

The Name, 1 of 3, First time I saw Jesus

Hi all,

In many situations in the gospels as well as in our time, the reason people didn't see miracles in their lives was due to their unbelief.

This is about how to overcome our unbelief and lack of faith by building ourselves up with faith in the Name that is above all names. Part 3 will deal specifically with unbelief and its causes, and how to overcome it. But I want to share why that first meeting with Jesus changed my life.

The first time I saw Jesus - and the Name

I was the Associate Pastor in an unpaid position in a church in the Boulder, Colorado area. Our youngest son, Brian, was still in the nursery. The nursery was to the side of the platform with the door near the back row of the roughly 300 member church.

Barb and I were on the very last row, in the far left 2 seats so that if needed, we could get to the nursery without disturbing the service. The row was empty but for us, with about 12 to 15 empty seats to my right.

During one of the worship songs, as I had my hands up and eyes closed, my spirit-man's head turned to the right, and I saw Jesus walk in the back of the church. He walked to the end of our row and stopped. With His left hand He motioned as He said to me: "Come with me."

This all seemed completely normal, and at no point did I think 'Wow I see Jesus!'

It was all normal, natural, and there was no mistaking Who it was. I walked along the row of empty seats to the aisle, and followed Him to the front, ignoring the congregation who continued to worship.

In front of the front row, Jesus stood to my left before a pastor from the Navaho nation who was visiting our church. Our church supported his church and ministry in what was at that time, a very poor area.

I looked to the Lord for instruction because where He stood just to the right of the seated Navaho pastor, meant I was left standing directly in front of the pastor. Of all the people in the service, this pastor was the only one seated. It is as if he was waiting for a word from the Lord. The Lord said as He motioned towards the pastor with His left hand: "I have a word for him, and I want you to give it."

I said, "Lord, you're here, why don't you give it?"

He replied: "Just do it." So I put my hand on the pastor's head - my spirit man's hand - for I was 'in the Spirit' as the apostle coined the term in The Revelation 1:10 and 4:2. Out of me flowed a prophecy for the pastor. It was exactly what Paul defined prophecy to be in I Corinthians 14:3, an inspired word of 'edification, exhortation, or comfort'.

The Lord expressed to the pastor such love, such appreciation for his hard work, such encouragement. Understand, the Lord who was standing next to me, was silent. But the Spirit flowed through me to this man from Him. I was blessed just giving such a word with the Lord standing next to me. I didn't have time to think, 'This is weird', because I realized this was a teaching moment with the Lord. What a teaching moment it was.

As the prophecy trickled off like someone slowly turning off a faucet, the Lord suddenly filled me with Himself, literally merging with my spirit saying as He did so: "Remember my son, when you lay hands on a person in my Name, it is as if I am laying hands on that person."

Suddenly I was back next to Barb.

The worship song was still playing (Of course, it was a charismatic church, so what good is a worship song if you can't sing it 6 or 7 times repeatedly, lol), and I asked her: "Did I leave your side?" With a slightly perturbed look on her face not understanding why I broke into her worship, she whispered back, "No."

(Paul wrote of himself in II Corinthians 12:1-2 saying when he was caught up to the 3rd heaven* he didn't know if he was in the body or out of the body. For the first time, I understood what that passage meant I was out of the body, my body in what the Bible describes as a trance - a condition where God suspends the functions of the physical body in order to either allow a person to see into His realm, or take them spirit and soul to heaven or where He wills. See Numbers 24:4, 16, and Acts 10:10, 11:5, 22:17 and Revelation 1:10 and 4:2 for reference.

*In Judaism, the 1st heaven is the air, 2nd is space, 3rd is where God lives. He was caught up to the 3rd heaven, where God lives, and heard private words that would not be right to share.)

What He said...

"Remember my son, when you lay hands on a person IN MY NAME, it is as if I am laying hands on that person." That changed my life. I stopped focusing on myself, what if nothing happens, what if they say no, what if I miss it, which demonstrates unbelief, and started focusing on Christ in me and the power of His name.

Acts 8:1-12 tells us after Steven was martyred the persecution was so bad, "all were scattered to Judea and Samaria except for the apostles." That is an amazing thing. Most estimates I've seen estimate there were about 10,000 believers in Jerusalem at the time. Everyone it says, left town except for the apostles.

They moved to Judea, which was the rural areas surrounding Jerusalem

Also to Samaria, to the north of the city. It was to Samaria after this massive influx of believers had moved there, that Philip the evangelist (Acts 11:8) came to preach Jesus to the locals.

I'm sure they were wondering what was going on, to suddenly have hundreds or thousands of families move to their area, build homes or buy them, in a massive relocation. Philip's evangelism essentially, explained what was going on.

We see this in 8:12: "When they believed Philip preaching concerning the things of the kingdom of God AND THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, they were baptized, both men and women.

When was the last time...

...you heard anyone, evangelist or not, speak or write or do a video teaching about the "name of Jesus Christ" as Philip did? This one verse linking 'preaching' of the kingdom and the Name could fill books, but we need to focus on 'the name'. They believed Philip concerning the name. Why?

Because what v6-8 tell us: "And the people with one accord believed what Philip spoke, hearing and seeing the miracles that he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice (hearing) came out of many who were possessed of them, and many that had palsies and were lame were healed (seeing), so there was great joy in the city."

What did this was Philip speaking of the things of the kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ. The proof, the evidence God provided that what Philip said was true, was seen and heard in the miracles witnessed.

Next week, Peter's faith and some of my own experiences using 'the Name' to heal. Until then, blessings,

John Fenn

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The Name 2 of 3, Faith in the name?

Hi all,
Let's pick it up where we left off last week.

Peter's faith was focused....where?

In Acts 3:16 Peter stood with the formerly lame man before the authorities. The man had asked for alms but got healed instead, what a turn of events! The authorities asked Peter how that man got healed. "And His name, through faith in His name, this man stands before you whole."

Peter and Philip had something we lack. We throw around the name of Jesus so casually, and we use it maybe 10 or more times in a prayer, or when we lay hands on a person the same thing. We command in the name of Jesus, repeating ourselves multiple times. In doing so we prove that we have little or no faith in the name of Jesus.

More than that, we can say we have a higher level of unbelief which causes us not to know what we have in the Name, than we do faith in the Name.

"When you lay hands on a person in my name, it is as if I am laying hands on that person." Think on that. What does that do to your level of expectation the next time you lay hands on a person, or when you pray for someone or even for yourself? How many times are you now going to speak that Name above all names?

What Mark 16:20 really says, and why

Most (English) translations of this verse say this: "And they went forth preaching everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following."

A literal translation however, like the Young's Literal Translation, reveals it says this: "And they having gone forth, did preach everywhere, the Lord working with and confirming the Word through signs following."

Do you see the difference? The Lord works with the Word to confirm it by signs following. He isn't working with THEM, rather He is working with His Word, and confirming that.

The pressure isn't on you, for the Father doesn't want someone to decide for their eternity without evidence to support the claims of Jesus. Mosaic and most courts today require evidence or witnesses before convicting someone of a crime. Why do we think the Father would expect people to decide their eternal fate without evidence? He works with the Word to confirm it.

Disclaimer: It could be argued that the Greek word 'synergountos', translated 'working with', can mean with the disciples for it is sandwiched in between them and the signs. For me, the grammar makes it clear the confirmation is first on the Word, and then in cooperation with the disciples as they preached. (In my opinion, and Young's Translation, etc)

Long ago I delivered furniture and did minor furniture repair for a store.

The owner's testimony was that he had an injured back and couldn't do any lifting. He had bought the furniture of a restaurant that had failed, and hired 2 college kids to load it into his truck and take it all to his store.

As they worked, the college kids told him of Jesus. When the job was done, the man paid them and when they asked if he wanted to 'accept Jesus' he told them. If what you say is true, then I'll accept your Jesus if He heals my back." Short story: He did, and he did. He had to see evidence.

Why did Samaria turn fully to Jesus? They heard and saw the evidence that what Philip preached about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus, was true.

I lived in an apartment just before Barb and I were married

I was 20 years old, and one day there was a knock at the door. It was a young lady from a well known cult knocking on doors, telling people about her religion, and passing out tracts with information about it.

I invited her in, let her give her speech, then asked if I could tell her of my faith, to which she agreed. She had a difficult childhood, and I shared about the love of the Father and the person of Jesus Christ. Before she went I asked if she wanted to 'accept Jesus', and she said she wanted to think about it.

Then I asked if she had anything wrong with her, because what I said was true, and the Lord would prove it to her if she wanted. She said her feet had some injury or malformation she was born with, so walking around made them very sore. I had her stand there, I laid hands on her feet, touched her on her forehead, her strength left her as she collapsed, and a few seconds later not knowing what hit her, realized she was totally healed. The Lord provided the evidence.

After Barb and I had married and moved to Boulder, Colorado, I worked in landscaping.

My boss who was the owner of the company, was very discouraged one day. He explained his wife was going to have a hysterectomy due to cancer on an ovary, at age 26, ending their chances of ever having a family.

She had already undergone a surgery to remove the ovaries from one side, hoping the cancer had not spread - evidently she had refused a full hysterectomy that first time because she really wanted children of her own. But now it had spread and a total hysterectomy, scheduled the next morning, was before them. I offered to meet with them and pray for her: Desperate for anything, they agreed. When he added that she was Jewish, I told him that was far better, and it would be easier to get her healed because she already believed in healing if she was Jewish.

That night we met at a park in town, the 3 of us sitting under a big tree.

They shared their story, then I shared how the Lord offers healing. She said she believed that, because in Judaism healing is throughout what we Christians call the Old Testament. It was part of her faith, though she was a non-practicing Jew. I thought, this will be so easy...

I started with Adam and Eve and how they were created in wholeness, how that was the Father's intent, went to Abraham and the covenant, and from there to Jesus being the last sacrifice and so on, over about 45 minutes. I concluded by telling her what I said was true, so the Father would back me up on it because He loves her and it is a normal thing for a 26 year old couple to want to have children, so their request before Him was just.

I asked; "What do you believe will happen when I lay hands on you?"

She said, "I'll be healed of course!" It was that easy. I had her and her husband put their hands over that ovary, and I put my hand on his hand, commanded the cancer to die and commanded her to be healed, in the name of Jesus (1 time).

It was a short command, for I don't pray for healing, I command which is what Jesus said to do and the apostles practiced. Jesus never prayed for anyone to be healed, and neither did any of them in Acts. (James 5:14-15 is in a different context)

She was immediately as weak as a rag doll, overcome with His presence, and with her husband having one arm and me on the other, half walked half dragged her to their truck and loaded her in. Two days later when he returned to work, he said she demanded the next morning before surgery they do a final test to see if the cancer was still there. It wasn't. Stunned, they cancelled surgery and sent her home. The Father worked with and confirmed His Word.

"Therefore God (Father) highly exalted Him and gave Him a name that is above every other name. That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow..." (Philippians 2:9-11)

I regularly, even now from time to time, spend time reviewing the passages I just shared here, so from the Word and the things I've experienced with that Name, stir up my faith in the name of Jesus. I do that in part to keep whatever unbelief I have, as low as possible.

"When you lay hands on a person in my name, it is as if I am laying hands on that person."

Next week, about unbelief, why and how to get rid of it. Until then, blessings,

John Fenn

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The Name 3 of 3, Unbelief

Hi all,

This installment is about unbelief, what it is, how to get rid of it.

The word 'unbelief' is used several times in the New Testament, and is linked to hardness of heart. It is 'apistian' and means unfaithfulness and disbelief - unfaithful through disobedience.

Unbelief is NOT little faith. Peter actually walked on water, but he became distracted and began to sink. Jesus asked, "Oh you of little faith: Why did you doubt?" That's not unbelief, that is being distracted by the wind and waves of life when we take our eyes off the Lord. Mt 14:31

Failure to go where God is leading, failing to grow in Him and as a person

Unbelief is an absence of faith, and involves an element of being unfaithful to the direction the Lord is trying to lead. It is used in Hebrews 3:19 when speaking of unbelieving and unfaithful Israel when they refused to enter the Promised Land. They failed not through lack of faith, but because of unbelief the verse says.

Familiarity breeds contempt

That is an American phrase and I'm not sure how it translates - thank you and apologies to all the volunteers around the world who translate my Weekly Thoughts into many other languages.

In Mark 6:1-6 Jesus is back in His hometown. The people marveled at His words and spoke of the claimed 'mighty works' they had heard about. Here is where their unbelief surfaces:

"Isn't this this carpenter? The son of Mary, brother to James, Joses, Jude and Simon? And aren't his sisters here with us? And they were offended at Him."

Here we see Jesus is the eldest of the 5 brothers and at least 2 sisters. They knew Him as carpenter, son of Mary, eldest brother to at least 6 siblings, and they were offended. Being a carpenter in that time it meant he built furniture and household items more than homes. How would you like to have a table made by Jesus in your house? He was known to all, so it is reasonable to assume he had made furniture that was in many homes in town. They all knew him.

If we give Mary 2 years between children, then Jesus at age 30 would have had siblings ages 28, 26, 24, 22, 20, 18. That 'his sisters are here with us' indicates they are not married, so they were teens or younger, at least young enough to still be single in other words. The family was still in the town, known by all, the kids known to all - and that familiarity contributed to their unbelief.

"He could not do many mighty works there, except laying hands on a few sickly folk, and healed them. And He marveled at their unbelief. So He went about the area teaching."

This is where to check ourselves. Do we have someone lifted up on a pedestal, but once they become familiar to us and we see they are just a normal person, do they fall off that pedestal? We do that of churches. Of a new job. Of a new friend or potential mate. Does familiarity lessen our opinion of them as it did for the people of Jesus' home town?

They let their history determine their destiny. They couldn't leave what they knew in the natural to reach up and grasp the eternal.

Failure to believe the risen Lord and what God is doing in your life

Mark 16:14 of the risen Lord: "He appeared to the eleven as they sat at dinner and rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart."

He expected them to believe the words of the women who had been to the tomb, and what He had previously told them about what would happen.

Summary for unbelief: In the Greek, hardening the heart, not keeping up with the Lord's direction for personal growth and life. Familiarity or theological disagreement with a person disqualifies them in our mind so we fall into unbelief of God's working in them. Failure to believe the miracles God has done in your life.

It is an easy check of our heart to see the level of our own unbelief. Israel failed to enter into the Promised Land because of unbelief. Study that. They were intimidated by the hard work ahead, they thought they couldn't do it when God said they could. Such a one would have to shift focus to bravely go where God is leading even if they don't have it all figured out, even if it seems impossible.

Jesus' old neighbors knew Him for 30 years as Mary's oldest son, trusted carpenter in the community. They let their familiarity cover any faith they might have had like a cloud covers the sun. They would have to grow up, set aside natural knowledge to grasp the Lord's new work.

The disciples should have been thinking about all they had seen, all they had done, all they had been told, and believed. Instead, they sat in spiritual neutral, ignoring their history with the Lord. The Lord's rebuke woke them up so to speak, causing them to think, remember, contemplate the future.

Coming full circle

The previous 2 weeks were about faith in the name of Jesus. This final installment is about unbelief. We cannot try to have faith in the name if we are also in spiritual neutral, perhaps because of past hurts in church circles though the Lord's miracles and provision were seen throughout.

It seems to be a choice. Israel didn't enter the Promised Land because they chose to believe in their own inadequacies and the work set before them of clearing the Promised Land of enemies. Jesus' hometown neighbors didn't see miracles because they knew too much about Him, choosing to know Him as carpenter and Mary's boy instead of the larger purpose to His life.

It is always our choice to believe in that name above all names. But we must also adjust our heart. Ignore the giants and realize it will be hard work to enter into the call God has for your life. Make the familiarity you have with someone or some church of no consequence, choosing to believe and see and give yourself to the higher things God is doing.

Remember the miracles He has done in the past but don't live in the past. A whole new world awaits, move on even if you don't know the future.

Drop the excuses for unbelief. Drop the excuses about someone's past, yours or someone else. And believe. Focus on that Name. That we have been entrusted to use that name against the devil, to bring healing to others. Focus on the facts laid out in Romans 8:32 and let it ring in your heart:

"He who did not spare His Son, His only Son, but gave Him up for us all; how shall He not also along with His Son, freely give us all things?"

The Father planned and His Son did the work of the creation of the universe. Then that Son became man and died for us. Now the Father has given us that same Son to live in our hearts by the Father's Spirit. We have the whole universe and its Creator in our spirit. Do we get that?

We truly can do all things through Christ who lives in us. Truly greater is He in us than he that is in the world. Truly we have been given the privilege to use that Name against demons and to proclaim healing and salvation for all who want it.

And He will confirm His Word with signs following...

New series next week, until then, blessings,
John Fenn

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