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Holy Spirit in the Now - III

Oral Roberts

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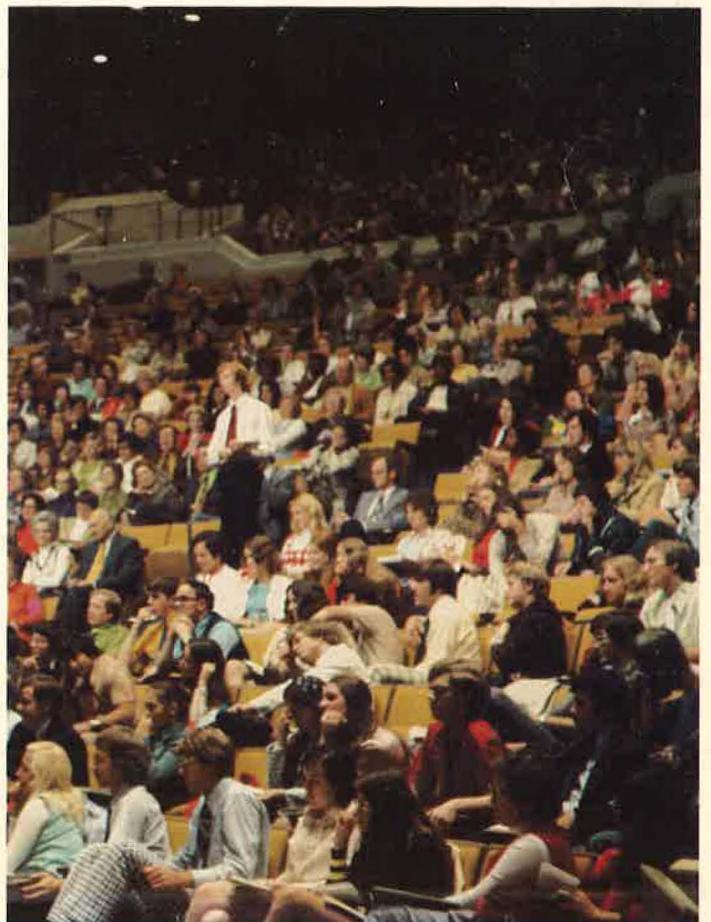
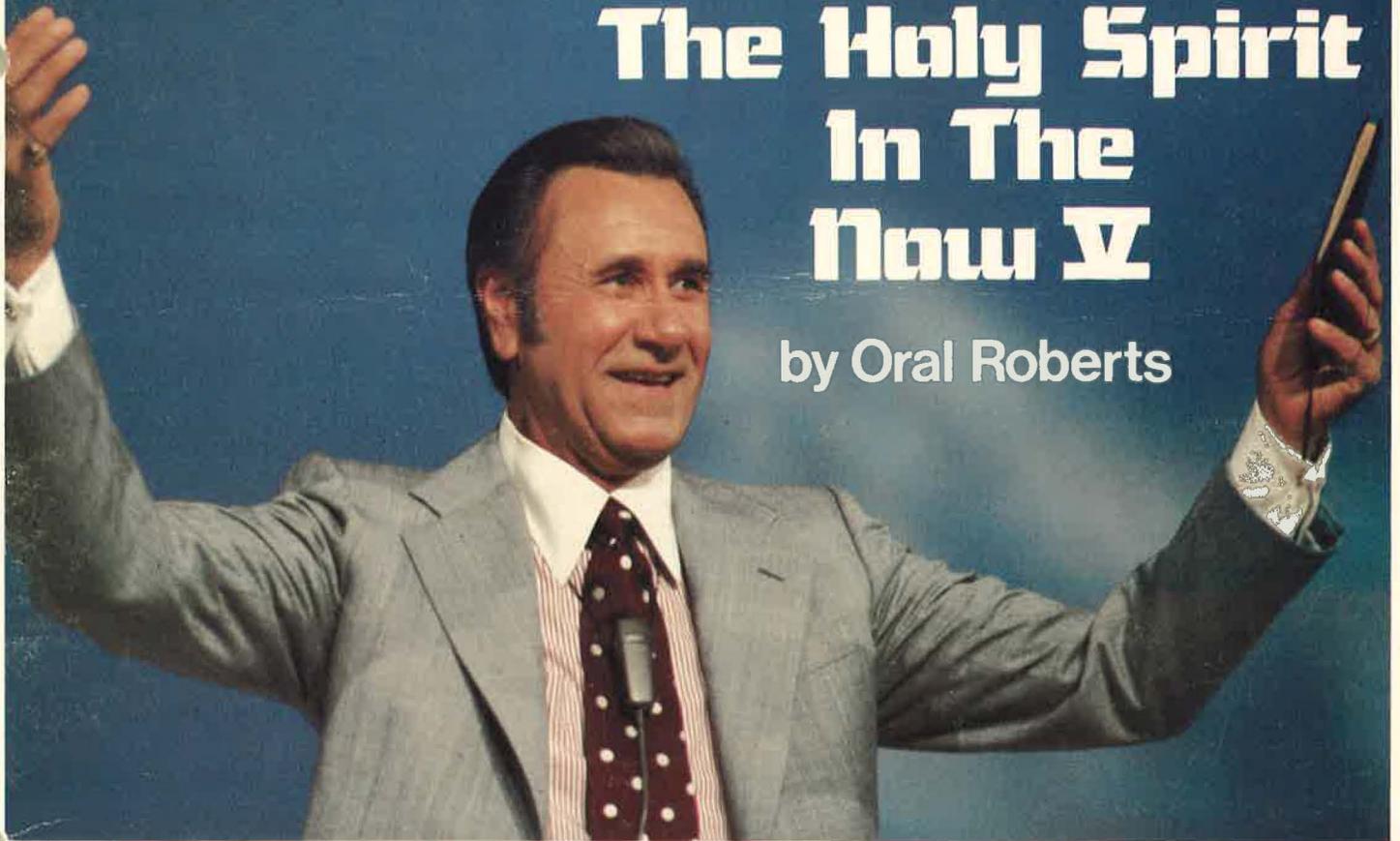
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The Holy Spirit In The Now Σ

by Oral Roberts



**THE
HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NOW V**

by Oral Roberts

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MY PERSONAL WORD TO YOU

Friend, as you study each lesson I'd like you to use your Bible. Please keep in mind that a class of approximately 2,500 people listened to this series of lessons. They have been only slightly edited to make what was said clear to the reader.

I would like to tell you about the miracle that brought about this class which is now part of the established curricula at Oral Roberts University. The first endowed academic chair on the Holy Spirit was established in the fall of 1972 through the generosity of my good friend, the late J. Arthur Rank, outstanding British businessman, member of Parliament, and Methodist layman.

I first met Lord Rank in 1967 when I spoke to a group of Christian businessmen in London. Although I had heard his name many times and knew of his Christian witness, this was the first time I saw him in person. Lord Rank was in his late seventies, but he stood tall and straight, a man of strength and character. I knew I was in the presence of a man of God. I took his hand and said, "Lord Rank, I'm honored to meet you." Then a curious impulse came upon me and I added. . . "I pray that God will fill you with the Holy Spirit."

Two years passed before I saw Lord Rank again, at which time I learned he had received the Holy Spirit. He then shared with me how this had transformed his Christian life and how the Holy Spirit had made Jesus Christ so real to him. He said, "I feel as though Jesus were walking by my side."

Because of his great interest in the Holy Spirit, Lord Rank determined to establish this chair at ORU. He passed away, however, on the day he was to sign the papers. The trustees of his estate honored his desire by setting aside a generous sum for this purpose for five years. Then they will decide if they wish to continue this course on the Holy Spirit.

As you study these lessons, I pray that God through the Holy Spirit will reveal Jesus to you in a way more real than you have ever experienced before.

Oral Roberts

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1

GOD HAS A NEED TO GIVE

**Suggested Scripture reading for this lesson:
St. John 3:1-21**

The Lord Jesus tells us about God in words that no human being ever said before. Now these words of Jesus are very familiar to many of us who were raised in the church. But I've been given what I think is a revolutionary concept of these words. Jesus is describing God to us, so that we can understand Him better. He wants us to understand how God works and how He does things. Then we can learn to do things like He does and really find the miracles He wants us to have. Jesus said in John 3:16:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Jesus said these words to a man by the name of Nicodemus, a man who was searching for God, who wanted meaning in his life, who wanted some of the miracles that he had observed in the life of Christ.

When Nicodemus reached out that night to ask Jesus questions about God and about life, Jesus said to him, "You must be born again." That was a statement Nicodemus found difficult to understand. Jesus finally said to him, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (Read John 3:1-21.)

Now what was Jesus trying to say about God? I think He was trying to show us that God undertook the greatest Seed-Faith project in all history, that God himself was facing a need in His own existence, startling as that may sound. Does God have needs? Did God have a need at that moment? I'll say He did. God was sowing a seed for a desired result. God focused His love into giving, which brought about the very thing that God himself desired for human beings and which met the great need of God, the Creator of all the universe.

GOD GIVES FIRST

First, Jesus begins with the word *GOD*. God who scooped out the bed for the ocean, who flung the stars from His fingertips and sculptured the mountains and

hung the earth on nothing — God. But what does this mean to me...to me in my existence, with the problems I have to face every day of my life? What does this mean to me? Jesus said, "God so loved...God so loved the world." God loved the world. And the world is mean. The world is full of murder, ugliness, death, and people who will slit your throat. The world didn't care whether God existed or not. The world didn't even believe there was a God. The world was not interested in God. The world had made no expression toward God. God loves this world, made up of human beings in their ugliness and meanness, of whom the Bible says, "All have sinned and gone astray." God loved that world.

It's the kind of love that's so very hard for me to understand. That God would love the world, and love the world first, before the world ever loved Him back, or loved Him at all. God *so* loved...That little word *so* sounds deep and tender. For God *so* loved the world that He gave; He made His love an act of giving. God is saying here that love is nothing unless it is translated into action, into something you do, something that rolls out of your being toward someone else. He *so* loved that He gave His only begotten Son. He spared not His own Son. He could have given any one of millions of angels. But He gave His only begotten Son.

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

You know, I think we are sometimes like the antique dealer who was always looking for bargains. When he came to a certain little town he went into a store where he noticed a cat drinking milk from a bowl in the middle of the floor. As he watched the beautiful cat he suddenly noticed that the bowl was an antique worth a lot of money. And he thought, I'll bet you this ole boy doesn't know that's an antique. Maybe I could buy that for little or nothing.

So he walked up and said, "Mister, that's a beautiful cat. I've been needing a cat. I wonder if you'd sell me that cat."

The storekeeper said, "Sure, I'll sell you anything I've got. Just give me the money and the cat's yours."

After paying him, the dealer picked up the cat and began to stroke him. He said, "My, what a beautiful cat. Oh, by the way, I notice he's drinking milk out of an old bowl. He's used to it and the old things not worth much. I believe I'll just pick it up and take it with me."

The merchant said, "You put that bowl down! That's the best cat-seller I ever had."

I think human beings are sometimes like that. When we approach others, we're often looking out for number one. We do have to preserve our own lives. We can't turn away from ourselves any more than we can turn away from anybody else. We are important to God who has made each of us unique and irreplaceable. I believe there's something built into you and me that's more precious than all the silver and gold and diamonds of the world. I believe that. And so we have to love ourselves as well as love our fellowman. But at the same time I think we often expect something for nothing. Or we find ourselves cheating or trying to catch someone off guard so that we can take advantage of him.

GOD GIVES HIS BEST

Jesus said that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. That's really hard to take in. Now God has blessed Evelyn and me with four children — two sons and two daughters. Back in the '50s when my children were small, God gave me a vision while I was sitting in our house in Tulsa. It seemed as real as life. And I found myself so stirred and moved by it that I wept.

With my eyes wide open, I saw myself sitting while my children were playing in the yard. Suddenly I heard my older son, Ronald David, scream. You know how children have different ways of crying out. Sometimes they're just happy. Sometimes they're angry. When they're in trouble their voices have a special ring. That's how my son's cry, "Daddy, Daddy, Daddy!" sounded.

I jumped up and ran outside just in time to see two men grab him, throw him into the car, and drive away with him. At first I was so stunned I didn't know what to do. Then I jumped in my car and began to chase them.

Soon I lost them in the traffic. I drove like a wild man down the streets and alleys, crying and asking God to help me save my child. I found myself driving into the outskirts and then going down one of the country lanes. There I came upon their car. I stopped quickly, jumped out, and saw them on the side of the hill. They had just nailed my little son, Ronald David, to a cross which they were jabbing into the ground. As I pulled him down from that cross, he died in my arms sobbing, "Daddy, Daddy!"

The vision was over. Out of the depths of my being, I cried, "O God, what does this mean?"

God spoke to me, deep in my heart, "If this had happened to your son, Ronald David, you would still have one son left. Isn't that right? I had only one Son and I gave Him. I so loved the world that I gave Him. And that's what one human life is worth."

I said, "There is no way that any human life can be worth the life of Your Son Jesus Christ."

And He said to me, "You don't have any right to

judge. You have no way of judging. Only I can determine the worth of a human being. You have no right to put any less value upon yourself or upon another human being than I do. I say that you and every human being is worth the price, which is My own Son."

Now I'll never forget that. It has been in my being like a pounding surf, a roaring wind, a burning fire in my heart all through these years — that God gave His only begotten Son. And He gave Him for you. And He gave Him for me. He so loved that He gave. I want to give you the words of a song that Oscar Hammerstein wrote:

A bell is not a bell till you ring it.

A song is not a song till you sing it.

Love in your heart is not put there to stay.

Love isn't love till you give it away.

Just think about that a moment. A bell doesn't become a bell until it rings. A song isn't even a song until it's being sung. Love in your heart is not put there to stay. Love is not love until you give it away.

SEED CORN IS THE BEST

During the first part of my life I grew up on a little Oklahoma farm. Later my father became a minister of the gospel, but while I was a little boy he was a farmer. My second brother, Vaden, and I grew up together. We chopped cotton, hoed corn, and helped my father in the fields. The hardest task of all was gathering in the corn. Vaden and I rode the wagon to the fields, where we pulled the ears of corn from the stalk and pitched them into the wagon. Then we'd throw the corn into the barn.

I remember the day my father said, "Wait a minute, boys; don't throw those ears in the barn. You pitch them over to one side." At first we didn't know what he meant. Then he explained, "Don't throw these choice ears, the biggest and best ears of corn, in the barn. Put them over here in a little pile. They're our seed corn, the best corn, which we'll plant next year. This is the kind I want multiplied back. If we plant these small ears, that's the kind of corn we'll get. If we plant our best ears, that's the kind of corn we'll get next year."

Now that made an impression on me. It impresses me now.

GIVE YOUR BEST

God gave His best, His only begotten Son. When our hearts reach out to another human being, that action is tinged with God's everlasting love. It's a reach from the deepest part of our being that strives to give our best. If we really want to be like God, to understand God as He exists and moves and acts in our universe and as He deals with you and me on a personal level, then we're going to have to learn how to give God our best and then ask Him for His best. Now I've been trying to train myself to do this, and say, "God, I give You my best." Say it to yourself again and again: "God, I give You my best. Then I'll ask You for Your best."

GOD HAD A NEED

God so loved the world that He gave His best, His

only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Why did God do this? Why was it so important to God that men should not perish, but that they have everlasting life?

It's a brutal fact that God had lost man whom He had created. The devil had stolen man from God. Man had chosen to go away from God and had gone astray in sin. God had lost His children. It's a little like losing one of your children, one that you gave birth to and brought into the world. Unless you've experienced it, you can never really know how parents feel when they've lost a little child. God had lost His children and He felt the need to win them back. God's need was to defeat the devil, to manifest His Son to destroy the works of the devil, to give His Son so that man would not perish but have everlasting life.

I believe that God had a need for man to be restored. God reached down His hand and took hold of you and me and lifted us up. He restored us to the way He had made us, in His own image and likeness. God had that need and He gave for a desired result. What was that desired result? God desired that no human being would perish, but that every human being would have life — that he would have abundant life, eternal life. God was focusing His love.

FOCUS YOUR GIVING FOR A DESIRED RESULT

I can hold a magnifying glass up to the sun and let the bright sun come through it. If I focus it upon a piece of paper I can burn a hole in it almost instantly. I can actually set the paper on fire just by focusing on a spot on the piece of paper. Now that's the only way I can understand what God did...in so loving the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. God focused His love upon His desire — that no man should perish, no woman should perish. Every human being would have life. You know, that's the thing we all want, life. Every older person is trying to live one more day. No matter if he's 90 years old he wants to live one more day. Every young person wants more life. We're trying to fulfill ourselves. We want life and that's what Jesus Christ came to give.

Once when Jesus came into a town where the people were very unfriendly, even hostile, James and John said, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and [destroy] them?"

Jesus said, "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:54,56).

Do you think you can take your love and make it an act of giving? Can you focus your giving upon a certain desired result? Yes, you can.

It amazes me to realize that God focused His love, His gift which was His own Son, upon a desired result. And because of this, you and I can be saved. Many of us are saved. Many of us have been given eternal life, because He did focus His love. God's desired result has happened in millions of lives, is happening in millions of lives, and will happen in millions of more lives. God had a need and God focused His love for His need to be met. He focused His love for a desired result.

FOCUS YOUR LOVE

I want to tell you what happened while I was on the way to the Jerry Lewis Telethon with the enormous gift of money from our students, faculty, and staff. I had no idea they would give \$10,000 in one chapel service. Just as I got to the airport a man walked up to me. Without saying a word he handed me a check for \$3,300 for the Oral Roberts University. I asked him, "What does this mean?"

He said, "Well, I just felt like I should do this."

I was stunned. Here I'm on my way with a Seed-Faith check for the Jerry Lewis Telethon when a fellow walks up to me and gives us back more than one-third of this amount. It's a total surprise to me. That's one of the quickest Seed-Faith projects returned that I've ever seen.

GIVE IN LOVE

If you give without love, you're not really giving. St. Paul says that even if we give our bodies to be burned and have not love, it's nothing. Your giving has to be motivated by the same love that motivated God when He gave His only begotten Son.

Through the years I've been slowly coming to the revolutionary ideas I'm sharing with you today. Time and time again I've been able to focus my giving...maybe for the construction of a building on the ORU campus...or for a life to be touched. I say, "God, I'm giving so that this person will be healed. God, I'm giving so that a certain thing will come to pass in my life. I don't know when or how but I'm giving for this."

Now this idea is so new that I know it will upset you for a moment, but we've got to get over the idea that giving is a duty, that loving is an obligation. I wonder how Evelyn would feel if I walked over and said, "Honey, I'd like to kiss you. I owe you this kiss. It's my obligation to kiss you." I just don't think she'd appreciate that kiss.

What is it you desire in your life? I believe you can focus your love just like you focus the sun right through a glass to that little piece of paper. You can focus it and something will be set on fire. You can focus it for a desired result. I don't think you can tell God how or when to act. I think God's going to act in the way He chooses and at the time He thinks is best for you. I think He'll meet your need in His way, which is always better than your way. Once God meets the need, even though it may be different from what you had anticipated, you always say, "It's better than anything I could have imagined." Never once has God done less — He has always done more.

EXPECT A MIRACLE

Night before last as I lay in bed praying for a certain person who is dear to me, God touched me so deeply I couldn't keep the tears back. Out of my prayer I found myself saying, "God, I'm going to make a certain commitment to You. I'm going to give a certain thing to Your cause. I'm going to focus my giving upon that person — for that person to want the keys of Seed-Faith, the keys of a new life."

And now that I've given, I find myself expecting a miracle.

In Matthew 1:21 the angel of the Lord said:
And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

What's the name that the angel of the Lord said this child would have? JESUS. And why did the angel say His name would be Jesus? Because He was going to save us from our sins. That's it, isn't it? You see, in the very name that God gave His Son, He was expecting miracles. "Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

God was not just giving to the wind. God was not merely giving as a scattered seed. God was giving for a purpose. God was giving to save His people. "For he shall save his people from their sins." In the Greek language the words *save* and *heal* come from the same root word. "Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save [and heal] His people..." Now there is God expecting miracles.

You see, many people come to church expecting God to do great spiritual things there, but they don't expect Him to do great things in their personal lives. If God is powerful enough to save the soul, He's powerful enough to heal the body. He's powerful enough to help you with your finances, your business, your job, your very life. I think your giving should be directed toward a purpose, a desired result. You should give in expectation of miracles.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

THREE MIRACLE KEYS

The first key of Seed-Faith is: **God is your source.** Second: **Give first, and give your best.** And the third miracle key is: **Expect miracles.** I want to share these three miracle keys of Seed-Faith with you. I shall start at the beginning and go through to the end of the Bible, book after book, experience after experience in the Bible, working out the three keys of Seed-Faith. Say the three miracle keys:

1. God is my Source.
2. I will give, and give first.
3. I will expect many miracles.

HARVESTTIME

Expect the seeds you plant to be multiplied, to become a harvest. Expect the love that you give to be multiplied back to you. I promise you, on the authority of the Word of God, that God is going to meet needs in your life that have never been met. God is going to make a way for you where there's never been a way. God is going to prosper you in ways you never dreamed that you could prosper. God is going to charge you with His Spirit, fill you so full of His Spirit that you'll be an entirely different kind of human being. You'll be a take-charge kind of

human being. You'll be a mountain-moving kind of human being. You'll face your problems and your needs with your shoulders squared and your head up. You'll believe God for miracles. I believe that things you now think are impossible will suddenly become possible, because God so loved you that He gave. You will so love that you can give and focus your giving upon a desired result.

PRAYER

Father, in the name of Your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who You gave because You so loved us, I pray for many miracles to happen. I pray that God will loose you from bondage to self and open you to giving and loving so that your whole being will explode with God's love. I pray that you will start giving and start expecting the miracle that will meet your need. I pray for that miracle to begin now. Through Christ I believe and I know it's going to happen to you. Amen and amen.

PANEL DISCUSSION

EVELYN: God holds out His precious gift of life eternal to us. Can we refuse it?

ORAL: Yes, we can say *no* to Him, because we are free moral agents. God gave us the power of choice. If we want to we can spit at God; many people do, you know.

EVELYN: Is this gift of eternal life automatic for the whole human race?

ORAL: God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth...the person *becomes* a believer, *has* faith in Him. We're talking about the miracle of Seed-Faith, faith as a seed we plant. There are millions of people who aren't saved now, who are going to perish. God gave His Son so that if we believe on Him, none of us will perish, but will come into life everlasting.

EVELYN: All right, when does life everlasting begin?

ORAL: The very moment we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of the Living God. Evelyn, I can just hear you saying, "And how can a person know? How can I know Jesus has saved me?"

EVELYN: I know that I know.

RICHARD: I was going to make a comment about God having a need. It's hard for us humans to think of God having a need.

ORAL: In what way do you think He had a need?

RICHARD: Because, like you said, He lost man in the garden of Eden. Satan came in and stole man away.

ORAL: But it was man's choice, man's own will.

RICHARD: And God had a need to get man back. I'm just saying it's difficult to understand, and yet at the same time it makes it easier for us to understand God, because all of us have needs. And to realize that He has needs...

ORAL: This is why God became a man. He entered flesh, He came down in the form of Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ became a *man*. I'm talking about a *man*, not some superangelic being. Jesus Christ was a man. He was one hundred percent human. He felt everything that you feel. He faced every temptation you and I will ever face. Jesus took the place of the sinner. Jesus Christ was here on earth, God walking around in human form, subject to

everything man is. That's God as man. That's God saying, "I have a need."

God wouldn't have sent His Son into this world if He had not had a need. But, Richard, He spared not His own Son. Jesus Christ was a man all through His life. He was a man hanging on the cross. They buried Him and left Him.

The Holy Spirit touched that lifeless human form and life returned. It was no longer the lowly human Jesus. It was Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, raised from the dead. *God!* alive forevermore. I tell you, there's enough of the power of the Holy Spirit here to save every person, heal every person, meet every need.

2

HOW TO GET INTO THE RHYTHM OF FAITH

Suggested Scripture reading for this lesson:
1 Kings 17

I am very much aware of the various types of individuals and their particular needs. Students face academic problems, problems of relationships, problems of finance. Business people wrestle with problems that the workingman sometimes doesn't understand. I know about the struggle that businesses go through to exist, to bring forth new products, and to serve this country. I also know about the problems of working people. Will the job last, will they get the raise they deserve and need to pay their bills? Doctors and nurses have an entirely different set of problems because they deal with people on a one-to-one level. Housewives have problems caring for their family and home. Ministers of the gospel have a different set of problems because they deal with people's spiritual problems.

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO GET YOUR NEEDS MET?

How are you going to find a solution for the problem that is absolutely about to wipe you out? When someone says he doesn't have a problem, I don't believe it. I believe *everybody has a problem, or he is a problem, or he lives with one*. 1 Kings 17 talks to the NOW of your existence.

And Elijah (who was a prophet) the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab (Ahab was the king of Israel at that time), As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

Elijah was saying, "God is going to withhold the rain." And it was withheld from Israel three and a half years because the king and the country were in disobedience.

And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens

(birds) to feed thee there. (Notice God said, "I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.") So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh (meat) in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. (First He commands the ravens to feed him, now He commands a widow woman to feed him.) So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake (I have no bread) but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse (vessel): and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

Did you ever feel like you wanted to die? Did you ever feel that things were so futile and desperate that you *might as well die*? Then you begin to understand her situation.

And Elijah said unto her, Fear not.

Don't be afraid. Many times when you say, "Don't be afraid," people think you are out of your mind. They say, "How can I *not* be afraid?" Elijah says, "Fear not," and then he tells her how not to be afraid.

Go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after

make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth (until the natural forces take over again). And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not (didn't diminish), neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah. And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? And he said unto her, give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth. (Now I know the truth. I KNOW!!!)

GOD MEETS ELIJAH'S NEEDS

In the land of Israel there was severe famine. Through the disobedience of King Ahab and his queen, Jezebel, there had been a general backsliding among the people of God. King Ahab had provoked the Lord with his sins more than any other king who had ever reigned in Israel. Ahab and Jezebel, king and queen of Israel, would not listen to God. They were leading the people into destruction. Then God did something to get their attention and to save them and their people from destruction. He put His Word into the heart and the mouth of a man named Elijah, a prophet who came out of the hills — really out of obscurity — into the presence of King Ahab and the queen. Elijah delivered God's Word, "Thus saith the Lord God, there shall be no rain upon the earth until I give the word, until I, the Lord God, give the word."

Because of that, Ahab turned against Elijah and threatened his life. God said to Elijah, "I want you to go over to a little brook and hide there. While you're hiding, I am going to preserve your life. No man will know where you are, and I shall sustain you. For I have commanded the ravens to feed you."

This is one of the most fantastic statements in the Bible. God commands the birds of the air to take notice of

a human being. A single human life is so important that God speaks to the birds of the air, "I want you to fly bread and meat to him every morning and every night."

Then God said to Elijah, "You go down to the brook Cherith and there you'll find plenty of water." In spite of the drought you'll find water."

This goes on for some time before the brook dries up. A man may live without food, but he can't live without water. So here he is now...the prophet of God who has truly given of himself, who is keyed to God, his Source, so much that he's willing to risk his life.

GOD SPEAKS AGAIN

The Word of the Lord came unto Elijah a second time and said, "Arise, and go to a little town called Zarephath where you will find a widow. I've commanded this widow to sustain you." First, God commands the birds of the air to feed the prophet. Then God commands a widow to feed this same man. Both are unlikely sources of supply. You would never dream that God would use birds or a poor widow. Yet God commands them to take care of his prophet.

I can hear someone saying, "Sure, God takes care of His favorite few. Elijah's a prophet of God. Sure, God's going to take care of Elijah. But what about me? I'm no prophet. I'm no well-known individual. I am just me — just me. What about ME?"

Well, I'm glad that question is in your mind because the same kind of power God used for Elijah is now used for the poor widow. God works the same kind of miracle for her that He worked for the great prophet. This is God's way of dealing with every human being. This is the essential nature of God.

IF YOU AND I CAN SEE THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF GOD, THAT IT IS THE SAME — IT NEVER CHANGES — THEN WE ARE GOING TO BE ABLE TO STAND IN THE PLACE OF AN ELIJAH OR STAND IN THE POSITION OF THE WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH AND SEE THAT GOD WILL BE THE SAME TO US.

God will be the same to you...whether you are known or unknown, whether you feel important or unimportant, whether you have lots of money or none at all, whether you are tall or short, whether your skin is white or red or brown or black or yellow or mixed. It makes no difference to God. The same God who commanded the birds to feed Elijah, and the widow to sustain him, is now going to use that same commanding power to meet the needs of the widow of Zarephath.

I'VE GOT TO HAVE A MIRACLE

Elijah meets the woman as she's gathering kindling to build a fire. And he says to her, "Ma'am, I've

come a long journey. Would you give me a drink of water?" The widow was glad to do that.

As she went to get it, he said, "And by the way, would you bring me a little food?"

And she stopped and said, "Sir, I can bring the water but not the food; for, you see, my son and I have only enough food in the house for ourselves for one day. We are going to eat it and die. That's what I'm doing now. I'm fixing this meal."

It's like the businessman who said to me, "Oral, ten years ago I heard you speak on Seed-Faith. I was cynical. I wasn't against it; I wasn't against you, but I suppose you noticed that I wasn't believing it."

And I said, "Yes, any minister knows what's going on in his audience."

"Well," he said, "I want to tell you I made the mistake of my life. Do you remember my situation ten years ago?"

I said, "I do. I remember that you were fantastically successful. You were more than a millionaire. You had a beautiful wife. You were a great civic and social leader in your city."

He said, "Yes, I was successful. But today I'm broken in my body."

He had a kidney affliction; he was on the verge of emphysema. His breath was coming in desperate gasps. He was very different from the man I had seen in the audience ten years before when I tried to share the miracle of Seed-Faith.

He said, "Our marriage is gone; we are going to divorce. My business is gone, I'm near bankruptcy, and I've lost my health. I'd like to give what little I have left to God."

I said, "Sir, God knows you want to give Him all you have. He knows what's really in your heart."

He wiped his eyes as he said, "I'm at the end. I've got to have a miracle."

I said, "You've got to have more than a miracle. You've got to have a new way of life. You've got to understand the way God deals and then accept the way He deals. You've got to learn the way God works with you and then work with God. You've got to learn this. It's not just one miracle you need. You need a whole life-changing process so that God can reestablish your life and put it on an even keel. You need God to help you for the rest of your life."

Then this man said, "I'm starting in Seed-Faith. I'm going to give."

I said, "Well, I want to tell you a story," and I began to tell the story about the widow of Zarephath that I'm sharing with you now.

This woman had planned her death. She was going to eat and then give up. She was going to give up.

You know what giving up means?

It means that you back out from life.

It means you turn away from what you are trying to do.

It means you give up your will — your shoulders sag, your heart hurts, your steps drag, your smile fades,

your shoulders slump, and you go down.

If you are a student you can't study; you can't hold your mind on your studying. You get upset about everything. Nothing works. Nothing is right.

If you are a businessman, everything goes wrong...the economy is against you...people don't buy anymore...the government is over-regulating and everything in the world is going wrong.

If you are a mother, your children are doing things that you'd just give anything in the world if they'd quit doing. Some of them are stepping on your toes while they are little, and as they get older they step on your heart and break it.

Your whole life seems like a rose that bloomed once and will probably never bloom again. Do you ever feel that way? You feel that you aren't going to make it and the whole world looks dark. You don't know where you're going to go...what's going to happen to you...how low you're going to sink. You just feel like you are going to die.

Many a person is walking around who is already dead. He's not dead in his body — his heart is still pumping — but he's dead in his spirit — she's dead in her spirit. Their spirit is dead. Their will is dead and life is passing them by. They say, "I have a reason for being like this."

A SUPERNATURAL INTERVENTION

The widow of Zarephath could have said, "It hasn't rained in all these months. My neighbors are dying. The stock is dying, the crops are not producing. There's nothing to eat. There's nowhere to go. If I go into town I'll starve there. If I stay here in this little farm house at the edge of town I'll die here. Death is everywhere. Defeat faces me at every turn of the road."

Now, friend, that's going on today. There's some part of your life that's defeated. There's some problem you are wrestling with that's getting the best of you. I contemplate my own life, how God called me to build Him a university. And now He's called me to complete the work by adding a medical school, a dental school, and a law school.

When I consider the economy of the country, the mood of the people, and my small resources, I want to throw up my hands. I want to run and hide. I want to say, "God, no, I can't do this." I have said it. I've told God many times, but He just keeps the pressure on. And the pressure on me is there for a purpose. It's there for my good, because if I obey God, He will build this School of Medicine. He will build this School of Dentistry, He will build this School of Law. God will complete the Oral Roberts University and He'll do it a million times better than Oral Roberts can do it. God will do it.

The pressure you feel is the Holy Spirit coming into your heart. That's a positive action of God in your life.

That's God saying to you, "Rise up in the inner man."

That's God saying to you, "Don't look at these meager dwindling financial resources...DON'T! Don't look at these problems surrounding you. Quit gathering up a few pieces of kindling to build a fire to cook your last meal, to call in your friends and have a wake. Quit doing that."

Elijah said to the widow, "There's a way for you to stop being afraid. There's a way. Give me a little part of the food you said is your last meal. And the Lord says the meal and the cooking oil will not diminish. After you cook the first part for me, then cook for you and your little son. You are going to find as much meal and oil left as you started with. Then you cook the next meal and there will be the same amount left for the next meal. And it will happen day after day, month after month until the rain comes. When the rain comes, you won't need the supernatural supply. You'll have to go out and grub it again. You'll have to work in the fields and get it in the natural way. But right now there's going to be a supernatural intervention in your life..."

THERE'S GOING TO BE A MOMENT WHEN ETERNITY STOPS AND HEAVEN TOUCHES YOUR EXISTENCE AND THE HAND OF GOD IS UPON YOU. AND HE WILL TOUCH EVERYTHING IN YOUR HOUSE.

"It will be an electric feeling. The food itself will come to life, will multiply. You'll find that it's not a bare table, it's not a lonely existence, you are not alone anymore. You are going to live; you are going to have abundant life. God is going to supply all your needs. God is going to take care of you, ma'am. Will you believe me?"

First, Elijah said to her, "Fear not!" Somewhere I heard that these two words, "fear not," are in the Bible 365 times, one for every day in the year. A "fear not" for every day in the year. Say it:

FEAR NOT!

What is this unseen power that changes marriages that are falling apart, courtships that won't work, studies that we can't complete, businesses that will not operate successfully, jobs that will not continue?

What is this unseen power that can change the situation from worse to better? From defeat into victory? What is it? It's the Living God. **IT IS GOD WHO IS IN THE NOW.** It is God who cares, who loves, who's concerned.

God picked you out as one of His crowning pieces of creation. You are unique and irreplaceable! You are somebody...and I'm somebody. We belong to God and **GOD CARES.** He has a way for us to come out of our defeats.

It doesn't matter what the defeat is...what shape it takes in your life. It makes no difference because God has commanded an unseen force to sustain you, providing you will get into the rhythm of the way He does things.

HOW DOES GOD DO THINGS?

First, God always gives first. He always loves first. He always takes a hand in people's lives first. He says for you to give first. The widow of Zarephath was to give first. She was to give a part of what she had, and give it first.

It must have frightened her terribly to be asked to give a part of all she had left in the world. But you see, without that as a seed to multiply, God had no way to meet her needs.

SHE HAD TO GIVE GOD A SEED TO MULTIPLY BACK TO MEET HER NEED. She had to Seed-Faith something. She had to Seed-Faith. And it happened to be a little bit of bread.

In your life it may not be the sharing of bread with a hungry person. It may not be even the giving of money. It may be something more difficult. It may be putting a friendly arm on someone's shoulder and saying, "I am praying for you." It may be to go to some individual and share a word of encouragement. It may be to pray for a person or a family. It may be a gift of your time, freely given to God. It may be something else. But I tell you, it's a seed that God will multiply.

THE TINY LITTLE THING THAT YOU PUT IN OUT OF YOUR HEART WILL NEVER DIE. THAT SEED OF FAITH IS THE INGREDIENT THAT MULTIPLIES THE DIMINISHING RESOURCES OF YOUR LIFE.

ELIJAH WAS KEYED TO HIS SOURCE

Notice that the brook eventually dried up. Now suppose Elijah had made the brook his source. Where would he have been? He didn't because he was keyed to God. So when the brook dried up he was in a position to hear God say, "Now I've commanded a widow woman to sustain you."

This Seed-Faith principle is all through the Bible. Here is a man keyed to God, the Source of his total supply. He was looking to God. He wasn't looking to the ravens or the brook. They were just helps along the way. They were not a source to him. When the brook dried up there was no break in his stride of faith, no giving up and crying out. Elijah's Source would never change, his Source would never dry up. His Source is God. So now he hears God say, "I'll just shift the scene. I've commanded a widow to sustain you."

Elijah goes there and finds a supply.

This is why you cannot afford to get your eyes on anything or anybody other than God, because human beings are going to fail you. Earthly resources will dry up.

One of my associates works for us out of the gift of his own life, because he has independent means and wants to work for God. One morning he was sitting at his desk, looking very downcast. I said to him, "What's the matter?"

He said, "Haven't you read the newspaper this morning?"

I said, "Yes, but what are you referring to?"

He said, "The stock market, the bottom has dropped out. Most of my assets are in the stock market. That's what I look to for my earnings..."

And I said to him — and I think God anointed me to say it to him because it came out of my spirit, not my mind — "Since when is the stock market your source of supply? Since when do you make the stock market — something that man can manipulate up and down — your source?"

He said to me, "Oral, what are you trying to say to me?"

I said, "My brother, God is your Source. God is not dependent upon whether the stock market is up or down."

He said, "Well, that's where most of my assets are."

I said, "Not really, not really. Your real assets are in God. Your real asset is your faith in God. Your real asset is the way you love and give of yourself. Your real asset is the way you expect miracles from God. God is not bound to meet your needs through the stock market. It goes up and down like a yo-yo. God is bigger than the stock market. If it dries up, God will open up a new situation for you."

I remember he put up his hand and he said, "Oral, you've made my day."

Not only is your day made, I think your life is made when you understand who your Source is. I don't think it's easy. In my experience I've found it hard to remember who my Source is. Oh, it's easy to remember for a day or a week, but it's also easy to get our mind off God. It's easy to get our mind on someone we think is going to help us. If that person fails us, then we give up. We say, "What am I going to do now?"

What if all your avenues are cut off? You see, if you have God, you still have your Source. And you can plant a seed and receive the miracle for your need. I believe this with all my being. If you lose your job, if your business fails, if your marriage is destroyed...I believe that if you hold on to God as your Source, keep on planting seed out of your need, and expecting miracles, God will intervene in your life just as surely as He did in Elijah's. And just as surely as He did in the life of the widow of Zarephath.

GOD IS IN THE NOW!

The widow had a tremendous experience. Her food was multiplied, she saw the power of God. But right in the midst of it a tragedy occurred, the death of her son. So she went to Elijah and said, "O man of God?" It's a question. She's wondering now. She has forgotten how God multiplied the food in her house. And that's easy to do...to forget the blessings of God. To forget that sometime, somehow, God intervened in your life. It's easy to forget that. And she said, "My little boy has died. Have you come here to recall my sin? To bring to my memory my life as a young girl? Have you come to haunt me?"

THE WIDOW GOT THE BLESSING BUT FAILED TO REDIRECT HER THINKING

If I were to give a starving man a fish, I could sustain his life for a day. But if I teach him how to fish, I could sustain his whole life. If God blesses you and you say, "Well, I've got a blessing from God," that's one thing. But if that blessing of God causes you to redirect your thinking, then your whole life will be changed. There is a greater blessing in Seed-Faith than just planting a seed out of your need for a desired result. God is saying more to you, He's telling you to find the rhythm of Seed-Faith living.

The widow of Zarephath gave out of her need and she gave for a desired result. What was the desired result? That the food supply would not diminish, right? And she gave, expecting miracles. And the blessing came. But she paid more attention to the blessing than to redirecting her thinking.

THE MIRACLE KEY

So Elijah now begins to change her thinking. He says, "Give me your little son." He took him in his arms and went upstairs where he had been sleeping. Elijah called upon the Lord. And God caused that little boy's life to revive. Then Elijah gave the child to his mother. Her statement is the key. She says to Elijah, the man of God, "Now I know. I KNOW that the Word of God in your mouth is truth. I KNOW. I UNDERSTAND it now."

I don't believe the widow of Zarephath understood when she first planted her seed, giving bread to the prophet. I believe she did it because she was inspired by the man. I believe the man inspired her to believe for this kind of miracle. She was able to say, "Yes," but I don't believe she understood. But now she says, "I understand. I understand what you're saying to me. I understand that regardless of the drought and the famine, I'm to trust GOD. I'm not to look at these circumstances but to look beyond them to God. I'm to be constantly open and giving."

LOVING AND GIVING MAKES YOU VULNERABLE

When you start loving you're going to hurt once in a while. People are going to take advantage of you sometimes. But you can't stop loving and giving because of your vulnerability. If you do you'll become bitter. You'll lose your faith. You'll become a cynic and you'll laugh at the supernatural. You'll mock the power of God. And you'll wind up without God, without hope. I've seen many a person rolling in money who had no hope. And I've seen many a person down and out financially who had no hope. They are full of cynicism, unbelief, and bitterness, because they had stopped loving and giving.

A TRUE STORY

I want to share with you something in my life. When I was dying with tuberculosis I didn't believe I would live, until a relative leaned over me and said, "Oral, God is going to heal you." These were the first positive words I had heard. I'm sure others had been said, but my mind hadn't heard them. Well, I was converted and healed and the years passed. And then one day this relative came to see Evelyn and me. And she said, "I'm in trouble."

I said, "What's the matter?"

"Well," she said, "you know, times are bad."

I said, "Yes, but specifically what's wrong?"

She said, "My husband has been out of work for three months."

I said, "No, I didn't know it had been so long."

She said, "Do you know that we're down to our last food? We can't even buy gas for our car."

I said, "No, I didn't know it was that bad. Here, take this."

She said, "No, I don't want any money from you. I don't want any money from anybody. I won't take welfare. I'm going to trust God."

But I heard the question in her mind...if I'm trusting God, why has He let me down like this? This was the unspoken question. And how well I understood it, because I have been in that place so many times. And I said, "Do you remember when you gave to me?"

She said, "No."

"Don't you remember leaning over me and saying, 'Oral, God is going to heal you?'"

"Oh, yes, I remember that."

"Do you realize you gave me the beginning of a new life? Those words caused me to believe that God cared about me. And through that I turned my life to God, was converted, and healed. You realize what a gift you gave me? That was a seed of faith and you should be expecting miracles from it."

And she said, "Well, I don't believe that I should expect anything back from what I give. I've never been taught that. I've always been taught just to give and not to expect anything back."

I said, "Have you ever planted flower seeds?"

She said, "Yes."

"Did you plant the seed, expecting it to multiply back?"

"Well, of course."

"Well, then, don't you realize your giving is a seed? God will return it but you won't recognize it if you aren't expecting. It'll pass you by and you'll wonder where God is."

She said, "That's how I feel now. I wonder where God is. I wish I had something to give."

I said, "You've already given a lot. You have two problems and here they are. One, you don't know who your Source is."

"Oh," she said, "I trust in God."

I said, "Sure you do, but you don't know He's your Source right now. And the second thing that's wrong is you're not expecting a miracle from the seed

you've already planted." Well, the conversation ended and she left.

In a few days she came back carrying two worn one-dollar bills. As she handed them to me, she said, "Here, Oral, put this in God's work."

I said to her, "How much money do you have?"

She said, "Two dollars."

I said, "You know I can't take them."

She said, "Oral Roberts, I'm not giving you two dollars. I'm giving them to God. If you don't want them, give them back to me, and I'll put them somewhere else. I've thought about what you said. I have thought about the widow of Zarephath. You said to give out of my need and I've done what you said. Now you're turning me down."

I said, "Give me the money." I tell you, I can remember the feeling that swept through me when I held those two worn dollars in my hand, knowing they were the last she had. I wanted to give them back and add to them real quick. But I couldn't do it.

She looked at me and said, "You told me to make God my Source. You told me to give. You told me to expect miracles. That's what I'm going to do." And she walked out.

Evelyn and I talked it over. We prayed. Not long after, she came back — her face beaming.

She just started in right there at the door. "Listen to me. A contractor called my husband and said, 'Come to work. I've got a year's work for you and I may take you on permanently after that.'"

Her husband is a carpenter. She went on, "You know there's no work. No buildings are going up in this town. And I've been offered a job, the best job I've ever had in my life." Then she said, "Something more important than that is happening. I know who my Source is."

This happened fifteen years ago to my sister, Mrs. Jewel Faust of Tulsa, Oklahoma. This is a true story. My sister came to a point in her life where she knew — she understood. She understood. The widow of Zarephath said, "Now I know. I know that the words in the mouth of God's prophet are the truth."

Do you know the truth? Do you know the rhythm of faith, how to get into it, how to give of yourself and expect God to intervene? How to trust Him and not let your trust be put in anything or anybody besides God? To give God your best and then expect His best?

PRAYER

What is your need? I want you to wrap your arms around yourself and let me pray with you. Let me pray that God will open your eyes and let you see that God is your Source. Let me pray that God will show you how to expect miracles.

Father, in the name of Your Son Jesus, my Lord and Savior, I ask You for many miracles. I ask You for them.

And now I pray for you. I pray that Jesus Christ will stretch out His hand and touch you. I pray you will feel the sensation of His presence and there will

dawn upon you an understanding that God is real, that God is in the NOW, God is your Source...your Source of total supply...that God is going to work miracles in

your life. He's going to start now.

Through Jesus Christ I pray, I believe, and I expect many miracles in your life. Amen and amen.

3

HOW TO RECEIVE THE MIRACLE THAT WILL MEET YOUR NEEDS

Suggested Scripture reading for this lesson:
St. Luke 5:1-11

Wouldn't you like to throw over your net into God's plenty and see it filled to overflowing?

Wouldn't you like to find God's depth for your problem and then see the miracle-working, life-changing power of Jesus Christ attack that problem until it's wiped out of your life?

Wouldn't you like to wake up in the morning and know that the whole day is as fresh as the morning dew, the whole day is an open book, a clean page?

Wouldn't you like to face your past failures and know they could be blotted out? There are millions of people in this world who are dragged backwards every day of their lives because of past defeats. There are people who feel the dead weight of a previous error so that they can't go forward because of the backward pull of that defeat. There are people who do not know they can take even one step forward in life because they don't know the miracle-working power of God exists. They don't know that the essential nature of God is to bring His miracles into each of our lives. They don't know God cares. They don't even know He exists. And you and I, those of us who believe in Jesus Christ, often forget WHO we belong to. We forget the nature of God and we forget that...

GOD IS IN THE BUSINESS OF MEETING US AT THE POINT OF OUR NEED

Here our Lord Jesus Christ comes on the job of the fishermen.

He comes on the job where they have failed. He invades the arena where they have tried and failed.

He walks up to them while they are mending their nets and grumbling, "Why didn't we catch any fish last night? We've spent our lifetime making a living like this. We know all there is to know about fishing. We've toiled all night and we've taken nothing. What's wrong with us anyway?"

As they look at the sea of Galilee they think of the fish they should have caught...the fish they could have sold to

feed their families and earn a living. They see that old sea and it looks forbidding, like an enemy. And they sit there lonely, forlorn, and in misery.

And yet, standing near is the Son of God who can speak to the things He created and cause them to do what He commands. All the fish in the sea obey the voice of Jesus Christ. Jesus can miraculously bless every man's work. Jesus Christ can meet every problem.

It's a moment of destiny.

It's a second when heaven is bending low to kiss the earth.

It is a time when the glory of God is closer than one's fingertips.

And a drama is about to unfold.

THE DEPTH OF YOUR GIVING IS THE DEPTH OF YOUR SUCCESSFUL LIVING

The depth of your giving is the depth of your successful living. Now say, the depth of *my* giving is the depth of *my* successful living. Say it! **THE DEPTH OF MY GIVING IS THE DEPTH OF MY SUCCESSFUL LIVING.**

What was God's depth? In John 3:16 Jesus Christ himself says of God His Father:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

What was the depth of God's giving? His only begotten Son.

The depth of God's giving was *His best*. The depth of God's giving was *giving off the top*. The depth of God's giving was *His only Son*.

The depth of God's giving was giving out of His own need, His need to restore man...who had been lost to the devil. God had a need and that need was to recover the human family which had been stolen out of His creative hands. So God gave out of His need, giving His only begotten Son as His depth, and He gave for a desired result.

What was the desired result for which our God gave? That no one would perish, but that every person would have everlasting life. That's God's desired result.

In 1 Kings 17 is a story of Elijah. Israel was backslidden when Elijah came forth as a prophet of God to lead the nation back. The depth of his giving brought the people back to God. When Elijah's life was threatened, he had the courage to deliver the Word of God. He knew the threat of death hung over his head. So he offered up his life. He was *willing* to be killed. He gave of his love because he loved those people. He gave of his love because he loved God. He gave of his time because he wanted to invest it in the service of God for those people.

The depth of Elijah's giving was the giving of himself. He gave out of his need and he gave for a desired result. God supplied his needs because of the seeds of faith he had planted. God supplied his needs through ravens, birds who dropped meat and bread to him in his little cave. Later God sent Elijah to a widow woman in Zarephath. He commanded her to feed Elijah.

THERE WAS A COMMAND OF GOD TO FEED ELIJAH BECAUSE OF THE DEPTH OF HIS GIVING

What was the depth of giving of the widow of Zarephath? She had only one meal left. She was going to cook it for her little son and herself, then eat and die. But Elijah walked up and said, "You go and do as you've said, but first cook a little bit of that meal for me, the prophet of God. The Lord says if you do that, the meal and the cooking oil will not diminish until the day rain comes on the earth. Until then there will be a supernatural invasion of God's multiplying power upon your food. It will not diminish, but rather it will increase day after day and month after month until the rain comes when you'll have natural resources of food. But until the natural forces are able to supply your needs, God will give you supernatural answers."

What was the depth of her giving?

She gave part of the last morsel of bread in her house. This was her depth of giving. She gave out of her own need and she gave for a desired result, that she and her son wouldn't die. The desired result was for the extension of their lives and the life of the prophet of God. That was the depth of the giving of the widow of Zarephath.

What was the depth of the giving of Peter and the fisherfolk who were his partners?

When Jesus preached to the great crowd by the sea of Galilee, He noticed these fishermen washing and mending their nets. He saw the desperate, lonely look upon their faces. He saw the slow way their hands moved. He felt the defeat they were suffering. He walked over and asked them to give.

And what was the depth of that giving? Their capital resources, the commercial fishing boat with which they made their living.

Jesus Christ invaded their lives, their actual resources for life, and He dared to say, "The depth of your giving is to lend Me that boat that I may use it for a higher purpose. Let Me have it. Give it to Me."

The depth of their giving was to receive His word and give what Jesus asked. Jesus spoke to the people from the boat. When He gave it back, He said, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

JESUS BORROWED THE BOAT EMPTY BUT HE GAVE IT BACK FULL

Whenever God asks you to find your depth of giving, He doesn't do it because He needs it. He doesn't do it to feed himself or to clothe himself or build himself a house. He doesn't do that. God asks something from you and me with which to work His miracles. He asks you and me for seeds of love and faith so that He can multiply His blessings back to us. He asks us for the failures so that He can make successes.

When Jesus Christ was asked to die on the cross He had the promise that God would raise Him from the dead. Do you believe that Jesus Christ could have gone to the cross, suffering and giving up everything, without any hope that He would ever live again? The Bible says He endured the shame of the cross and the suffering for the joy that was set before Him (Hebrews 12:2). There was a joy set before Christ. God was saying to Him, "If You'll suffer this, if You will go to Calvary and die for the sins of mankind, I'll raise You from the dead and You'll be King of kings and Lord of lords." That was the promise.

When we find our depth of giving, that depth of giving leads to a net-breaking, boat-sinking load!

It leads to a miracle of God.

It leads to a supply of your needs that you can get met in no other way.

It means the whole resources of heaven are flung against your problem.

Our weapons are not carnal, they are mighty, even to the pulling down of the devil's strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:4). You see, when we give something we are not giving it up. We are investing it in the bank of eternity that has never failed to pay a dividend...a bank that can never go broke...is always oversupplied...and will never fail to meet our need. Do you believe that?

God is speaking to you now about your depth! *The depth of your giving is the depth of your successful living.* It's not living with your hand out, saying, "Give to me" or "What can I get out of this?"

It's not putting your hand out, expecting something for nothing. It's not seeing how I can slack off this job and do as little as possible, just enough to get by. But it's working when the boss is not looking. It's telling the truth when a lie would be more convenient. It's being honest even though no one is watching.

The depth of your giving is at the very depth of your vital being, a depth that reaches to the deepest part of your soul where your love and compassion flow. Your better self emerges with every ounce of honesty and integrity to be multiplied into more integrity and more honesty.

There are no shortcuts.

There's no such thing as something for nothing.

God himself sent His Son.

God didn't ask something for nothing.

Neither can you or I ask something for nothing.

We must find our depth of giving.

What did Peter do?

He found his depth and gave of it — his boat. He obeyed Jesus — launching out into the sea, actually going against all the rules of fishing. You see, they fished at night rather than during the day. The waters of Galilee are so clear during the day that the fish see the net and swim away. So they fish at night. Jesus is saying, "Fish during the day. It doesn't make any difference. It's My miracle that's going to make them bite anyway."

THIS SUPERNATURAL POWER IS RELEASED WHEN WE FIND OUR DEPTH OF GIVING... WHEN WE LEARN HOW TO RELEASE THE BETTER PART OF OURSELVES

Just the other day I dealt with a desperate man who said, "I'm floundering. I'm miserable. I feel like the work I'm in now is leading to a dead end. I'm not fulfilling myself. I don't even know if I'm doing God's work."

As I listened to him, I picked up his spirit and his feelings. And I also felt the Holy Spirit giving me a word of knowledge for him. I asked him, "Do you think you would be doing God's work if you were preaching the gospel?"

He said, "Of course."

"Would you if you were engaged in some kind of worthwhile church work?"

"Yes, I'd be doing God's work."

"Well, what about feeding hungry people?"

He said, "Yes."

"Well, your job has to do with feeding people. What you do helps create food for the people of the world. Don't you realize that God is concerned about the hungry people? That He transformed the loaves and fishes just to feed hungry people? Don't you know that the job you are doing is also God's work? The man who comes to your house and hauls the trash away is doing God's work, because when trash piles up disease strikes. So the man who hauls it away is doing God's work. The trash hauler is doing God's work. Besides that, the job doesn't make the man — the man makes the job. The person makes the job."

"Well," he says, "what shall I do?"

I gave him two bits of advice. One of them was — you can guess — to read my new book, *A Daily Guide to Miracles*. In fact, I challenged him. I said, "I double-dare you to read it."

Now that's putting it on strong, isn't it? I said, "Read *A Daily Guide to Miracles*, and say the key for each day over and over to yourself. Find the key of Seed-Faith for each day in that book."

He promised me he would do it.

Then I said, "When you go to work in the morning, treat your job like you do your wife. When you feel a surge of love for your wife, don't you feel like stroking? Doesn't love want to stroke?"

"Yes, of course."

"How about your children? When you feel a surge of love for your children, don't you want to get them in your

arms? Don't you want to stroke them and say the words of love that you feel down deep inside?"

He said, "Yes, I do."

I said, "Why don't you go to that job with love and stroke your job, stroke it with love? Be thankful you have a job. Do that job better than anybody else has ever done it. Help your boss, make his work easier. Don't worry about being seen. Just stroke that job with your love. Give it your best and one of these days your boss may be transferred or promoted. They are going to need a special kind of person in that company, and who do you think they are going to think of? They are going to think of the man that does his work with love, stroking it. That's who they're going to think of."

I hire hundreds and hundreds of men and women. I've done it through the years. Who am I looking for? Someone who will do the job with love, someone that will do it with joy. Someone who just can't wait to do it...and there's no part of it that's too low, not if they have to get down on their knees and scrub the floor. What's wrong with scrubbing a floor if you scrub it with love? Somebody's got to scrub the floor. Somebody's got to clean the furniture. Someone's got to repair the automobiles. Someone's got to cook the meals.

What is this caste system in America that says you've got to be a doctor or a lawyer or a preacher or businessman to be somebody in this world? No one can take anything from those professions. But I'll tell you, whatever your job it's important to enter into it with God's love...touch it with the stroke of your concern...do it with all your heart...and do it with joy.

One young man wanted to start his ministry where mine is now. And I said, "Well, I know how you feel because when I started out as a young preacher, I just hurt every time I heard an older preacher preach, especially if he could preach well. I wanted to preach that well myself. And I couldn't to save my neck. And all I could do when my time came was to get up and preach the best I knew how, to put all the love and concern I had into it."

One day somebody noticed me. People began to pay attention to me. No one was printing anything about me. No one was writing letters to Oral Roberts. Somehow I got carried away with what I was doing. I got so in love with Jesus Christ and so full of Him that I wanted to hug everybody in the world. I wanted to touch people, and the next thing you know there were people writing me that I'd never heard of, people coming for prayer. How they ever knew where I was, I don't know.

I want to tell you two experiences about preachers. I was in one of the larger crusades and had a lot of people to pray for, some slightly ill and some deathly ill. With the desperately ill there are often terrible odors. And you really have to have a feeling for them or you can't do it. Well, that night I was just feeling the anointing of God and praying for people right and left. I saw a dear friend of mine, a preacher, who walked to the car with me. He put his arm around me and said, "Ole buddy, how do you do it?"

I said, "How do I do what?"

"How do you pray for all these people?"

"What do you mean, how do I pray for them? You just saw me."