

How To Raise the Dead

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GOD WANTS YOU TO RAISE THE DEAD!

In this treatise, you will find practical principles on how to raise the dead! These same principles will work on how to heal the sick, how to cast out demons, and how to cleanse the lepers. These are the four things that Jesus specifically sent His disciples out to do:

'And as you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons: freely you have received, freely give.'
(Matthew 10:7-8)

Unfortunately, in most churches these days they're preaching to the dead, casting out the sick and raising the demons! The idea of raising the dead is frankly absurd or preposterous. 'When you're dead, you're dead! Call the morgue and arrange the funeral!' Yet, in the days of the early church, believers didn't let death have its way so easily. They followed One who had experienced death Himself but, through His resurrection, conquered death forever. As a result, they believed they had authority in His name to challenge even death itself!

The good news is that such 'preposterous' faith is still possible! God can use you to raise the dead! God can use you to heal the sick! Think about it. Wouldn't it be exciting to pray for people with colds, cancer, or tumors and see them recover? God can also use you to cast out demons. Few things in life are as rewarding as seeing someone bound by demonic forces find marvelous release.

The principles involved in doing these mighty acts of resurrection, healing, and deliverance revolve around a fundamental understanding of faith and the power of faith to bring about the miraculous. A proper Biblical understanding of faith will enable you to even raise the dead. Unfortunately, much of the teaching about faith today tends to be self-centered and self-serving. The reason we don't see many people healed, raised from the dead, or delivered from demons these days is because so few ever ask God to do these things. One of the reasons for that is because people tend to get discouraged by the current teachings of faith.

When you understand the true Biblical revelation of faith, you'll lose your discouragement. You'll find yourself coming often to the Lord with wild and crazy requests! You'll pray things like, 'Lord, please raise this dead person back to life!' or, 'Lord, please remove this tumor NOW as we watch!' And, more often than not, you'll find the Lord delighted to give you far more than you even ask. Consider what Paul said:

'Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us...' (Ephesians 3:20)

CLEARING UP THE 'GIFTS' CONFUSION

To begin laying a foundation of true Biblical faith, let's consider a passage in Paul's letter to the Corinthians:

'Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.' (1 Cor 12:1)

The way this chapter starts, Paul could be speaking right to the times we live in. Because if there's anything that characterizes the church today, it's the gross ignorance concerning spiritual gifts. Not only do many deny the validity of gifts today, but many who do believe in the gifts have very little understanding of what they are and how they operate in everyday life. Yet, it's the understanding of the gifts that will release the faith to raise the dead. Let's read on:

'But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith

by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these work that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.' (1 Cor 12:7-11)

In this passage Paul speaks of nine different gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are the manifestations or 'outworkings' of the Holy Spirit's power. There's a traditional view of the gifts that has become increasingly popular over the last few years. It is that every believer has inherent within them one or more of the spiritual gifts and it's up to them to 'discover' which gift is theirs. In other words, while I may 'have' the gift of discernment, you might 'have' the gift of knowledge. We just need to determine what our own gift is to be most effective in our Christian walk.

I submit to you that this view of the gifts of the Spirit is simply not true. Consider the following verse that shows such a view can't be what the apostle was teaching:

'But eagerly desire the best gifts; and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.'
(1 Cor 12:31)

The very fact that Paul is encouraging believers to eagerly desire the best gifts implies a 'non-residence' of the gifts within the believer.

Let's look at another verse:

'And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.' (1 Cor 12:28)

GIFT 'CLUSTERS'

What believers do have resident within them, Paul is saying, are ministries, callings, offices, and roles of responsibilities in the Kingdom. That's what each person needs to be seeking the Lord to find. Some believers have a calling in their life to evangelize. Others are called to be teachers. Still others have a pastoral calling. And around each calling, there are certain 'gift clusters.' The gifts that tend to cluster around a pastor would generally be discerning of spirits and words of wisdom. A person with prophetic anointings would tend to have the gifts of discernment, tongues, and prophecy. And around an evangelist, you would expect to see more frequent manifestations of the gifts of miracles and faith. Notice Paul said:

'Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.' (1 Cor 12:7)

The word 'manifestation' here comes from two Latin words: manis and festive. Manis is a Latin term for hand. Words like manacles, manicure, manual, all derived from this Latin root, have something to do with the hand. And festive speaks of a party, a celebration. So another way to understand 'manifestation' is - 'the dancing hand.' This is important in understanding how spiritual gifts work. Another way to read the verse would then be,

'Now to each one the dancing hand of the Spirit gives for the common good.'

It's God's dancing hand that distributes the gifts to His people, according to His will. In other words, He distributes the gifts to different ones at different times. The gifts are not permanently resident within believers. (Oh, that they were!)

The gifts of the Spirit are literally momentary anointings for momentary needs. They are empowerments of the Spirit that come on a person in a moment of time to accomplish God's will. They are not necessarily 'resident' to the person through whom they are operating.

MOVING IN THE 'GIFT OF FAITH'

There's one particular gift that we need to focus on in our discussion of how to raise the dead. It is the Gift of Faith. Everything said so far is important in understanding how this gift is activated to the point where

one can move in supernatural power. John Wimber, in his book 'Power Healing,' gives one of the clearest definitions ever offered for this particular gift:

'The Gift of Faith is a mysterious surge of confidence in God that arises within a person faced with an insurmountable situation or need. It provides supernatural certainty and assurance that God is about to act through a word or action. It usually wells up from within when one least expects it and needs it most.'

The faith necessary to raise the dead is a definite GIFT from God. It's a momentary anointing for a momentary need. It's not something resident within you. It comes only when you're weak within yourself. Jesus said:

'...My power is made perfect in weakness.' Paul's response to that was, 'Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.' (2 Cor 12:9)

I've found that the more I'm weak, the more likely I'm going to be strong in the things of the Spirit. Let me explain what I mean. Suppose someone is sick and needs prayer for healing. If somebody came and said, 'I'm feeling quite strong today. I'll pray for them to be healed.' I'd probably say, 'Not today. We need Jesus' power to heal. That only comes when you're genuinely weak within yourself.' Why is that? It's because His power is made perfect in weakness.

THE ERRORS OF THE 'WORD-FAITH MOVEMENT'

As I said before, there's much misunderstanding being taught today about the true nature of faith. The popular Word-Faith Movement has succeeded in confusing many people in this regard. In essence, the Faith Movement teaches that you can do anything if you only have enough faith. If you have enough faith, you can speak to a mountain and it will be moved at your command.

Now, I know there are scriptures that say these things. It's just that there's often a misplaced emphasis in interpreting what's really being said. You see, the emphasis in the Word-Faith Movement tends to be on your 'own faith.' In fact, if things are not working out well for you, or if you're praying and not experiencing healing, it's because your own faith is lacking. Have you ever heard anyone say that? 'Brother, your trouble is you just don't have enough faith!'

This is where I believe the problem lies. All this really does is discourage the person hearing it. Once the focus is on a person's 'own faith' to do this or accomplish that, then the results will invariably be frustrating and dissatisfying. Why is that? Because the truth is, no one can maintain the kind of faith necessary to move mountains or raise the dead all the time. Life just isn't like that. Whereas one day you may 'feel' strong enough to do anything for the Lord. But as sure as the sun rises, another day will come where you hardly 'feel' the strength to crawl out of bed.

Am I right? Believe it or not, a popular teacher in the faith movement has actually written a book entitled, 'Faith in Your Faith!' Nothing could more clearly illustrate the erroneous teachings of the Faith Movement than that.

WHY 'FAITH' IS NOT THE BOTTOM LINE

The Lord never intended the focus of your Christian walk to be on your 'faith.' Consider the following verses:

'And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.'
(1 Cor 13:13)

'For in Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision;
but faith which works by love.'
(Galatians 5:6)

The Lord intended the focus of your walk to be on 'love!' If you believe that the key to power and answered prayer is your own faith, then you'll find yourself striving much of the time to obtain more faith. The very fact that you perceive your faith to be lacking will keep you frustrated most of the time. Why? Because you'll always feel that you just don't have the faith needed for such and such a situation. THAT'S WHY so few people pray for someone to be healed on the spot or to rise from the dead. Obviously such a prayer would require a great deal of faith. And, honestly, who walks around with that kind of faith all the time?

Suppose someone asked you to pray for their headache. You'd say, 'I'd love to pray for you, but I haven't spent time with the Lord today. I just don't have enough faith for that right now. I'm sorry.' Doesn't that sound ridiculous? This is all such a misunderstanding of the truth of God's Word. When you focus on your faith like this, it does nothing but discourage you from doing anything for the Lord.

The teaching of the Faith Movement, based upon the interpretation of certain texts of scripture, is under girded with a presumption. Fundamentally, the teaching lacks one primary virtue - Humility. The issue of the Christian life is not how much faith you do or don't have. No, the issue is to walk in humility before the Lord! We're told plainly that,

'God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.' (1 Peter 5:5)

When humility becomes your focus rather than the amount of your faith, then the Lord is the one glorified! And when He's glorified, He responds by releasing His grace and anointing to accomplish His will. This is where the 'faith' to raise the dead comes. Not from your own striving but from a posture of humble submission before the One who can do all things!

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE OF WHAT'S REALLY IMPORTANT

Let's consider what Jesus has to say about all of this. If the crucial message of the Faith Movement is true, then we can expect to find Jesus exhorting His followers to focus on the need for more and more faith to do the works of the Kingdom. In the following passage, we find His disciples asking for just that - more faith:

'The apostles said to the Lord, `Increase our faith.'" Now let's see how Jesus responds: 'He replied, `If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this sycamore tree, `Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you.'" (Luke 17:5-6)

Interestingly enough, Jesus here seems to be minimizing the need for faith rather than treating it as the central issue! Imagine the scene. After His disciples asked Him to increase their faith, Jesus stooped down to pick up something to illustrate what He wanted to say. At first He picked up a watermelon. 'If you had faith the size of a water...., no!' Then He looked around and picked up a cantaloupe. 'If you had faith the size of a cantalo...., no!' He looked around again and lifted up an apple. 'If you had faith the size of an appl...., no!' Then He spied an acorn on the ground. 'If you had faith the size of an acor...., no!'

Finally He got down on His hands and knees and there, between the blades of grass, He found what He was looking for. 'Come here,' He said. 'See this tiny seed? If you had faith this small, then you can say to that tree, be uprooted and planted in the sea, and it will obey you.'

Do you see the point I'm driving at? Christ is saying the issue is not your faith. No! The issue is something else entirely, and it has to do with humility. Let's read on:

'Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, `Come along now and sit down to eat?' Would he not rather say, `Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink?' Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done what you were told to do, should say, `We are unprofitable servants; we have only done our duty.'" (Luke 17:7-10)

In this short passage, Jesus gives us the secret to raising the dead! While the disciples were asking Him to increase their faith, He told them to adopt the attitude of a bond slave! This is the key to increasing your

faith. This is how you get 'more faith.' It's by adopting the attitude of humility - to the point of admitting that all of your well meaning attempts to increase your own faith have been unprofitable and worthless! Isaiah understood this when he said:

'We are all as unclean things; all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags' (Isaiah 64:6)

King David knew this as well when he said,

'Every man at his best state is altogether vanity.' (Psalm 39:5)

The truth is - there's nothing you can do to work up more faith. It's not your faith that accomplishes anything anyway. It's an anointing from above - a momentary anointing that comes when there's a need. That's what the spiritual gifts are. They are 'empowerments' that come when you least expect them yet need them most. And they come upon you to empower you to do supernatural works when you're weak within yourself and in a posture of humility. Remember:

'God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.' (1 Peter 5:5)

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES HOW THE 'GIFT OF FAITH' WORKS

Let's consider again the Gift of Faith. This is the faith that will move mountains. It's a surge of anointed power that comes upon you in a moment of need. You cannot 'work it up.' To illustrate how this gift works, let's suppose you had a leak under your sink. You climb under the cabinet to take a look. Sure enough, it's dripping. Then, as you're looking at the leaky pipe, a wrench suddenly materializes in your hand. After tightening the bolt on the pipe, the wrench disappears as quickly as it came! Another way of describing this scene is that in the time of need, the proper tool to meet the need appeared. Then it was gone. That's exactly how the gifts of the Spirit work. They are momentary anointings for momentary needs.

Let me give you a practical example of how this works in ministry. Recently, a man came to my office and shared with me a fairly complicated, stressful situation in his life. While he was going through the problem, I sat there and honestly felt I didn't have a clue as to what I was going to say to him. But I knew Jesus did. So I said to the Lord in my mind, 'Lord, I know you're here. Help me listen to you as well as to him so I'll know what you want me to say.' Then, the man finished talking and waited for my response. As I sat there quietly, I'm sure he thought I was mulling over the particulars of all he'd said. No, I wasn't. I was saying, 'Jesus, help!' Then, a few moments later, a thought flashed through my mind that I definitely knew had not originated there. It was rather simple, yet it was the very thing he needed to hear to solve the problem.

What I just described is how the gift, 'the word of wisdom,' operates in a counseling situation. Rather than trying to help the guy out of my own experience or human wisdom, I've learned to wait on the Holy Spirit's wisdom and anointing that always comes when you ask for it. And, sure enough, what came went further to helping the man than anything I could have said from my own experience.

WHY YOU MUST OPERATE IN THE ANOINTING

We're told in Isaiah that it is God's anointing that breaks every yoke (Isaiah 10:27). The anointing that empowered Jesus is the same anointing that empowers those commissioned to do His works. Jesus told His disciples, in the last chapter of Luke, that they were to wait in Jerusalem for 'power from on high' before they went out to fulfill His great commission. Elisha was not able to do the works of Elijah until he was clothed in his predecessor's mantle. So it is with you. Until, and unless, you learn to walk under the unction of His anointed gifts, you really can't do anything worthwhile for the Lord.

Let's consider an example that may help illustrate how important the anointing is. Suppose a terrible traffic jam occurred right in front of a policeman's house. After listen to the blaring of horns for a while, he decides to go out and clear up the mess. However, since he was in a hurry, he went out into the street in his Bermuda shorts and a T-shirt. Instead of responding to him as they usually do when he directs traffic, the horns kept blaring and people started yelling at him to get out of the way. Then it dawns on him: 'I'm

not in uniform. I can't do anything out here on the street without my uniform on.' After retreating into the house, he returns in his familiar blue policeman's uniform. Instantly, the horns stop and people begin to carefully respond to everything he says.

You see, the anointing is your uniform. Without the anointing, you're as helpless as that policeman directing traffic in his Bermuda shorts. But when you're clothed with the Lord's unction and power, nothing can stop you. When you rebuke the enemy, he must flee! He's not fleeing because of you, but rather because he sees the anointing draped over your shoulder - the mantle of Jesus' authority. It's as if Jesus were leaning over you telling the evil one to depart. When you speak to a sickness or disease under the anointing, the physical infirmities must respond. And when you pray that the dead be raised, God's anointing is there to perform His will. Again, it's not because of any intrinsic power within you (as the New Age teaching of today would have you believe). Rather, it's the anointing power of the Holy Spirit draped over your spirit. Consider another verse:

'Have faith in God. I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Truly I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.' (Mark 11:22-24)

There's a lot of misunderstanding when it comes to this verse. First of all, a 'mountain' is a Jewish metaphor for an obstruction or problem that's blocking one's way. Also, the literal rendering in the Greek is, 'Have the faith of God.' When you see that Jesus was speaking of an 'anointing' and that the faith He's referring to is the 'Gift of Faith,' everything becomes clear.

It's evident that no one can 'work up' the kind of faith necessary to accomplish the things He's saying in this verse. If they could, I'm sure the Rocky Mountains would have long ago been moved around until they were worn down to hills. But there is an incredible promise here. As you do learn to operate in the power of His faith (the momentary anointing for the need at hand), then nothing shall be impossible to you - including raising the dead!

DON'T PRAY FOR RESULTS

If you ever do have the opportunity to pray to raise someone from the dead, there's an important principle you must know. The same thing applies in praying for someone to be healed. Many times, when you begin to pray, the last thing you'll feel is a lot of faith. Your mind will be wrestling with doubts, fears that nothing will happen, and other harassments from the enemy. Don't despair! This is perfectly normal. In fact, it's usually a sign that something exciting is probably going to occur; if not, why would the enemy be bugging you?

Praying for the sick is often like entering a duel with an unloaded gun - as far as your feelings are concerned. But that's O.K. You really don't have to feel anything to be effective. So the answer to any pre-prayer attack from the enemy is simply this: don't go into a ministry situation 'looking for results.' Now, I know that seems like a strange approach to take, but hear me out. If you are looking for results when praying for someone who is ill, then your faith tends to be directly proportionate to the results you're achieving. This may be good at times, but more often than not, you'll find yourself discouraged when your expectations are not met.

So, the answer is, don't pray for results - pray out of obedience and love. Christ commanded us to love our neighbor. More specifically, He told us to pray for him when he's sick (see Mark 16:18). When you enter a ministry situation, moving in simple obedience to Jesus' command, then you will succeed regardless of the 'results.' For all you know, the results achieved may be exactly what the Lord had in mind in that particular time of prayer.

Paul said in Galatians that 'faith works by love.' This is a powerful spiritual principle. Understanding and applying it will greatly affect your success in supernatural ministry. When someone asks me to pray for their sick child, I always go, asking the Lord to come with His anointing and healing. Sometimes He comes with great manifestations of His healing power, and sometimes He does not. I know that if there isn't a complete healing, then I can be thankful that I've at least had the opportunity to love the family and

encourage them to continue to seek the Lord for His supernatural intervention. If the child is healed, praise God! If the child is not healed, or if there is just slight improvement, praise God!

When you approach ministry from a posture of love and compassion, then God is usually far more likely to intervene in your behalf - because He is far more likely to receive the glory. If healing is approached looking for results, then the glory of the healing may be another notch in your belt rather than glory to the Lord. So, enter every ministry situation determined to love and care for the person, regardless of what happens. Take your eyes off of the results (even in praying to raise the dead) and put them on Jesus, and often you'll get the very results you desire.

PUT YOUR FAITH IN GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

The key to raising the dead is having faith in God's faithfulness, not in your own faith. Consider this verse:

'It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is your faithfulness.' (Lamentations 3:22-23)

When you put your faith in the Lord's faithfulness, and your trust in His trustworthiness, then nothing will be impossible to you. You must shift the focus in any ministering situation from the what-ness of results to the who-ness of who's accomplishing those results. Let God do what he wants to do, and learn to follow His leadings in prayer rather than just what you want to see happen. That way, the very thing you want to see happen is more likely to come to pass. Confused? Don't be. It's just an application of the principle Jesus gave us many times when he said,

'You must lose your life to find it.'

It's when you finally let something go (in this case, the very results of your prayers) that you are then in the best place to receive.

Let me give you an example of how this works. One morning I was hosting a morning prayer time at my house for a couple of friends. Before we started, one of the men there asked us to pray for his headache. So, three or four of us laid hands on him. Before we started, I reminded them to not pray for results, but to wait on the Lord to see what His mind was in the situation. We waited a few minutes until everything got quite still. Then, one of the ladies said she kept hearing this word go around in her mind. She said, 'I keep hearing the word `unforgiveness.' Are you holding a resentment against anyone?' He hung his head and said, 'Yes, I am.' I then said, 'You need to forgive that person.' So he did.

Guess what happened next. In just moments, the headache left. Now if we had prayed with a focus on results, it's very likely we would not have been sensitive to what the Spirit wanted to do, which was to show him the unforgiveness in his heart. But by taking our eyes off of the results (getting his headache healed) and waiting on the Lord (putting our faith in His faithfulness to come through), we ultimately obtained the very results we sought.

In conclusion, let's look at a working definition of the Gift of Faith, again by John Wimber in his book 'Power Healing.'

'That active confidence that what we're about to do is the will of God. The brash confidence that nothing else could happen other than what we've just conceived or received. It's the absolute certainty that we're performing the actions of God. And it wells up from within when you least expect it but when you need it most.'

Hopefully, if the things written in this article have made sense to you, you won't need to go around trying to 'work up' your faith anymore. Just start obeying Jesus: laying hands on the sick, casting out demons and raising the dead. You'll be surprised at what will happen. For all you know, God may come through with anointings and power you've never known!

Remember, God's faithfulness, not your faith, is the central issue. If He's commissioned you to do something, He'll always back you up. If these truths sink into your spirit, you will undoubtedly experience

many signs and wonders in the glorious name of Jesus. And who knows, maybe you will have the privilege to raise the dead!

'And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons; 'freely you have received, freely give.' (Matt. 10:7-8)

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