not able to resolve their issues with him even if they wanted to. They didn't know where he was after all those years. No doubt, though they tried to forget about him, yet their guilt consumed them.

Then we see these brothers in a land of drought, food getting scarce; but because Joseph had built on his rocks, there was a way of saving their lives. You can read the whole story in Genesis how they came to Egypt, and were tested by Joseph. He made himself known to them and let them know that they were forgiven. But time went on and we find that their father had passed away. In Genesis 50:15 we read: "And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him." They were remembering all those rocks they put in Joseph's way; the ridicule, all the hatred, the scoffing, putting him in the pit and selling him. Now they think that Joseph has been kind only because of their father. But we read in verse 17 that "...Joseph wept when they spake unto him." Why did he weep? He had built on those rocks as they were thrown at him to the point that he had risen above them. He wasn't dwelling on it; they were. Their guilt, like a heavy dirty rock, was weighing them down after all these years. Verse 18 "And his brethren, also went and fell down before his face; and they said, "Behold, we be thy servants." They were still carrying the rocks of guilt. Joseph tells them in verse 20 "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good...to save much people alive."

If you are carrying around a rock today, it's going to become a burden that you won't know what to do with. It will gather other rocks and the time will come that it all becomes too heavy to carry. The thing to do with rocks is put them

in the foundation of your life. Make them something to build on. There are rocks that others throw at us with words. Words that are hard and hurt. What are we going to do with such rocks? Are we going to carry them around in our heart until we get a sore that never heals?

There is a story of a man that had a mule that fell into a well. They couldn't get him out so they decided to throw rocks and dirt in the well and bury the poor creature. As they did so, the mule would just shake it off until eventually instead of burying him he walked out of the well. He put the dirt and rocks where they belong—under him. May the Lord help us do the same.

Sometimes the rocks we face are just ordinary happenings in our life. As an illustration, say that you go into the kitchen some morning, still blurry eyed, to get the orange juice out of the refrigerator. You open the door and it falls out, breaking the pitcher and making a sticky mess. As you are cleaning it up you have the choice of complaining under your breath as to which child put it in there like that, letting it irritate you to the point that when you get to the table you tell the children that there will be no more orange juice in the house until they learn how to take care of things. Or you can start asking the Lord to give you grace and help you keep the peace of God in your heart so that when you get to the table you can tell the children you are sorry there is no orange juice this morning, but maybe we can have some the next morning. The Lord can give us grace to build on the circumstances of life so others can see the beauty of that grace and want it also.

Another point I want us to realize is that very few structures are built out of one rock. In our part of the country you see houses, barns and foundations built out of rocks. Not just one, but many. Building things out of difficulties—the Lord is in that kind of business—just as the Lord helped Joseph to take the difficulties of life and build a life that is a blessing to us today, thousands of years later.

If you have hard places in your life that you will not build something out of, they will become too heavy for you to carry. You can carry it for a while—showing it to others, telling them how sharp and heavy it is and "you just can't believe they said or did such a thing to me." You will have an abundant supply of building material, but you will never build anything from it. Then you will feel there is no hope, no reality to the

walk with God. You can't have a structure for God, you can't have victory, there are too many hurts, too many hard places in life, and no victory can come out of that. Oh yes, there is victory! You can do just like Joseph and others between that time and now.

Matthew 21:42, "Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?" You and I have options today. Accept or reject. Incorporate or carry. Verse 44, "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder." When it comes to the place that we feel there is no way, if we will fall on that rock, Christ Jesus, in a state of brokenness crying to Him—"Lord, I can't carry this any more." He is going to help us. When our soul and mind is empty of the old jagged rocks then ***we can make it—and have victory.***

May we get a picture in our minds of being free of all the old dirty heavy, jagged rocks we carry in our bucket of life—offences, troubles, problems. Jesus wants to help you pour your bucket out. He wants you to rise above it, build on it so you can be stable. If I am determined to hold onto my bucket of rocks, those offences and hurtful things that happened in my life, then the later part of that verse comes true. "but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder." There's a far greater chance of healing and being made whole when we are broken then when we are ground to powder. When Jesus comes in judgment and looks down on you and me, and we have a bucket full of rocks because of difficulties that have happened in our life, He will grind us to powder. We are going to have to settle up with God with what we have in our bucket. May God help us because this is a serious matter.

Let's look in 1 Peter 2:1-8. "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings," There are some rocks that are not fit for foundation stones. Rocks of malice, guile, hypocrisies, envy, evil speaking should not be built into your foundation, but need to be taken out and buried under Jesus blood. Rocks like these will eat us up, if not now, then on the judgment day. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word,

that we may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious." A living stone! Something that's alive and yet something we can build on. "Ye also, as lively stones,"—Do you know that when you and I take the rubbish in our lives, put it under our feet and build on it, we become a living stone that other people can build on. You become an extension of the building that Christ wants in our society today. We can become "...lively stones...built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."

The same one that was to be the head of the corner in our spiritual life will become a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense—something you can't get over. It is very distressing to bang our shins or stub our toes in the dark. It causes us to feel like we are fixing to fall, but that is nothing like coming to the end of life's way, carrying a big bucket of rocks and banging into that Rock that should have been the corner stone, but now He is a rock of offense to me. All I had to do while living was to bring my bucket of rocks and ask the Lord: "Where do you want me to put this rock?" And He would tell you to put it up against the corner stone. You'll be surprised how well your troubles, your disappointments and your rejections in life will fit up against the corner stone, Jesus Christ. As He calls for each rock, it won't be long until your bucket will be empty.

May the Lord help you to understand this illustration and be able to apply it in your Christian experience. I don't know the rocks you have encountered, but I know ONE that can take those rocks and turn them into something that will prove to be a blessing in your life. And, it will make the generation following want the victory that you have gained.

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Its motto: Have faith in God. Its object: The glory of God and the salvation of men; the restoration and promulgation of the whole truth to the people in this "evening time" as it was in the morning Church of the first century; the unification of all true believers in one body by the love of God. Its standard: Separation from sin and entire devotion to the service and will of God. Its characteristics: No discipline but the Bible, no bond of union but the love of God, and no test of fellowship but the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

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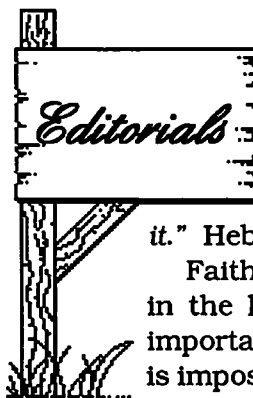
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"For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Hebrews 4:2.

Faith is an important ingredient in the life of a Christian. It is so important that the Scriptures say it is impossible to please God without it. No doubt many of our older readers can remember in years past how, as a young person, they sat in the congregation of the Saints with their friends and listened as the Word of the Lord went forth. However, today when you think of some of those friends, you realize that many of their faces are no longer seen among God's people. Perhaps we rightly blame sin for their absence, yet their departure is not because they simply slipped and fell, but because they lost faith and fainted by the wayside. What sadness fills our hearts when we think of those who have failed to mix faith with the hearing of the Gospel. Misery, despair and ultimately death await the faithless.

While doubt looks on a situation and says, "I can't do it," the eye of faith surveys the same situation and seeing the possibilities of the power of God says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." We would see much improvement in our Christian experience if we would mix more faith into our daily living. Abraham was a man of faith and was commended by God. Notice what was reported about him in Genesis 24:1. "And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things." Evidently, Abraham mixed faith in all of his endeavors and God rewarded him by blessing all of those efforts.

David said, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed." David throughout his lifetime was called to go through many perilous situations. In those times of need he called on God for deliverance and his faith in the Almighty was rewarded. When one has a willingness to share what they have been blessed with, it generally is an expression of faith that recognizes God. Faith says, "I don't have to

hoard this because God is my everlasting source Who has promised to supply all my needs." II Corinthians 9:7 says, "...for God loveth a cheerful giver." Faith puts the cheer in giving. Those who give begrudgingly have little faith, and that displeases the Lord.

Faith brings vitality to life. Unbelief adds such a heavy burden to the miserable soul who fails to trust God. Gloom and despair is the food for the complainer, and selfishness and greed are likewise dark companions of the faithless. But, when light comes and faith illuminates the darkness, a new form of energy begins to bubble forth. All the gloom and evil foreboding vanish and in its absence peace and joy are able to abound. The heart of faith has vision that is able to see beyond themselves and their present distresses to behold the glory of Christ. This vision changes the total perspective of an individual allowing them to taste and experience the sweetness and richness of life God intended man to enjoy. "...Behold, all things are become new."

Faith enables us to forgive and to love. It is very hard to forgive one who has done us wrong when we are continually nursing our hurts and injuries. Faith allows us to see how Christ has forgiven us and by taking upon ourselves the spirit of Christ we forgive others. Jesus said to, "...Love your enemies..." This kind of love does not come from the natural man. It must come from a work of faith in the heart. By forgiving and loving, the blessing of God will be upon us and it works wonders in the complex scheme of human relationships.

Faith inspires us to pray and brings the answer to our prayers. James 5:15 says, "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." This text contains a powerful promise for those with faith. Healing, salvation and forgiveness are essential needs of mankind and we have them promised to us in this passage. We have seen this promise fulfilled in the lives of Saints around us and also in our own experience—We know that it is true and can be trusted.

Faith motivates us to work for God. "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." Ephesians 4:28. Faith would move us

to occupy ourselves with things that are noble and upright in the sight of God and our fellow man. The Lord does not take pleasure in those that are lazy and apathetic. Jesus illustrated this principle when He presented the parable about the man who gave his servants talents to manage while he was gone. While some were faithful to properly manage and increase what was entrusted into their care, another went and buried his. This slothfulness was displeasing to his master. The call of faith would have us to be actively involved in serving God, for there is great reward offered to those who faint not. James teaches us that faith without works is dead. Therefore active faith is demonstrated by life and activity for the benefit of our Savior and the furtherance of His noble cause in the earth.

Faith calls us to obedience. "And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give *them their* portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." Luke 12:42-43. If we truly believe what the Word of God says about mankind being held accountable for the deeds done in this body, then we will be careful about obeying the bidding of our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 10:16 says, "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" It is essential that we believe the "report" and obey the Gospel. There is much false religion that places great emphases on "believing," yet their followers do not esteem the importance of obeying. The truth of the Word of God would dictate that the faith of those individuals is vain.

Faith cultivates a restful atmosphere. Romans 5:1 gives this wonderful assurance, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:" When we know that our sins have been forgiven and that we have new life in Christ, it brings about a peace in our hearts that passeth all understanding. By faith the promises of God are ours and we can rejoice in the blessings that He provides on a daily basis. Hebrews 11:33-34 tells of those, "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong,

waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." May we never underestimate the power of faith in our lives.

"And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith." Luke 17:5. This is a good request for every child of God to have, for we all have need of this precious gift. Then a comforting scripture in I Timothy 1:14 tells us, "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." With the "exceeding abundant" supply that is available to God's people through grace, none of us should allow unbelief to cripple our life. Ask for and apply this powerful weapon against all of the enemies that threaten your soul. God will honor your faith and give glorious victory.

In October of last year I fell behind in the publication of the Faith and Victory papers. Each month since then I thought I would be able to recover the lost time, but I have failed to do so. Therefore it seems expedient to combine the January and February issues. I apologize for the irregularity of the previous issues and desire your prayers that the Lord will help us to do better in the future. Also pray that the Lord will continue to bless the work here and cause the publications and literature to be edifying and minister grace to those who are seeking a closer walk with God.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey
wemurphey@yahoo.com



IL—Greetings in Jesus dear name. I want to thank each one for remembering me in prayer for the healing of my body. I am a lot better—my back, hip and also the arthritis. I have carpal tunnel syndrome in my hands and wrist, and I am diabetic. Please remember me in prayer for the healing of these. I trust the Lord and I know He can heal me if it is His will. May His will be done.

—Sis. Elsie Offerman

KY—Please pray for my son, Maneth, he has some physical and emotional needs. He has recently given his heart to the Lord and he desires prayer for the Lord to help him get victory over a tobacco habit. —Sis. Kay Griffitt

Philippines—Dear Saints, Greetings in Jesus' lovely name. I'm sorry to inform you that Sis. Dinah Duremedes went to be with the Lord this afternoon. (1-29-09) Thank you so much for all the love and support, specially your prayers. God bless you. Your sister, —Nellie Tibayan

MO—Bro. Clayton Gaines has some very serious physical needs. Remember him in prayer. Compounding his illness, the power to his home has been disrupted by the recent ice storm in the Myrtle/Thayer area. Bro. Harlan Sorrell also reported that the campground has sustained heavy damage to the trees. Pray the Lord to bless the Saints in this area as there is much work to clean up from the debris left by this storm.

Standing Prayer Requests

Bro. Carlos Arriaga
Sis. Gladys Cashio
Sis. Helen Carson
Sis. Genevive Carver
Sis. Elizabeth Corteway
Sis. Waneta Creel
Sis. Patsy Doolittle
Sis. Dorall Forbes
Bro. Troy Gentry
Bro. Lee Hilton
Jaden Howard
Sis. Karoline Kessler
Bro. Mark and Sis. Darlene Knight
Sis. Elsie M. Offerman
Sis. Melba Powell
Sis. Marilyn Rendall
Bro. Vernon Robinson
Sis. Ruth Shehee
Sis. Cheryl Smith
Bro. Michael Smith
Bro. Rodney Sorrell
Bro. Edward and Sis. Gloria Taylor
Sis. Imogene Taylor
The Mitch Taylor family
Sis. Norma Tiller
Bro. Delmar Wilkins
Sis. Anneta Williamson

MEETING DATES

Oklahoma City (Revival)—April 1-5
Miami, FL (Camp Meeting)—April 5-12
Alabama (Spring Singing)—April 25
Oklahoma State (Guthrie)—May 22-31
National (Monark Springs, MO)—July 17-26

MEETING NOTICES

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK, REVIVAL

23rd Street Church of God congregation in Oklahoma City desires a revival meeting for April 1-5. We are looking to the Lord to provide the minister of His choosing. The congregation extends an invitation for all to come and enjoy the blessings of the Lord with us. Services will be 7:00 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday. There will be morning and afternoon services on Sunday with dinner served. The afternoon service will start about 2:00 p.m. (There will be no night service.) The chapel is located at 5900 N.E. 23rd St., Oklahoma City, OK. Contact persons are: Bro. Loren Busbee, (405) 478-3860 or Bro. Galen Kelly, (405) 424-8400.

MIAMI, FL, CAMP MEETING

The Saints in Miami, FL will be having a camp meeting beginning April 5 and continuing through April 12. Services will be nightly at 7:30 with two services on Sunday. The schedule of day services will be announced at the meeting. All are welcome.

For more information call Bro. Charles Clay at (305) 235-4271 or Bro. Ken Baxter at (786) 554-8833. The chapel is located at 235 NW 47th St, Miami, FL.

ALABAMA SPRING SINGING, NEAR WARRIOR

The Church of God congregation near Warrior, AL is planning a singing April 25, at 6:30 p.m. in the chapel. Activities will begin at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday morning at Dodge City Community Building, about one half mile west of Interstate 65, from exit #299. Dodge City is near Cullman.—Please take note, this is a different location than we usually have for the activities on Saturday morning and afternoon.

On the following day, April 26 there will be dinner on the chapel grounds with services at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

The chapel is located approximately two miles west of Interstate 65 at exit #289 on Acton Bend Circle. For further information you may contact Bro. Roy Herron at (205) 647-7869 or Bro. Marshall Whitson at (205) 647-6325.

Africa Mission Report

I am very thankful for the blessed trip to Ghana that the Lord gave to Bro. Matthew Gellenbeck and myself. We left on January 12 and returned home on the 23rd. Our purpose was not evangelistic, but was rather to address some needs among the ministers and to encourage them in the way. God met with us and blessed in our fellowship and time together with the brethren.

Bro. Naths-Igbanibo from Nigeria traveled to Ghana to enter into the burden with us. We appreciate his spiritual leadership and support of the work in Ghana. The brethren are encouraged and have expressed a desire to work in unity for the furtherance of the Gospel.

There is a minister we met that had left the truth over twenty years ago. In the last two years, he has left Babylon and desires to labor in God's true church. We are looking for the Lord to lead this new congregation into all the light and make them a blessing in Ghana. The night we had service with them, a number of people came forward and prayed to start a new life in Jesus Christ.

In the mornings we had Bible studies with the ministers, and in the evenings we went and had services in the different village congregations. On Sunday, people from the various congregations came to Akumadan and we fellowshiped together.

God was gracious to give us good health and strength for the trip. My heart is full of thanks for the presence of God.

Please remember the work in Ghana that the Lord will bless and help them to be rooted and grounded in truth.

Hundreds of saints have been displaced from their homes in Malawi due to a cyclone and heavy rains that resulted in widespread flooding. The local government has not assisted these people with food. Hence, some of the saints in the United States have been helping to supply the saints in Malawi with some maize to help them through this critical time. Further information can be found at: www.africamission.com

Lord willing, we are planning another trip to Kenya and Malawi in April. We plan to conduct meetings in which Christian living and Bible doctrines will be taught to the ministers and Gospel workers. Our prayer is that God will firmly establish His church in these countries. There continues to be much hunger for the truth in these areas. Please pray for success of these endeavors.

—Bro. Michael Smith

Personal Testimony of the Practical Applications of the Holy Spirit

By Sis. Vonda Cole

Overview of the Steps to Receiving the Holy Spirit

When we come repenting, we are forgiven or cleansed of our committed sins, and thereby, justified in the sight of God. The scriptures ask the question, "...Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?..." Acts 19:2. To receive the second work of full salvation, we must come consecrating our already purified life to God to be cleansed of the inbred sin (carnal nature). The Holy Spirit cannot come into a life that has not first been cleansed from committed sin. At this time a person chooses to let the Holy Spirit take the lead in his/her life.

The life of a Christian is happy and free. The greatest freedom known to mankind is found in living the Christian life—truly living it to its fullest and not playing at living for God or living the metaphorical life of wandering around in the wilderness because of unbelief. Let's consider the definition that Bro Isaac Chandler explained in a message "Two Works of Grace" preached in the 1960's. He brought out that the song #120 in the *Evening Light Songs* "Fully Saved Today" speaks of the life that has had the second cleansing work, because salvation and sanctification is the complete salvation/redemption package. Verse 3 especially describes the victorious life of the sanctified, "I am fully saved today, while His Word I do obey, On the promise now by faith I calmly rest; Not a doubt or fear I know, While I walk with Him below, For I'm leaning on my Savior's loving breast." Naturally we have doubts and fears flit through our minds, but when we have come to the Lord consecrating our lives to Him and say "not my will, but thine be done," then as those thoughts come to our mind we chase them right out the door with, "I am the Lord's. He will take care of me. Let come what will come, twill but pass through His hand." A figurative example of this act is Abraham shooing the birds away from his sacrifice (Genesis 15:11). The quest of the enemy of our souls will continually be to get us to break that resolve and pick something back up that we have lain on the altar of consecration.

Personal Testimony

As the writer, I can only speak for my life, but as the reader you can pause and consider how it has been in your life as you came for sanctification and then continued to leave your "all" on the altar as it was tested through life.

I came to the Lord in my youth consecrating my life. The Holy Spirit came in at that time and each time I gave the Holy Spirit full freedom, I was *more* than a conqueror. However, my understanding was not clear all the time and I am human, so there are those points in my life that I did not yield fully in a situation, and those failures are glaring faults in my brother's eye. But thankfully, the Lord is merciful and as long as we don't willfully back up and resist, He continues to lead each one of us to show us more of the beauty of His plan.

However, because I came to the Lord in my youth, when I consecrated my "all," my "all" was pretty small. I had health; I had no earthly possessions; I had no husband; I had no children, but still yet I gave Him my "all" and He accepted it and came in to dwell in me to give me greater conquering power. Maybe because my "all" was so small, I remember no exulting emotion with the infilling of the Holy Spirit, but had to take it by faith that since I had followed the plan of the Word then the promise of the Word was also mine.

Manifestations of the Spirit

However, I had life to live, so my "all" was going to be tested on a daily basis and sometimes in a very heated way. I have found that the battle is harder the more self is entrenched and intertwined in an area. What I would like to share now is how the Holy Spirit manifested itself in different circumstances when the will was left on the altar.

There are times when a re-consecrating of the will brings a healing, a gift in the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12), or greater divine communion like daily walking on a heavenly plane (example, Paul's out of body experience II Corinthians 12). Some authors explain the latter as union and communion with God. In every victory over self, the Holy Spirit always

brings a greater power to live a holy life and rise above those trials in life that would want to crush us down. Power to live a holy life is the main office work of the Holy Spirit, so the manifestation of a holy life is always present.

At this point, I would like to leave a disclaimer: The Christian life is never to be viewed as a literal "Health and Wealth" answer. Zephaniah 3:12 states that God would leave in the midst of them an afflicted and poor people. But, Isaiah 1:19 also promises that the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land. God promises to fight our battles for us by sending in pestilence, etc. (Exodus 23:27-33.) Sometimes the devil tries to keep our eyes focused on the "poor and afflicted" state of the Christian rather than the "victorious and reigning" state that is gifted from above as a soul submits under God's almighty hand.

The manifestations, other than power to live a holy life, have always been a surprise to my finite mind. It has made me realize that I cannot put God in a box and predict how He will respond when one chooses to yield in the monumental battles of one's self-will. The only assurance I know is that the manifestation will be wonderful and glorious! Praise God! Once the glory of God comes down in a situation, the gory pains of the death to self that were so hard to submit are forgotten as the soul revels in the presence and blessing of the Spirit. Praises be to God! It is a glorious plan! Truly the tongue cannot tell of all the glory, but that doesn't keep us from trying to share this great secret recipe of blessing and peace with the rest of the world.

Blessing of Temporal Needs

Although there are multiple blessings in this battle that seemed to endlessly last for a year, just one blessing will be listed. In January, about 4 years ago, a customer of ours fell on hard times, and withheld payment of several invoices. We signed a contract on a house during this time, not realizing that withheld payments would drag on for so long. One day I felt I had to have an answer of peace about the home purchase that now didn't appear so wise. It was April 15, 2003 and as a small business owner, we had just sent a small "chunk of change" to IRS, the closing on the house was ten days away and any hope of the customer paying in the near future was fading away. As I wrestled with God, I consecrated the house and even the earnest money if He showed us to back out of

the deal. Before I got up the Lord had given assurance and direction. The next day, we received a sizeable check from a surprise source that covered the amount that was being withheld wrongfully by the customer. It was definitely a God thing and not a human instrumentation. God is so good!

Even in this current economic crisis, I have this full assurance that God will take care of His consecrated children, even if it is not the way the flesh would desire. Do we realize God has greater spiritual plans for our lives even if we seem to suffer financial ruin? There is a beauty for our souls in the ashes of financial ruin. Psalms 37:25 "I have been young, and now I am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Remember, God owns the cattle on a thousand hills. He will not call all to walk this path of devastation, but feel privileged that God counted you worthy, if it happens to be your lot.

Blessing of Healing

On another occasion about eight years ago, the Lord brought me to the point of consecrating my companion. As I look back over the fears and battles waged in my mind, I count it silly, but at the time it was very real and monumental. My heart just knew that the Lord was sending my spouse out in the work of the Lord to kill him on the highways. Through personal devotions and an anointed Sunday morning message, the Lord confirmed to my heart that He not only wanted me to give over the evil and bad in my life as I had already done at salvation, but that He also wanted me to give over the good and "God-ordained" to His control. (I Samuel 15:1-9.)

About a month before the spiritual battle of consecration, I had a physical check up. The nurse practitioner found an abnormal mass in my abdomen and really encouraged me to have further testing, including an ultrasound. However, three days after my husband "arrived home alive and well," I realized that I no longer had any of the daily pain of the affliction that I had lived with for about 10 months. Once again, praise God for honoring His plan. He is so merciful and sometimes answers when we are not even praying for the answer, but is just waiting for us to untie His hands!

Each one of us will die with something. Only the God of Heaven knows our time. For Paul, the Bible said he sought three times to be delivered of a situation, but God said His grace was

sufficient. As we submit to God's will in afflictions, whether the answer of healing in this life is ours or not, the spiritual blessings of peace and contentment will be innumerable.

Blessing of Peace

About twelve years ago, I was at death's door due to extreme blood loss. As I lay collapsed on the hall floor too weak to even want anyone to move me, my mind reeled with the "what if's," should I die. Naturally, I wanted to stay to see my children reared to adulthood, but as I worked through it and said, "Lord, I want to be here for my children and husband, but I am willing to go home if you see it is best," a sweet indescribable peace swept over me. I felt light and free and ready to pass on to Heaven. It was ethereal. The peace was worth the distress and suffering that I had experienced up to that time.

Blessing of Communion with God

As was stated earlier, the hardest and longest battles will be when self has to die to self—a consecration of everything that seems to go against your whole moral fiber. But what does the scripture say, "Unless you lay down your own life also you **cannot** be my disciples (paraphrased from Luke 14:26.) The testimony is too personal and too lengthy to share the details, but the victory that seemed too long in coming has been a sustained glorious relationship with the lover of my soul. I came close to being disillusioned in the Christian way. The peace and the victory that is plainly described in the Scriptures did not seem available to me at this juncture. Now, on the other side, I just want to shout from the housetop, "Peace is real; peace is for everyone. It just requires a dying to self, a dying to the seeming injustice of the situation and the seeming eternity of the situation." After listening to Bro Isaac Chandler's message on "Two Works of Grace," I finally realized there was a deeper consecration for me to make. When I listened to him speak on the power that comes with that consecration, I was shouting and realized no consecration for my Lord and Savior is too great.

After giving over to the Lord what He now showed me He was asking, the peace flowed in and covered the situation. After that time, the Lord put into my hands the book "*The Christian's Secret to a Happy Life*," by Hannah Whitall Smith. As I read it, all I could do was rejoice, because she was describing my spiritual experi-

ence. True, I still have to shoo the figurative birds away when the thoughts of the situation flit through my mind. Even though my emotions may still be weak at times, there is no overshadowing power of oppression or depression, because the situation is in the Lord's hands and I continually choose to leave it there. If circumstances never seem to end in this life, there is grace to reign above—a grace to turn the "Juggernaut Cars" into "God's Chariots" to raise us above the situations that we humans tend to grovel in (chapter 19 in "*The Christian's Secret to a Happy Life*.") I am still living way below God's power for my life, but anytime I recognize that fact, I just try commit more into His hands.

Ponder and Reflect

And now, I know you can think of many more and greater blessings that the Lord has done in your life, because I have heard some of those testimonies recently. Think on them now...and thank the Giver of all good things.

Dangers of Not Following on into Sanctification

The parable in Matthew 12:43-45 tells of a life that was swept clean, but the person failed to go on and invite the Holy Spirit in to take full possession and burn out everything that the devil could claim as his own. So when the devil came back by with a temptation, there was not the power to resist and the devil came back in and took abode with more force and vengeance. This fact is why with each backsliding it is harder to come back to the Lord. It is not impossible, but the devil sees to it that we are entangled more and therefore it is harder on the flesh to break over the will. Oh, that each Christian would not only see the danger to their soul of not consecrating to be filled with the Holy Spirit, but would also see the beauty of the power of a sanctified life. May we each one not be like the neighbors of "Legion" (Luke 8.) When they first saw the power of how the spirits were cast out of the man and driven into the swine, they were scared and frightened and asked the very giver of that wonderful power to leave.

May, not only, the understanding that our salvation experience is at risk if we do not follow Christ on into the *full* plan of God, but may also the understanding of the wonderful, victorious life in this present world be the impetus that encourages us to not leave our swept and garnished spiritual house void of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.



Thurman Lee Sorrell was born the son of Alsia James Sorrell and Bessie Mable Reynolds Sorrell on June 1, 1937, in Myrtle, MO. He departed this life January 5, 2009, in Mountain Home, AR at the age of 71 years, 7 months, and 4 days. He was united in marriage on December 25, 1955, in Myrtle, MO to Carol Allen. He is survived by his wife, Carol Sorrell of the home in Myrtle; four children, Harlan Sorrell of Myrtle, Dennis Sorrell of Myrtle, Camille Zacharias and husband, Norman of Hinckley, MN and Stanley Sorrell of Myrtle; seven grandchildren, Anthony and Jason Sorrell of Myrtle, and Nathan, Jared, Robyn, Caleb, and Natalie Zacharias of Hinckley, MN; one sister, Lillian Eck of Guthrie, OK; two brothers, James Clifford Sorrell and wife, Gertrude of Pochahontas, AR and Fred Sorrell and wife, Merry of Myrtle, MO; two step-brothers, Troy Gentry of Loranger, LA and Eddie Gentry of Sand Springs, OK; two step-sisters, Hassie Palmer of Loranger, LA and Eula Shirrell of Molalla, OR; one sister-in-law, Edna Sorrell of Newton, KS; one brother-in-law, Gene Beisly of Strafford, MO; several nieces, nephews, other relatives and many friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents; one brother, Lehman Earl Sorrell; one sister, Dora Lela Beisly and one brother-in-law, Edwin Eck.

From the time he was a small boy, Thurman was a farmer at heart and thoroughly enjoyed working with livestock. He owned and worked with many different kinds of livestock throughout his life, but in his later years he enjoyed tending his heard of sheep. From his childhood Thurman was taught by his godly parents to firmly believe the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. When just a boy, he assisted his father, Alsia Sorrell, along with others, in the construc-

tion of the Church of God Chapel of Myrtle, and he attended services there regularly for the rest of his life. Throughout his life Thurman performed many maintenance jobs on the Myrtle Church of God campground and contributed much to its upkeep. In the months of his declining health, he sought a closer relationship with his Lord and left an inspiring testimony of God's personal dealings with him. He loved and enjoyed the life and family God gave him and often said, "I don't want to leave you all," but he was resigned to God's will. He left this world with a testimony that he was ready to meet the Lord and, though greatly missed by all of us, we know our loss is heaven's gain.

Funeral services were held January 10, 2009, at the Carter Funeral Home Chapel in Thayer, MO with Bro. Curtis Williams and Bro. Toney Samons officiating. Burial was in the Oak Grove Church of God cemetery, Myrtle, MO.

NOTE OF THANKS

We wish to thank all who prayed, sent flowers, money, cards, email messages, phone calls, or drove many miles to be with us during this difficult time. The outflow of love from the Saints was so comforting. You were all so caring and thoughtful, and we appreciated it so much. May God bless you all.

—The Thurman Sorrell family

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The Wedding Garment

By Thomas Nelson

*Have you on the wedding garment,
Spotless in this world below,
Shining in the light of Heaven,
Brighter than the winter's snow,
Washed and cleansed within the fountain,
Till no trace of sin remains,
Kept within the blood of Jesus,
Without wrinkle, without stain?*

*When the Master looks upon you
With His eyes of flaming fire,
Does He find your robes untainted
With a single wrong desire,
Envy, jealousy and anger,
Thoughts of vengeance, words of strife,
Cov'tousness and idle worship,
Love of world and pride of life?*

*Are you clothed in Heaven's raiment,
Righteousness, humility,
Mercy, kindness and forbearance,
Tenderness and sympathy?
Robed in patience and long-suffering,
Words of comfort, peace, and cheer,
Love in deed and truth abounding,
Love to all both far and near?*

*Soon the marriage feast is coming,
Which shall be forevermore;
Blessed are the called and chosen,
Spotless, undefiled and pure.
Will you then be clothed or naked,
In the awful judgment day?
Will you be among the blessed,
Or to torment go away?*

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