

## *Faith Movement... Where To Now?*

*The fact that you live on a planet where natural law has been subjected to a curse makes it a breeding ground for all kinds of diseases. The question is, if one of these diseases touches you, can you stop it?*

I know how much you love the Word and the privilege to be identified with the "faith movement". Now that we are approximately three decades into the faith move, it is easy to look back and see how the teachings on faith have played a major role in effecting the way we believers think, both on a national and international level.

Because we have had that much time to explore the different aspects of faith, many of our teachers have become very knowledgeable in the different areas of their calling. Some teachers have majored on healing, some the righteousness of God, while others have taught on prosperity, confession, etc.

Now, with many major camp-meetings behind us and the birthing of thousands of churches all over America that adhere to the message of faith, we can honestly say that we have had time to put faith to the test. And, of all the things I have been questioned about, the subject most asked about is healing. That is probably because, in cases of terminal disease, the final outcome affects the faith of so many people when someone they love fails to receive healing.

If you have been around the faith movement for any amount of time at all, I am sure that you could tell at least one or more stories of knowing someone who died of a terminal disease while standing on the Word and believing God that they were healed. Of course, being in the position I am, I have had to counsel many people who lost their loved ones in a similar situation and were confused and hurt. And, as much as I understand the Word, nothing I do or say seems to help as much as I would like in the middle of these kinds of crisis situations.

As far as the people are concerned who have just lost a loved one, many times their confusion and hurt is compounded by the fact that they are faith people who know they have a covenant that includes healing.

If the person who went home to be with Jesus did not have faith, or was living in such a way that it was obvious to those around them as to why they died, then it leaves our understanding intact and we think to ourselves that we would have done this and that differently. But, when the believer who died seemed to have had it all together, was a strong Word-oriented, Bible-confessing believer, then it tends to shake us up. When preachers or teachers of the Word looked up to and admired for their faith lose out to death after a long bout with a terminal disease, it can strike fear into the hearts of believers who may think, "If a strong person like this, full of the Word, could not receive their healing standing by faith, then what chance do I have?"

The devil has tried to introduce fear more than once into my life and ministry when there seemed to be no logical explanation for the death of a believer who appeared to love God and upheld our covenant of healing with the same veracity that I do. Yet, I understand, in my heart, that in our

covenant, God has truly provided healing for everyone and has made it available to anyone who has asked Him.

Up until the end of April, I really did not know how to address this issue except to say that the secret things belong to God. And we, who are strong in our covenant and uncompromising relationship with His Word, knew that even though the person who died was asking God for their healing, and to all outward appearance were believing to receive it, that somewhere down in the confines of their spirit, there was a secret rapport going on between them and God, and as an outsider, we may never know what it was. But, you can rest assured that God was there with both counseling and healing and was ready to adhere to the decision they yielded themselves to, whether the decision made it possible for them to stay or to go on to Heaven.

And being a secret thing of God, we may never know what the reason was that caused God to take them home. But you can rest assured that God did what He could to cause them to understand what changes they needed to make in order that they might live, and if for some reason they could not make the changes... HE GLORIOUSLY TOOK THEM HOME TO BE WITH HIM!

First of all, many people have a misconception on how God is able to communicate with a person who is in the middle of a crisis. For some reason, they want to believe the crisis better equips them to hear from God because of the seriousness of the situation as compared to a person who is just putting in another day in his walk with Christ.

Wrong! It does not. The same Holy Spirit that deals with us on an everyday basis about our life, our call, and following after Him, is the same Holy Spirit who deals with us in the middle of crisis using the same little promptings and conscience attacks that most of us do not pay any attention to.

I used to wonder why a person facing death didn't just throw himself on the mercy of God and say, "God, I will go anywhere, do anything, answer my call, follow after You, and be anything You want me to be." However, if these things had not been as important to them under the normal everyday promptings of the Holy Spirit, why would it suddenly be important to them just because they are dying?

The Holy Spirit is going to continue to talk to a person in the same way about obedience and service to God in the middle of a crisis but they may not hear Him because they are looking for a miracle, not another lecture from the Holy Spirit about their life.

God knows I trust Him completely as much as I know how, and every time I go through a situation that challenges God's faithfulness, He knows I have no question in my heart as to why a person in a particular situation died. And, because I trust Him, He was able to speak two things to me that resulted in the revelation contained in this letter.

The first was that in God's sovereignty, He is absolute JUDGMENT. I am not talking about judgment in the sense of God rendering judgment on a nation by sending plagues on them or things like that. In God's divine nature, there are several attributes that make up the essence of God and one of these divine attributes is ABSOLUTE JUDGMENT.

God does not "try" to judge or render a right decision, He IS Judgment. He is incapable of rendering a wrong decision or administering wrong judgment. Because God is incapable of incorrect judgment, we can be assured that, in any situation (including the death of a loved one), whatever course of action God did or did not take, He was justified in doing so.

We know our covenant includes healing and, when we talk about God's judgment in these kinds of situations, the only judgment we are talking about is the decision-making process God goes through that sets the course of His action and releases Him to either heal the person or take him home to be with Him. But, whatever the outcome, we can rest assured that God was exonerated in His decision.

The second thing God revealed to me is found in John 12:25-26: *"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour."*

God spoke to me just as plain and said, "If you lose your life in this world, then you will find it in the Kingdom. But, if you lose your life in the Kingdom, then you will find it in the world." If I do not love God enough to walk after Him in response to the gentle promptings of the Holy Spirit (those attacks of conscience that repeatedly tell me to get my foot out of the world and into the Kingdom where it belongs) ... if I do not love God enough, when there are two chickens in the pot and two cars in the garage, to lift my face towards Heaven and say, "I will go where You send me, be what You want me to be, I will fulfill any call You want me to fill" ... if I am not willing to lose enough of my life to this world to find it in His Kingdom, then the chances are that, if a terminal disease ever comes my way, it will take from me by force what I would not give to God willingly, MY LIFE.

There are hundreds of thousands of believers and preachers who have been dealt with by the Holy Spirit and prompted time after time to die enough to the world to go on to the next phase and anointing of their call. And, because the hidden things belong to God, we do not know from outward appearances, the rapport that is going on between them and God through the promptings and leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Many times some believers and pulpit ministers look and sound almost perfect to the casual observer. But, in that hidden room of the heart, the Holy Spirit may have done everything He could do to get them to go on to the next phase of their relationship with God but they just would not go. The world has become too comfortable. It is not that they are not producing thirty fold or so in the Kingdom of God. It is just that they are not going to listen to the Holy Spirit to let Him bring the other 70% of their life under subjection to God's Word.

So, then it happens ... along comes a terminal disease. Is God allowing the disease? Not necessarily. Did the devil single them out because of their disobedience? Not necessarily. I know a lot of rebellious sheep and preachers who live their whole lives out and hardly ever get sick ... BUT WHY? Well, we belong to a world that has been subjected to corruption, not willingly, but, nevertheless, it is there. Romans 8:20 says: *"For the creature (creation) was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope ..."*

The fact that you live on a planet where natural law has been subjected to a curse makes it a breeding ground for all kinds of diseases. The question is, if one of these diseases touches you, can you stop it?

I have heard believers say, when someone died of a disease, they were receiving judgment at the Hands of God, but Jesus said in John 12:47-48: "*And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*"

God is not judging you. You can do what you want with His Word. You can preach part of it, all of it, abandon it in favor of the lusts of the flesh but in the last day you are going to be judged according to what you did with it. Right now, you are the boss, you are in the driver's seat. God is not going to use strong arm tactics to get you to love Him. You will have to give your love to Him on your own. He will not take it from you by force.

So the question is, if we receive bad news, if we are singled out by the enemy for destruction, can we survive? We know that God is not causing the disease and that it is the enemy who is the destroyer. We also know that God, by His grace, has been causing the Holy Spirit to prompt us by speaking to our consciences about dedicating ourselves wholly to Him. He calls us to seek Him and pursue our calling whatever it may be.

God's best for us is that, while no one is forcing us, no disease or tragedy is pressuring us, and, of our own free will, we set our face toward Heaven and choose to listen to His voice and serve Him from our heart. I know in my own life I am seeking more intensely to hear what the Holy Spirit would say to me, through His Word and His leading, and I know the Word and the Spirit always agree. The time I want to hear is now and the reason is that I love Him.

So, even though it is not God bringing judgment when tragedy strikes, He has been all the while trying to thoroughly furnish us with the Word by His Spirit so that we will stand in the evil day. Even now there are hundreds of thousands of believers doing what they please with their lives and the Word. They are choosing what their tomorrows will be. But remember it is **ONLY THE WORD** that can stop what the doctors cannot ... when the illness is beyond their capabilities.

I ask you to join with me in dedicating to God listening ears for His voice, seeing eyes for His Word, and a heart full of love for Him.