

# INSPIRATION



*Blessed to Be a Blessing*

SEPTEMBER 2019

# HOPE UNSHAKABLE

THE I AM  
REDEMPTION

PAGE 14

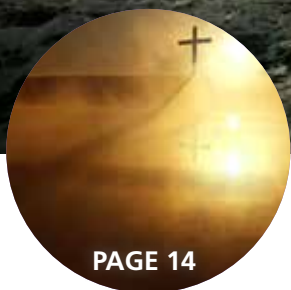
SEVEN YEARS  
OF HELL

PAGE 16

'BECAUSE  
YOU OBEYED ME'

PAGE 54

# HOPE UNSHAKABLE



PAGE 14



PAGE 16



PAGE 54

## *This Month's Theme Is*



### **HOPE UNSHAKABLE**

At one time or another, everyone faces a situation that tempts them to lose heart and give up. No matter what challenges you may be dealing with today, **David Cerullo's** article on **page 5** explains how you can be confident that your breakthrough is right around the corner!

### **Our Featured Partners This Month**

Everything changed for Betty and Kofi when they took steps of faith to trust God with their finances (**pages 12 and 13**).

## **10 Your Turning Point**

*by T.D. Jakes*

God wants to ignite a burning optimism in you about your future – overwhelming hope that turns past fears and failures into a glorious new future.

## **14 The I Am Redemption**

*by Jonathan Cahn*

Your amazing new identity as a believer is revealed as you're joined to the resurrection power of Christ.

## **16 Seven Years of Hell**

Delinda was addicted to cocaine and on the brink of death. Could God set her free?

## **18 When You Run Out of Wine**

*by Jim Buchan*

With every disappointment in life, God provides an appointment to meet with Him and see something extraordinary happen.

## **21 Your September Devotionals**

A daily guide to living in the covenant promises of God.

## **53 Developing an Unshakable Identity**

*by Mark Maulding*

Even when everything around you seems to be shaking, here's how to make sure your self-image is grounded in God's steadfast opinion about you.

## **54 'Because You Obeyed Me'**

*by Jonathan Miller*

Abraham discovered that faith and obedience are the twin pillars of a life God blesses.

## **61 Perfect Peace in Stormy Times**

*by Ben Cerullo*

If your life is anchored to God's Word, you will finish well in the marathon of life.

# Worry No More!

Be blessed by these encouraging words from renowned Christian leaders.

*Worrying is carrying tomorrow's load with today's strength – carrying two days at once. It is moving into tomorrow ahead of time.*

– CORRIE TEN BOOM

*Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows, but only empties today of its strength.*

– CHARLES H. SPURGEON

*The more you pray, the less you'll panic. The more you worship, the less you worry.*

– RICK WARREN

*Oh, how great peace and quietness would he possess who should cut off all vain anxiety and place all his confidence in God.*

– THOMAS À KEMPIS

*The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety.*

– GEORGE MUELLER

*Every tomorrow has two handles. We can take hold of it with the handle of anxiety or the handle of faith.*

– HENRY WARD BEECHER

*Worry is the cross which we make for ourselves.*

– FRANCOIS FENELON

*God wills that we be as free as birds to soar and sing our Maker's praise without anxiety.*

– A.W. TOZER

*In the midst of life's storms, God is speaking to your troubling circumstances, "Peace be still."*

– DAVID CERULLO

Turn to [page 32](#) to see how you can receive our book *Simple Steps to Handling Stress* in gratitude for your gift of any amount this month. To pray personally with one of our anointed prayer ministers, see [page 17](#).

# Hope... WHEN YOU WANT TO GIVE UP



**STRENGTHEN**  
*your walk*  
with David Cerullo

I love this passage where the apostle Paul assured the Galatian believers of a great promise from God...

***“At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up”***  
**(Galatians 6:9 NLT).**

Like nearly all of the Lord’s promises, conditions are attached here. First, Paul is assuming the believers have sown *seeds* – otherwise, it would be futile to expect a “*harvest of blessing*.”

But Paul also mentions another important condition of this wonderful promise: “*IF we don’t give up*.” That phrase got me asking myself...

**Why would someone who’s been given a promise from God be tempted to give up before their breakthrough comes?**

I’ve concluded that the answer to that question is fairly simple: People tend to grow impatient when they must wait for their harvest to come.

That’s why Hebrews 6:12 makes the surprising statement that the promises in God’s Word can’t be activated by faith alone. Instead, the Lord’s promises

must be received by “*faith and PATIENCE.*” Later in the same chapter, we’re told that the key to this kind of patience is supernatural HOPE, which is “*an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil*” (v. 19).

Let me share a few stories in the Bible about people who could have been tempted to give up when they didn’t see God’s promises come to pass right away. It’s fascinating that in each of these stories, the breakthrough was delayed until people reached the number **SEVEN** – God’s perfect number.

## **MARCHING AROUND JERICO**

If you put yourself in the place of the Israelites, the Lord’s instructions for defeating the city of Jericho must have seemed ludicrous. It was a walled city, after all, heavily fortified against any enemy attacks. Instead of supplying His people with visible weapons of warfare for such a battle, He told them victory would come as they marched around the city for seven days and blew rams’ horns.

Each day for the first six days, the Israelites were to march around the city once. Then on the seventh day, they were to march around the city seven times. Instead of merely blowing horns on the seventh day, the Lord added a new instruction: “*All the people*

*shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat*” (Joshua 6:5).

Picture how silly you might have felt on the first day of marching around Jericho and blowing your ram’s horn. The citizens of Jericho no doubt climbed up on the city wall to watch this strange battle strategy. “These Israelites must be crazy!” they probably said to themselves.

Then day two...three...four...five...and six came. More marching. More blowing of the horns.

But nothing happened! With each new day, the Israelites must have been increasingly tempted to simply give up.

Perhaps you can relate to this feeling. You’ve tried to follow God’s instructions, yet nothing seems to be changing.

However, remember the promise of Galatians 6:9. The breakthrough will come “*at just the right time*” (NLT) or “*in due season*” (NKJV) – if you don’t quit too soon.

Fortunately, the Israelites persevered, following the Lord’s directions all the way through day seven. The result was a resounding victory, but it only came because they patiently waited and obeyed.

## **AN OUTPOURING OF RAIN**

Because of the prayers of



Elijah, Israel had experienced a three-and-a-half-year drought. But after defeating the false prophets of Baal, this man of God turned to praying for rain to be restored to the land.

As Elijah bowed to the ground and prayed, he commissioned his servant to go look up into the sky for signs of rain. The servant returned and said with certainty, “*There is nothing*” (1 Kings 18:43).

My friend, let those chilling words sink in for a moment. Maybe you’ve been praying for something for quite a while now. But when you look at your circumstances, you feel just like Elijah’s servant. Despite your persistent prayers, the result has been the same: “*There is nothing.*”

Yet Elijah wasn’t about to give up. He told his servant to go again...and again...and again. In fact, seven times he instructed his servant, “*Go again*” (v. 43).



Finally, the servant saw something different when he looked for rain the seventh time – but it certainly didn’t seem very promising. “*There is a cloud, as small as a*

*man’s hand, rising out of the sea!*” he told Elijah (v. 44).

Today, perhaps you see “*nothing*” in answer to your prayers. Or maybe the only sign of encouragement seems quite insignificant, “*as small as a man’s hand.*” Will you continue to trust God, nevertheless?

Elijah did. When he heard about the tiny cloud forming in the sky, he got excited! Despite that small beginning, he was confident that a huge outpouring of rain was right around the corner.

However, notice once again that the breakthrough didn’t come on the servant’s first, second, third, fourth, fifth, or even sixth glance at the sky. Things only changed because he kept looking – persisting until the *seventh* time!

## THE SEVENTH DIP IN THE JORDAN

The final story is found in 2 Kings 5:1-14 (NLT). Although Naaman was considered a great man and a mighty warrior, he had a problem that seemed humanly insurmountable: He suffered from leprosy.

But when Naaman heard about the prophet Elisha, he became hopeful that God would heal him. So he and a huge entourage made the journey from Syria to Israel and waited at the door of Elisha’s house.

The renowned general expected a quick prayer from the prophet and an instantaneous healing, but instead Elisha just sent him an annoying message: *“Go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River. Then your skin will be restored, and you will be healed of your leprosy”* (v. 10).

There’s that number again: *“seven times.”* Rather than being grateful for this word of instruction from the prophet, Naaman thought it was both crazy and insulting. As a result, *“Naaman became angry and stalked away”* (v. 11).

Thankfully, Naaman’s officers reasoned with him, pointing out that Elisha’s directions were relatively simple to perform. Finally, the general was persuaded to humble himself and try this unusual plan.

Can you picture the scene? Surrounded by his entourage from Syria, Naaman must have felt pretty silly when he dipped in the water and nothing happened. Once...twice...all the way to six times dipping in the muddy Jordan River, and there was absolutely no change in his condition.

I can’t help wondering if Naaman was tempted to give up at that point. Yet look what happened after he finished dipping in the river the full seven times: *“His skin became as healthy as the skin of a young child, and he was healed”* (v. 14).

## WHAT NUMBER ARE YOU ON?

Dear friend, I hope you see how encouraging these three stories are. Six times you may have already circled your Jericho...prayed for rain to end your drought...or dipped in your Jordan River. But who knows? Perhaps the next time is when everything will change.

As Jesus said in Matthew 7:7 (NLT), you must keep on asking, seeking, and knocking until your breakthrough comes. I’m convinced it’s closer than you think!

God bless you,

David



P.S. Our powerful THANK YOU GIFTS this month are sure to rekindle your hope in God’s faithfulness to His promises (**pages 32–33**). Supplies are limited, so don’t delay!



*“One generation  
shall praise Your  
works to another!”*

—PSALM 145:4



Will your children and grandchildren see evidence of your love for Jesus and commitment to the Great Commission in your Will and Estate Plan?

Our Planned Giving experts offer **FREE** assistance in answering all your important questions about Christian Wills, living trusts, charitable gift annuities,

estate taxes, IRA rollovers, and major gifts to advance the Gospel. They can show you exciting ways to provide for your loved ones AND continue winning souls even after you go home to be with the Lord.

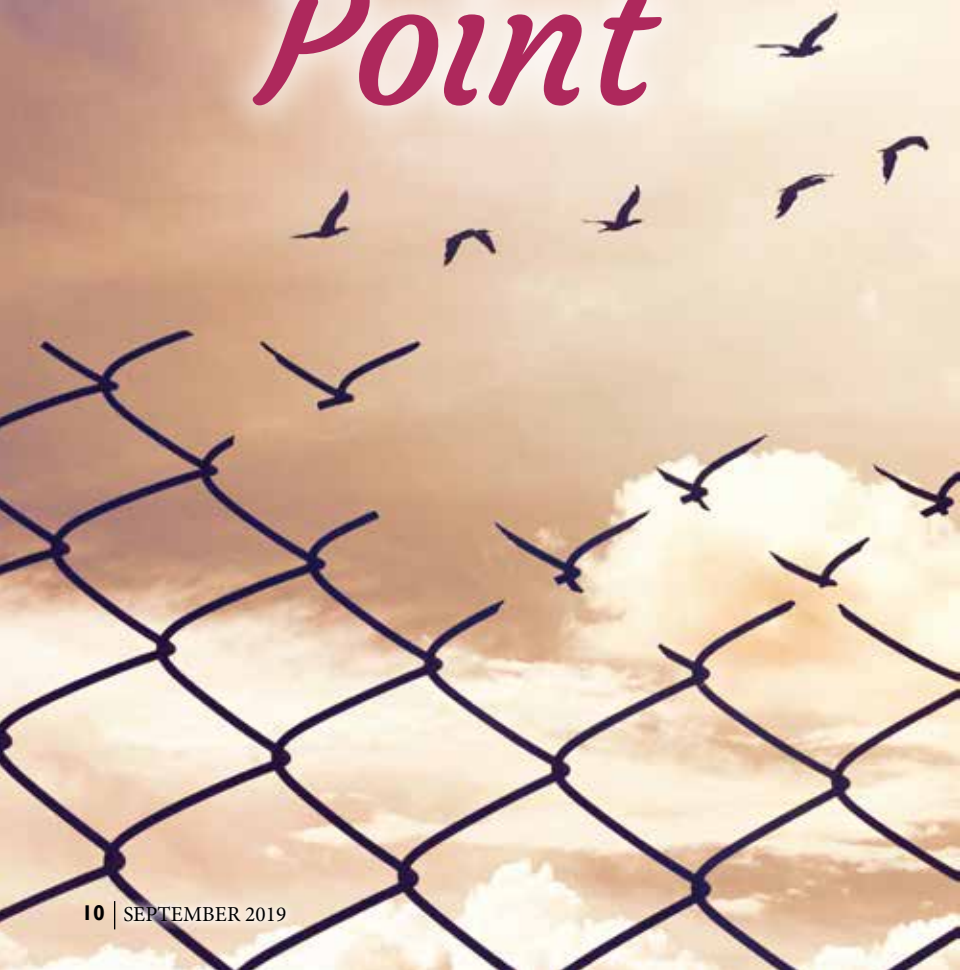
Don't delay! Our representatives are waiting for your call and are ready to help:

**855-702-7042**

**[plannedgiving.inspiration.org](https://plannedgiving.inspiration.org)**

**Leave a legacy of soul-winning  
for generations to come!**

# *Your Turning Point*



When things look bad, hope says, “It’s going to be all right.” But I’ll admit, sometimes it’s hard to understand why you’re going through a storm or trial. You say to yourself, “I’ve been faithful to the Lord, so why this is happening to me?”

As you read this, maybe you feel that life is passing you by. Despite experiencing success in some areas of your life, perhaps you’ve faced agonizing defeat in others.

However, I’m convinced that every difficult storm can take you to higher ground. Noah passed through a torrential downpour, but the flood took him higher until his ark landed on Mount Ararat (Genesis 8:1-4).

Moses was near burnout and in a very difficult place. But God promised to show him His goodness and glory “*in the cleft of the rock*” (Exodus 33:19-22).

The apostle Paul was in the confines of a Roman jail. Yet he wrote about his contentment and encouraged believers to “*rejoice in the Lord always*” (Philippians 4:4).

When Paul and Silas were imprisoned in Ephesus, it was midnight when they sang praises

that triggered an earthquake from God (Acts 16:25-26). In the same way, I see the Lord bringing an earthquake into your prison, perfectly designed to set you free from your negative circumstances.

Friend, I think you’ve reached midnight – the *turning point* of days. This is your time for change...for a turning of the tide. As you praise God, He will enable you to escape from the dungeons of your past.

Today, God wants to ignite a burning optimism about your future – overwhelming hope that overcomes past fears and failures. As you declare, “Enough is enough!” the chains of your past will give way to a glorious new future.



**T.D. Jakes** is the founding pastor of The Potter’s House, a best-selling author, and a filmmaker. This article is adapted from his book *Anointing Fall on Me*.



# From Skeptic to Grateful Partner

Kofi, once skeptical of the principle of Seedtime and Harvest, gained a new perspective while watching David Cerullo's video teachings.



Kofi, an African man now living in Denmark, was highly skeptical of the Biblical principle of Seedtime and Harvest. He explains, "I used to have a problem

with preachers encouraging us to sow seeds in order to receive a turnaround. I always argued that God doesn't sell miracles, and I thought that's what they were doing."

But then Kofi faced dark days when the love of his life told him goodbye. "My heart was utterly broken," he says. Yet God used this devastating experience to cause him to reexamine many of his beliefs and assumptions.

One day as Kofi scrolled through Facebook posts, he stopped when a video captured his attention. As the video began, David Cerullo said, "Today we're continuing our series on how to receive a breakthrough from God and unleash His blessings in your life!"

Kofi was intrigued, and he knew he needed a breakthrough. Suddenly a ray of hope penetrated his gloom, and his hard heart toward those who preached about Seedtime and Harvest began to soften.

David focused that day on Genesis 8:22, which says, "*While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest... shall not cease.*" The video helped Kofi see that if he changed the seeds he sowed, he would also change the harvests he received.

In the months after seeing that first video, Kofi eagerly consumed other discipleship resources produced by Inspiration Ministries. Through them, he learned that the Christian life is not only about breakthroughs, but it is also about heeding the call to grow in our faith every day.

"Inspiration Ministries has been a huge blessing to me," he says gratefully. "I look forward to your devotional and David's videos every day, and God has used them to strengthen my faith that He will answer my prayers!"

**To take a step of faith and sow a Seed for Souls, use the enclosed response form or visit [inspiration.org/souls](http://inspiration.org/souls).**



# All My Pain Is Gone!

Here's how God healed Betty's body, restored her relationship with her daughter, and brought her into greater intimacy with Him.



Betty knew nothing about the principles of Seedtime and Harvest until she happened to watch an Inspiration Ministries broadcast one day. To her surprise, she sensed the Holy Spirit speaking to her in an unmistakable way.

“God led me to sow a financial seed into your ministry that day, and I have been sowing each month since then,” she recalls. “As a result, I’m being blessed in ways I never would have imagined!”

Shortly after Betty began sowing financial seeds to win souls through Inspiration Ministries, she was miraculously healed of fibromyalgia. “I had suffered terribly for several decades, and my fibromyalgia had become extremely painful. But now all my pain is gone!” she marvels.

However, that wasn't the end of Betty's new blessings.

“My daughter and I have recently developed a very close relationship, something I had prayed about for years,” she says. “And I now have a new sense of the Holy Spirit guiding me and giving me peace like I've never experienced before. It's so wonderful to feel free and happy in the Lord!”

Looking back, Betty sees her turning point as the day she took a step of faith to sow her first financial seed. “Thanks for being there for me, Inspiration Ministries. God's law of Seedtime and Harvest has changed everything!”

**What God has done for Betty and Kofi, He can do for YOU!  
Our prayer ministers would love to agree with you in prayer for the breakthrough you need.**

*We are Here for You!*

**US / CAN / CAR:**

**+1 803-578-1800**

**UK / Intl:**

**+44 (0) 84 5683 0584**

A golden cross stands on a hill against a bright, hazy sun. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, creating a serene and spiritual atmosphere. The cross is the central focus, with its lines clearly defined against the background. The sun is positioned to the right, casting a long, soft glow across the sky and the landscape.

# The *I Am* Redemption

by Jonathan Cahn

“Do you remember,” said the teacher, “at the very beginning, when I told you that when you speak of your existence you must speak the Name of God?”

“*I Am*,” I said.

“Yes,” he said. “But there’s another side to it. We’ve all fallen.

So when we speak of our existence, we speak of a fallen existence. But how can the Name of God be linked to that which is fallen, sinful, defiled, broken, and marred? If you say, ‘I am sinful,’ you’re telling the truth, but you’re joining the sacred name *I Am* to sin. And if you say ‘I am unholy,’ you’re



joining *I Am* to unholiness...and defilement. You're bearing witness against God. It could be called blasphemy...the *I Am* of God and the *I am* of man now infinitely separated from each other."

"Then what's the answer?"

"When Messiah died for our sins, it was *I Am*. It was *I Am* joining Himself, rejoining Himself, to our *I am*...to our fallen, sinful, and unholy *I am*. It was *I Am* joining Himself to our sins...*I Am* becoming sin; *I Am* joining Himself to all that is not *I Am*...that by so doing all separations would be ended. So when you find yourself saying 'I am condemned,' then look at the cross, and what will you see there? You will see *I Am* condemned. When you find yourself saying, 'I am guilty,' look at the cross and you will see *I Am* guilty. When you're hurting, you will see *I Am* hurting. When you're broken and crushed, you will see *I Am* broken and crushed. And when you're rejected, you will see on the cross *I Am* rejected. And when you find yourself at your end, you will see *I Am* at the end...*I Am* finished.

"What happened there on the cross is a mystery...the Holy One joining His *I Am* to your *I am*, that nothing – no sin, no shame, no darkness, not even death – could ever separate you from Him again...that even in those things He will be there with you...He who is *I Am* has joined His *I Am* to

your *I am*, that your *I am* would be joined to His *I Am*.

"And this is the other side of this mystery: After His death comes the resurrection. And it is in the resurrection that we find our *new I am*. For what is it that we find there? We find *I Am* alive...*I Am* victorious...and we find *I Am* risen!"

*Message:* Let your fallen *I am* be finished in His death, and let His risen and victorious *I Am* become the *I am* of your life!



**Jonathan Cahn** is a Biblical scholar, Messianic rabbi, and best-selling author. This is an excerpt from his daily devotional, *The Book of Mysteries*, used by permission.



# 7 Seven Years of Hell



**Addicted to cocaine and on the brink of death, Delinda needed a miracle. Could God set her free?**

Delinda's marriage, which began with high hopes, had ended in a devastating divorce. Embittered and unmoored, she drifted away from the Lord for seven years. "I became a cocaine addict and dealer, and even abandoned my four children," she recalls sadly. "Those were seven years of hell."

Adding to the trauma of her addiction and family conflicts, her body rebelled against the ravages of her unhealthy life choices. "Twice I was in a coma, once my lungs collapsed, and at the age of only 35, I suffered a nearly fatal heart attack – all because of my destructive lifestyle."

Four different doctors told her the same thing...

**“It’s a miracle you’re alive!”**

Thankfully, Delinda’s parents and sister never gave up on her. She particularly credits the prayers of her mother for drawing her back to God, so He could deliver her from the drug addiction that was ruining her life.

The turning point came one night when the Lord once again spared her life. “The night I had the heart attack and was rushed into surgery to have a stent put in my heart, I finally realized God wasn’t going to keep sparing my life if I continued my destructive behavior,” Delinda says. “So I gave

my heart to Christ and asked Him to set me free from my addictions.”

Delinda loves to testify of God’s goodness in healing her body and delivering her from drugs. Even though life hasn’t always been easy since that fateful day, she now can steadfastly proclaim, “Christ has miraculously restored hope to my life! I’m such a testimony that He can restore anyone, no matter how hopeless their life may seem.”

Delinda wrote to thank Inspiration Ministries for being there to help strengthen her in her new walk with Jesus. “Today I’m a new person,” she says. “I have my children and my health back. I’m even the leader of the praise team and youth group in my church!”

## What God did for Delinda, He can do for you and your loved ones.

No matter what you are struggling with, there’s hope and restoration for *everyone* who turns to Christ.

*We are Here for You!*

If you’re dealing with addiction, family conflict, financial pressures, or health concerns today, our prayer ministers would love to pray for you:

**US / CAN / CAR:** +1 803-578-1800

**UK / Intl:** +44 (0) 84 5683 0584



# WHEN YOU RUN OUT OF WINE

[www.lumoproject.com](http://www.lumoproject.com)

**With every disappointment in life, God provides an appointment to meet with Him and see something extraordinary happen.**

*by Jim Buchan*

What does it look like to believe God's promises, follow His instructions and see His supernatural power on display? A good illustration is found in John 2:1-11, where Jesus turned water into wine during a wedding feast in Cana. This story contains some powerful principles for experiencing a happy and joy-filled life.

At the wedding venue were some stone water pots used by the Jews for purification purposes. The water in these pots was plain... ordinary...bland...flavorless...and completely unexciting. But as the story unfolded, Jesus performed a miracle – transforming this water into sparkling, tasty, refreshingly good wine.

We all have “water” of some kind that needs to be transformed into “wine” – and this story shows us how that can happen when Jesus turns the ordinary things in our life into something extraordinary.

Although water is an essential part of life, in this story it stands for the plain, the ordinary, and the bland. Wine, in contrast, has flavor and fizz. Jesus said this kind of wine must be put into “*new wineskins*,” because it needs room to expand and grow (Mark 2:22).

## **RUNNING ON EMPTY**

Soon into the wedding feast story, we learn that they “*ran out of wine*” (John 2:3). Perhaps that's how you're feeling today as well. You had money...but it ran out.

You had love...but now it's gone. You had dreams...but somehow they evaporated or turned into nightmares.

At such times, it's easy to feel frustrated or disillusioned. "I never thought it would be this way," you moan. That's exactly how the people at the wedding feast must have felt when they ran out of wine.

But the story isn't over yet – and your story doesn't have to be over either. For every disappointment you face in life, God offers you an appointment to meet with Him and hear His instructions for a turnaround.

No wine? No problem! All you have to do is find out what Jesus is telling you to do. That's why Jesus' mother told the servants at the wedding feast, "*Whatever He says to you, do it*" (v. 5). This profound advice is the key to every breakthrough. When you commit yourself to obeying Jesus' instructions, your life will be transformed, and your lack will be turned into abundance.

## WHAT DO YOU NEED?

More often than not, God will tell you to give Him something you **HAVE** (like water) in order to get something you **NEED** (like wine). Sounds fairly simple, doesn't it?

So what do you have today, and what do you need? Like

exchanging water for wine, whatever you give the Lord will be a wonderful exchange indeed. In fact, the entire new covenant Jesus enacted on the cross can be described as the Great Exchange:

*Your sins for Jesus' righteousness...your sickness for His health...your poverty for His wealth...your weakness for His strength...your sadness for His joy...your weariness for His rest.*

When you step into a covenant life with God, friends and loved ones who taste the newly made "wine" in your life will probably be like the master of the feast, who "*did not know where it came from*" (v. 9). They'll wonder where you got such peace, joy, and zest for life, even amid difficult times. What a great chance to tell them about Jesus, the one who can turn their water into wine too.

And notice that the new wine Jesus provided wasn't just a replica of what they had before. Verse 10 says He saved the **BEST** for **LAST!**



**Jim Buchan**  
is Director  
of Partner  
Communications  
at Inspiration  
Ministries.

# Christ in YOU...

**Giving Hope to Millions of  
People Worldwide – Right  
from Your Home!**



*“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”* – COLOSSIANS 1:27

Jesus Christ is the world’s only hope, and His people are the only means for sharing that life-changing message with lost and hurting souls.

If you’ve ever thought about becoming a missionary to a foreign land, you know it’s a daunting task. Usually it entails months of raising support, dealing with countless logistics, and often having to learn a foreign language and culture. Even after all that effort, you’ll only be able to reach a very small area of your target country.

But what if you could become a *different kind* of missionary? No raising support. No need to leave your home and move to a foreign nation. No barriers of language and culture to deal with. And best of all, your impact could extend far beyond just one geographical area – reaching souls for Christ in over 200 nations and territories.

**As a monthly partner of  
Inspiration Ministries, you’re a  
new kind of missionary – a *global  
media missionary* – able to have  
a worldwide impact without ever  
leaving home!**

For every \$100 you invest in evangelism through Inspiration TV, social media, and other Internet outreaches, Inspiration Ministries is able to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with more than 1,000 people. Last year alone, more than TWO MILLION people prayed to make Jesus their Lord and Savior because of your financial support!

To experience the joy of being a global media missionary through monthly partnership with Inspiration Ministries, visit [inspiration.org/mmp](http://inspiration.org/mmp) or call our special number TODAY:

**US / CAN / CAR:**

+1 877-578-7979

**UK / Intl:**

+ 44 (0) 80 0043 8420



TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ACTS 1

The disciples were filled with questions. After His resurrection, Jesus had been with them for 40 days. During that time he demonstrated the reality of the resurrection and taught “*about the kingdom of God.*” But in His last words, He focused on the Holy Spirit and the *revolutionary* impact He was to make.

This focus continued the emphasis He had placed on the Spirit before His crucifixion. As He described, other people would not be able to “*see Him or know Him,*” but the Spirit actually would be “*in*” them (John 14:17). He would be their counselor, teacher, and guide, declaring “*what is to come*” (John 16:13).

In ways the disciples did not fully understand, the Holy Spirit would *change everything*. As the book of Acts describes, the Spirit would *revolutionize* their understanding of what it meant to serve God. He would show the limits of their past thinking. As Jesus warned, some people would not be sensitive to the Spirit’s revelations and would resist these changes.

This same Spirit is at work in the world today, and His impact remains just as *revolutionary*. He is with us to teach and guide us, to help us recognize the limits of our past thinking, and to disrupt us from comfortable clichés.

The Holy Spirit empowers us and enables us to experience the full potential of God’s Kingdom. And He still is changing everything today.

*After he had given instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen...he said...“John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days.”*

Acts 1:2, 5 CSB

## PRAYER:

Holy Spirit, help me to be sensitive to Your leading. I submit my thoughts to You. Teach me. Guide me. Change me. In Jesus’ name, amen.

*If anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. For we hear that some among you are...doing no work at all...Such persons we command...to work in quiet fashion.*

2 Thessalonians  
3:10-12 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, I dedicate my time, talents, and treasures to You. Help me to be faithful with all that You have given me. In Jesus' name, amen.

Even as a young boy, William Bradford hungered for a fresh experience of God. Born in 1590 in England, he became a leader of the Pilgrims, Christians who decided to immigrate to America in order to worship God in freedom.

They faced incredible dangers. Bradford experienced personal tragedy when his wife drowned in Provincetown Harbor in 1620 while he was exploring the New World. Yet he remained convinced that he was obeying God's call. Problems continued after they landed in what is now Plymouth, Massachusetts. They struggled and many died.

A recent book about these Pilgrims describes a breakthrough that occurred in April 1623. Bradford "decided that each household should be assigned its own plot to cultivate." It was understood "that each family kept whatever it grew." The change in attitude was "stunning." Suddenly families worked harder than before. They still struggled, but "never again starved" as they had during the first few years in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

In his interaction with Christians in Thessalonica, Paul, too, stressed the importance of hard work. Some were "*leading an undisciplined life*" and being bad examples to other Christians. Paul urged them to realize, "*If anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat.*"

Today is a day to celebrate the importance of our labor. Make sure that you are being faithful with the resources He has given you. Be a faithful worker, doing everything unto the Lord.

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ACTS 1

Jesus promised the disciples that they would be given the gift of being “*baptized with the Holy Spirit.*” But He did not explain what this meant, what the impact would be, or how they might experience this gift. He simply told them to *wait*. They must have had questions, but they were left to wonder and wait.

When the Day of Pentecost came, “*they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them*” (Acts 2:4 CSB). Having waited, they received the gift Jesus had promised. But it was given in God’s way and in His time.

We, too, may find it necessary to wait for promises to be fulfilled, for the help we need, or for answers. As we wait, we easily can become discouraged and feel impatient. In spite of our prayers and the promises in the Bible, the answers may not seem to come soon enough.

We need to remember that waiting does not mean that God is displeased or that His promises are not true. It simply means that the time is not right, and we must wait for God’s time.

Today, do not be impatient, but trust in God. Keep praying and believing that He will answer your prayers. As you wait, prepare your heart and mind and be faithful to His Word and His direction for your life.

*He commanded them...  
to wait for the Promise  
of the Father...“for  
John truly baptized with  
water, but you shall be  
baptized with the Holy  
Spirit not many days  
from now.”*

Acts 1:4-5 NKJV

## PRAYER:

Father, I commit these needs to You: \_\_\_\_\_.  
I know that You will answer my prayers. I trust You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

# A Personal Relationship

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ACTS 1

*After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.*

Acts 1:9 NIV

As they followed Jesus, the disciples always could turn to Him. Wherever they went, He was there. When they didn't know what to do, they called on Him. When they failed, He rescued them.

Then He was crucified. Facing life without Him, they gathered together with doors locked. But when He appeared to them, His post-resurrection presence gave them peace (John 20:19-21).

After He spent 40 days with them, the time came for Jesus to ascend into heaven. As He was taken up before them, they realized He *really* was departing. They had many questions and uncertainties. What did this mean? What were they to do?

When they returned to Jerusalem, they began praying in earnest. As they sought God, the Holy Spirit fell on them. His presence changed everything. He gave them the power they needed. Confidence replaced fear. They no longer were timid but acted with supernatural boldness.

Before His crucifixion, Jesus told them that it would be “for [their] good that I am going away.” He meant that “*the Advocate*” would come to them after He left (John 16:7). The Day of Pentecost proved that this was true (Acts 2).

In similar ways, we can find ourselves with secondhand faith. But it is important for us to grow in our *personal* relationship with Him. We must seek Him in more intense ways, listen for His voice, experience His Spirit, and grow in confidence.

## PRAYER:

Father, deepen my relationship with You. Speak to me. Empower me. Use me. In Jesus' name, amen.

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ACTS 1

After Judas died, the disciples felt someone should take his place. The question was how to fill this vacancy. They followed a traditional method: After a short prayer, they cast lots.

In the days to come, they were to learn an entirely *new* way of being guided. As they experienced on the Day of Pentecost, this new way was based on being *led by the Spirit*.

Jesus told them that they were to “*wait for the gift my Father promised*” (v. 4). They just didn’t know how long they were to wait. But they kept waiting, probably wondering what would happen next.

Suddenly the Holy Spirit fell on them, and they were ushered into an entirely *new spiritual* dimension. As Jesus had promised, the Spirit became their comforter and companion. As they submitted everything to Him, they could trust Him to guide and lead them (John 14:16-26).

We see this new guidance in operation when the Holy Spirit told the church in Antioch, “*Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them*” (Acts 13:2).

These same principles still are true. The Bible is clear: God still urges us to know His Word and follow His principles. But we, too, need to stay sensitive to His Spirit by waiting on Him and listening to Him.

In your life, stay in tune with God’s Word; always be sensitive to His Spirit. Trust Him.

*They nominated two men... Then they prayed... Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.*

Acts 1:23-26 NIV

## PRAYER:

Father, help me be sensitive to Your guidance. Help me listen and not make presumptions. In Jesus’ name, amen.

# Getting Ready

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ACTS 2

*When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven...it filled the whole house where they were sitting.*

Acts 2:1-2 NKJV

## PRAYER:

Father, I wait on You. Help me be sensitive to Your Spirit. I welcome Your presence. Change me. Transform me. In Jesus' name, amen.

The disciples probably thought that they understood the things of God. After all, they had spent three years with Jesus. But there was so much they did not know, including the nature of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus had told them that they would be “*baptized with the Holy Spirit*” (Acts 1:5). The Spirit would come upon them and give them new power. But what did this really mean?

Suddenly, the Spirit moved among them with “*a sound from heaven*,” filling the “*whole house*.” As they were to discover, He changed everything.

This same Spirit is still at work. In fact, the Bible assures us that He is available to help us overcome problems, bring victory, and change us, just like He changed those disciples in the upper room. But we must remember that the Spirit is “*from heaven*.” He is sovereign and moves on His own timetable.

The example of the disciples shows us how we can be *prepared* for His presence. In the upper room, He came when they were *united*, *waiting*, and *listening* and when every heart was *focused* on God.

The Bible assures us that the Spirit can do a new work in your life, too. Aim to be ready. Cry out to God, seeking Him with your whole heart. Submit your life to Him. Worship Him. Wait on Him. Then be ready for the power of the Spirit to fall on you!



TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 7

Paying attention always has presented challenges. Distractions abound, making concentration difficult. Recent studies have demonstrated that this problem has increased in recent years, particularly from the impact of social media.

A study conducted by the Technical University of Denmark concluded “our collective attention span is narrowing.” Time spent on social media actually has a negative impact on the ability to focus in the long term.

People simply don't remember as clearly as they did in years past. Many people feel caught up in the frenzy of sharing opinions and “the fierce competition for novelty.” As a result they more quickly lose interest in topics and find it harder to retain information.

Many believers experience these patterns in their *spiritual* lives as well. They find it more difficult to concentrate while reading the Bible. Their attention wanes during times of prayer. They quickly forget the insights from a sermon or anointed message.

The Bible reminds of the importance of listening and paying attention. And we are warned of the consequences when we don't listen carefully. When we focus on novelty, we don't have the sensitivity to remember what we read in the Bible as we study God's time-less principles.

Today, ask God to help you become a more careful listener and reader, to help you concentrate and remember. Seek to minimize distractions and make it a priority to focus on His Word while staying sensitive to His Spirit.

*Listen to me, and pay attention to the words of my mouth. Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, do not stray into her paths. For many are the victims she has cast down.*

Proverbs 7:24-26 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, help me to pay greater attention to Your Word. Help me to be a better listener. In Jesus' name, amen.

*When the day of  
Pentecost had come...  
suddenly there came  
from heaven a noise like  
a violent rushing wind.*

Acts 2:1-2 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, open my eyes to the power of the Holy Spirit. Keep me from placing limits on You. I believe You can do all things. In Jesus' name, amen.

Who exactly is the Holy Spirit? What is He like? The disciples must have asked questions like these when Jesus told them they would receive power when the Spirit came. They must have wondered *what* would happen. Would He be a quiet force, just providing them with gentle reminders?

Their questions were answered on the Day of Pentecost when the Spirit came without warning. He came with *noise* like a “*violent, rushing wind.*” He came not in meekness, but in *power*.

He came in a rush with an *overwhelming force*. The disciples may not have seen His presence, but they *heard* it and felt it. He changed their lives and enabled them to perform miracles and disrupt the world.

This is the same Spirit that God has sent into your life. Yes, He is gentle and sometimes speaks in a still, small voice. But do not minimize His power or the impact He can make through you!

He can come with violence and power, shaking things up, empowering you in ways you cannot imagine. He can disrupt armies, stop storms, heal diseases, open doors that seem permanently closed, and enable you to do what seems impossible.

Today, ask God to open your eyes to the power that He has given you through His Spirit. Believe Him for miracles. Do not hold back, but allow Him to change you in order to touch lives and impact the world.

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 6

Order Number 191. General Robert E. Lee thought this might contain the key to victory in the American Civil War. His Army of Northern Virginia was about to invade the North for the first time. When issued on this day in 1862, Order 191 detailed troop movements and strategies.

Little did he know that three of his men decided to use his military order to wrap their cigars. Then, purely by accident a few days later, one of these cigars was found by the opposing Northern forces. When George McClellan, their commanding general, saw the document, he knew that this might bring *them* victory.

In the ensuing Battle of Antietam, the North emerged as the qualified victor, but the outcome was not clear-cut. Why? Even though McClellan knew the enemy's plans, he did not act *decisively*.

In the spiritual realm, many Christians fail to experience the total victory God wants for them, in part because they don't realize that we know the plans and schemes of *our* enemy! We don't have to be defeated.

Today, believe God for the complete victory He wants for you. Act decisively! Be strong in the Lord. Put on His full armor. Stand on His Word. Don't compromise. Seek first His Kingdom. Take up the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Remember. You are in a spiritual war.

*Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.*

Ephesians 6:10-11 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, help me to be prepared for spiritual attacks. Help me to stand firm! Thank You for the victory I have in Christ. In Jesus' name, amen.

*Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.*

Acts 2:43 NASB

Were the disciples superhuman? No. In fact, they were ordinary people. But, because they had been transformed by the Spirit, through them “*many wonders and signs were taking place.*”

Jesus had said that those who believed in Him would do “*greater works than these... because I go to the Father*” (John 14:12). The apostles proved that this *really* was true!

As they witnessed these transformed men and women, the crowds were amazed, and filled with “*awe.*” Seemingly unsolvable problems were solved. People with incurable diseases were healed. These untrained men spoke articulately with supernatural wisdom.

What would the disciples do if they were alive today? Would they be content with the ordinary? We almost can hear them tell us not to limit what God can do! In fact, we should expect “*many wonders and signs*” in our lives!

Is this possible for you? Absolutely! But what will it take?

Like the disciples, start with your personal relationship with Jesus. Spend time with Him. Pray. Listen to His voice. Grow in your knowledge of the Word. Be a faithful servant. Like the disciples, wait for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit! Let Him guide you.

Don't be content with a mediocre faith. Be like those early disciples: humble, filled with faith, unafraid. Always be ready and available for the leading of the Spirit. You serve the God of miracles! For Him, *nothing* is impossible! He has not changed. He never will!

## PRAYER:

Father, I commit these situations to You: \_\_\_\_\_ . Thank You for performing miracles! I believe that with You all things are possible. In Jesus' name, amen.

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ACTS 3

People feel hopeless for many different reasons. They may have tried to find solutions to their problems, but in spite of their efforts, nothing seems to have changed. Giving in to despair, they feel overwhelmed. Not knowing what to do, they have given up.

This was the attitude of the lame man who sat by the gate of the temple. The *beauty* of the location may have been part of his attraction to it. There, he could stare and dream. Perhaps he imagined he was not lame.

Day after day, friends carried him to the same spot. He had become so comfortable in his discomfort that he spent his time begging for just enough to survive.

But Peter and John recognized that the man really didn't need sympathy or money. He needed to be healed. Peter spoke with boldness, *"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk"* (v. 6)! In a moment, he was healed.

Are there people today like this lame man? People who have given up? Stopped trying? People who have assumed that their condition is hopeless? That there is no way to turn around their situation?

The answer is yes. But all of these people need to realize that there is hope! God cares for them and can help them. In your life, encourage others to seek God, to have faith, and to believe Him for answers, even in situations that seem hopeless.

*A man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple.*

Acts 3:2 ESV

## PRAYER:

Father, thank You for giving me hope. I commit these people to You: \_\_\_\_\_. Thank You for meeting their needs. In Jesus' name, amen.

# Dying Inside Because

**For Your Gift of ANY Amount...**

**Our new little book reveals Biblical keys for defeating stress and worry once and for all!**



If your stress level has been unbearable for months or even years, perhaps you've wondered if there's any other way to live. Help is on the way!

*Simple Steps to Handling Stress* is a new Inspiration Ministries publication to help you shed the cares of life and experience God's peace and joy instead. This special resource will empower you to...

- Stop being crippled by worry.
- Block the enemy's assignment to steal your happiness.
- Restore your intimacy with God.
- Receive supernatural power for victory in every situation.

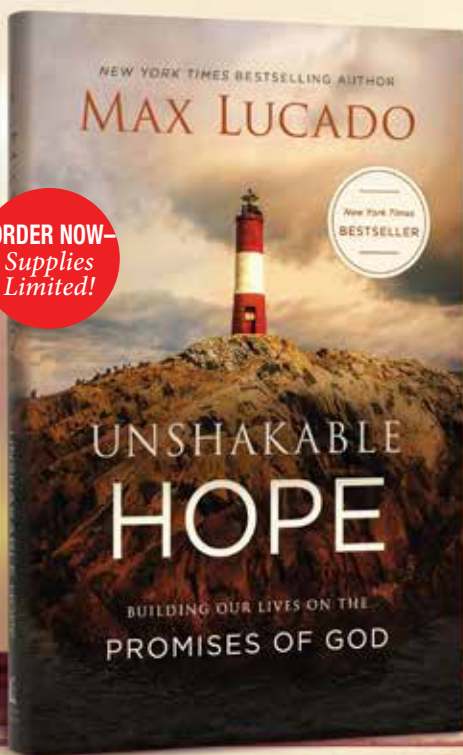
**These tremendous resources are available as our THANK YOU GIFTS for your seed to win souls this month!**



# of a Lack of Hope?

**For Those Who Sow a Seed  
for Souls of \$45 (£34) or More...**

**You will ALSO receive a  
life-changing book by Max Lucado.**



Pastor and best-selling author Max Lucado asks a vital question every Christian should consider:

“The circumstances of life or the promises of God – upon which are you standing?”

After 40 years of ministry, Lucado concludes that many people are dying inside because of a lack of hope. In his powerful book *Unshakable Hope*, he gives you the tools you need to...

- Confront life's problems with God's promises.
- Develop a bedrock faith.
- Experience lasting security.
- Make wise decisions.

**Use the enclosed response form, call our special  
resource line, or visit [inspiration.org/SEP2019](http://inspiration.org/SEP2019) today!**

US / CAN / CAR: +1 855-331-4585

UK / Intl: +44 (0) 80 0043 9673

# The Source

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ACTS 3

*Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk?*

Acts 3:12 NASB

In the mid-nineteenth century, when mountain men first experienced the geysers and bubbling springs in what we know as Yellowstone Park, they were completely mystified. Some referred to them as “vents of hell.”

They didn't know that these thermal features simply were vessels for pressurized water that had been heated to the boiling point by volcanic rocks. They didn't know that geysers have no strength of their own but simply release power from forces deep within the earth.

They wondered why some geysers were small while others were large. They could not have understood that the pressures and forces were the same for all geysers, but each geyser gave expression to these forces in different ways.

When the people in first century Jerusalem saw Peter and John performing miracles, they reacted much like these mountain men. They were “full of amazement” (v. 11) and mystified by the power that the disciples demonstrated. But Peter and John knew the true source of their power. And they knew that God could do anything through them.

Each of us has a choice of what kind of vessel we want to be: a tiny geyser that erupts a little or a massive geyser that allows God's power to flow in mighty ways. Do not limit His power in your life. And don't worry how others might react. Let His power flow through you without limits.

## PRAYER:

Father, I commit these needs to You: \_\_\_\_\_.  
Deliver me from doubt.  
I believe that all things are possible with You. In Jesus' name, amen.

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: REVELATION 2

Located in Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, Old Faithful is the most famous geyser in the world. Like other geysers, it erupts when the base of a column of water resting in the earth is vaporized by hot volcanic rock.

This geyser gained fame in part because of its *consistency*. It erupts on the average of every 75 minutes for up to 5 minutes, shooting a column of steam and hot water as high as 170 feet.

This *consistency* is a perfect picture of the kind of faithfulness God desires in our lives. He wants us to be so consistent that others literally can “set their clocks” by our lives. They know how we will act. They know the fruit of our character. We also can be sure that they continue to watch to see if we have any inconsistencies or mistakes.

The Bible also says that we need to be faithful because we will be tested and face problems. At times like these, some people yield to fear and worry. Others allow doubt to fill their lives and start giving in to compromise. But God promises great rewards for those who remain faithful. They will receive “*the crown of life.*”

Ask God to help you be faithful today. Seek to be faithful even when you are tested and face unfavorable circumstances. Ask Him to allow His power to flow through your life in mighty torrents.

*Be faithful until death,  
and I will give you the  
crown of life.*

Revelation 2:10 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, help me to be faithful with the time, talents, and treasures You have given me. Use me to touch others with the Gospel. In Jesus' name, amen.

*As they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.*

Acts 4:13 NASB

To the Jewish leaders, it was clear that Peter and John were not educated or trained. (They used a Greek word that is the source of the English word “idiot.”) They felt they were not qualified to understand the Law, the Prophets, or their traditions. After all, these Galileans had been just fishermen.

Yet they could not deny that amazing things had happened through these men. Thousands had responded to Peter’s Pentecost sermon. Miracles had been performed. In fact, standing next to them was a beggar who had been healed. These leaders recognized two important things about Peter and John. They had been *with* Jesus. And they were *confident*.

Right now, how confident are you? Are you skeptical, placing limits on what God can do? You may feel your problems are too big and that God can’t help. You may think miracles can’t take place. Do you *really* believe that God can perform miracles through you?

You may even feel inadequate or unworthy, that you don’t have the right skills or background. But as Peter and John proved, God can use *anyone*.

What should you do? Like Peter and John, spend time with Jesus. Make Him your Lord. Read God’s Word. Seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit, depending on *His* power. As you do these things, you will gain *confidence*. Never limit God. Be bold. Believe that *all* things are possible. All things.

## PRAYER:

Father, I commit these needs to You: \_\_\_\_\_. Thank You for the answers! I believe that with You, all things are possible! In Jesus’ name, amen.

The Jewish leaders had a problem. A miracle had taken place through the lives of Peter and John. This undeniable fact was particularly “*noteworthy*.” In fact, it was “*apparent to all who live in Jerusalem*.”

Yet these leaders were determined not to consider the evidence. They were so *hardened* in their beliefs that they could not accept that this irrefutable miracle had taken place. They resolutely clung to their *preconceived* conclusions, refusing to change. Their only concern was limiting the impact of the Gospel.

Yet their opposition could not stop the spread of the Gospel. Miracles continued taking place. Lives were changed.

The same patterns continue to exist today. Those who have been impacted by the Gospel *know* that it is real. Miracles have taken place. Lives have been changed. Changes are so dramatic and real that they cannot be denied.

Yet some people are not moved. Not just skeptical, they seem determined not to change or consider that the Gospel is real. Denying facts, they are concerned with perpetuating their own interpretations. They try to limit the impact of the Gospel, even going so far as trying to discredit Gospel messengers.

Like Peter and John, we should not be surprised by these reactions. But we should not allow this opposition to impact our ministry. We should continue serving God, sharing the Gospel, and using the power He has given us to change lives, meet needs, and perform miracles.

*What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.*

Acts 4:16 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, use me to impact lives. Demonstrate Your power through me. Change lives. Convince skeptics of the truth. In Jesus' name, amen.

*“Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?... You have not lied to men but to God”... Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it.*

Acts 5:3-5 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, search my heart. Forgive my sins. Help me to be pure in Your sight and pleasing to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Many people's faith was largely a set of rules or tradition. Some brought this perspective when they responded to the Gospel.

Consider the attitude of Ananias and his wife, Sapphira. On the surface they might have seemed like model believers. But in fact in their hearts, they were deceptive.

Believers demonstrated the depth of their conviction by sharing resources during this time. Some sold land *“and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet”* (v. 2).

Ananias and Sapphira appeared to share that commitment. But other believers did not know that Ananias *“kept back some of the price for himself”* (v. 3). However, Peter, inspired by the Spirit, knew that they had been under satanic influence.

The price they paid was severe: Both Ananias and Sapphira died as the result of their deception. The church was shocked. And with their death, *“great fear came over all who heard of it.”*

Believers were learning that following Jesus was not a religion or a set of rules. This was not about appearances or getting praise. This was about a real relationship with God. He was serious about their lives. Lying to other believers and to the Holy Spirit was, and is, a serious sin.

These are critical lessons every believer should learn today. Always remember to be honest with God. Be humble before Him. Develop a personal relationship with Him. Be sure that you are in tune with His Spirit.

# Changed in a Moment

TUESDAY  
September  
**17**

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ACTS 9

It would be hard to imagine a person more opposed to Christianity than Saul of Tarsus. He sought to destroy the church and throw believers in prison. He took his quest to Damascus, seeking to arrest any followers of Jesus.

Yet in only a moment, this determined anti-Christian *completely* changed. All it took was a supernatural encounter with Jesus Himself. Without warning, he realized that all of his assumptions had been wrong.

No one, in fact, had been expecting a change, certainly not the Christian community. They had been hounded by Saul and scattered in an attempt to escape persecution. They must have wondered if the persecution ever would end. Their lives, and the history of the world, changed the moment Saul met Jesus on the road to Damascus.

If God can change a man like Saul, surely He can change men and women today. He can change even the most hardened atheist and the most bitter opponent of Christianity. He can change people who are headed in the wrong direction and who have no sympathy for the things of God.

Today, think about people who need Jesus in their lives. Do not be discouraged if they seem to reject the Gospel at first. Pray for them. Continue to commit them to God persistently and relentlessly. Continue to believe that the same God who suddenly changed Saul will suddenly change them!

*Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord...asked for letters...so that if he found any belonging to the Way...he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.*

Acts 9:1-2 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, I commit these people to You: \_\_\_\_\_. Change them. Speak to them. Turn their lives around. In Jesus' name, amen.



*The apostles and the brethren...heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. And when Peter came up...those who were circumcised took issue with him.*

Acts 11:1-2 NASB

These early disciples thought they had everything figured out and understood God's plans. Then they heard that Peter had eaten unclean food with Gentiles. In fact, they "took issue" with him. The Greek word here suggests that they *opposed* and separated themselves from him.

They felt the rules were clear and could not understand why he had even spoken to Gentiles. How could Peter have declared "the word of God" to them?

All Peter could do was tell them that he heard God clearly telling him, "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy" (v. 9). Forced to re-think his traditions, he asked himself how he could "stand in God's way" (v. 17).

Peter felt compelled to cooperate with God. The other disciples agreed that they, too, needed to put aside their prejudices and be open to this new understanding.

Is it possible for us to be like those first-century apostles, convinced that we know everything? Have we put God in a box, placing our own limits on what we think He can do? Are we creating our own narrow interpretations of His Word? Are we standing in His way?

Today, make sure that you have not put God in a box. Seek to stay open to the leading of the Spirit. As He leads, let Him challenge your stereotypes and preconceived ideas. Open your heart. Listen. Be ready to change as He directs.

## PRAYER:

Father, give me greater sensitivity to Your Spirit. Help me hear from You. Free me from stereotypes and prejudices. In Jesus' name, amen.

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ACTS 13

Herod the tetrarch and Manaen shared similar backgrounds, yet their lives had dramatically different outcomes.

First, we see Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great. His power led to a life dominated by pride. Sitting on his throne, the people described him as having “*the voice of a god and not of a man!*” His actions were so offensive to God that he was struck by an angel and died (Acts 12:22-23).

In contrast, we read about Manaen, a man who “*had been brought up with Herod.*” Unlike Herod, Manaen believed the Gospel. He became so committed that he became a leader of the early church, facing all the risks.

The paths of these two men illustrate choices each of us must make. We may have similar experiences, see similar things, have similar backgrounds, and have similar points of view. But each of us responds to the Gospel in our own way.

Will we be like Herod, who was curious but determined to live life his own way? He got his riches, honor, and power on earth. But in death he was a miserable, lost soul. Or will we be like Manaen, who followed the call of the Gospel and served God faithfully? He may not have been written about in history books, but he is a star in God's Kingdom.

The choices are ours to make every day.

*In the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers... Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.*

Acts 13:1 NKJV

## PRAYER:

Father, I commit my life to You. I will seek first Your Kingdom. Show me how I can serve You. In Jesus' name, amen.

*The Jews who disbelieved stirred up the minds of the Gentiles and embittered them against the brethren.*

Acts 14:2 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, I declare that Your Word is true. Help me to put Your Word into action. Deliver me from fear and worry. In Jesus' name, amen.

When Paul and Barnabas were in Iconium, they went to the synagogue to share the Gospel. As a result, many Jews and Gentiles believed. But some resisted. These were people who had an opportunity to hear about Jesus, but for whatever reason, they were not persuaded.

The Bible calls them people who “disbelieved.” As Kenneth Wuest wrote in his translation, they “were *unwilling* to be persuaded.” As a result, they “withheld belief.”

These people made a decision. They had the same opportunity as other Jews and Gentiles. They heard the same Gospel message. But by an act of their will, they determined that they would not be persuaded and would not believe.

All of us have opportunities like this every day. God has given us His Word and made promises to us. But He also has given us choices. And there are rewards based on the decisions we make. This applies to Christians as well as non-believers. All of us have been given wills, so we can refuse “to be persuaded” and actually withhold belief.

You have many opportunities to believe and to put God's Word into action in your life. Now the choice is up to you. Will you decide to act in faith and believe God? Or will you withhold faith and allow your life to be dominated by doubt? Are you willing to be persuaded by God? Or have you already made up your mind?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ACTS 15

Everything should have changed for Jesus' followers. The Spirit had arrived and given them *fresh* insights. Yet some continued to be bound by the old ways.

Over and over, the Spirit revealed new dimensions God had prepared for believers – a life beyond the limits of the flesh. No longer were they to feel boxed in by traditions, but liberated to live a dynamic faith.

But some *refused* to change. The old ways were so deeply ingrained that they resisted the liberating work of God's Spirit. They were bound by traditions and past interpretations of laws.

Many people today have similar limitations. The same Holy Spirit is present and available to us. The Bible provides numerous examples of ways He can impact our lives. But to experience the fullness of the Spirit, we cannot allow the limits of the flesh to put a stranglehold on our faith.

We should be always rooted in God's immutable Word, so we can follow the leading of the Spirit. We must ask God to open our eyes and teach us His ways. We need to move past our limits to grasp the full dimension of His Kingdom.

In your life, *dare* to believe God. Dare to believe His Word. Dare to be open to the leading of His Spirit. Dare to leave the past behind. Ask Him to help you see the world in light of His limitless power and His timeless revelations.

*Some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed, stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses."*

Acts 15:5 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, I lay aside my own thoughts. Show me if I am stuck in old habits that limit Your Spirit. Teach me Your ways. In Jesus' name, amen.

# A Good Name

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 22

*A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold.*

Proverbs 22:1 ESV

## PRAYER:

Father, help me to be faithful and responsible, a person others can trust. Help me to be a good witness for the Gospel. In Jesus' name, amen.

When do we start being influenced by others? Caring what other people think? A recent study provided some startling news. Even by the time they are two years old, children can change their behavior when they know they are being watched. They even can react differently to different kinds of comments.

Researchers concluded that this demonstrates how concerned human beings of all ages tend to be about their reputation.

As the Bible reminds us, our reputation is very important. In fact, a good name actually is more valuable than riches! Our reputation demonstrates the kind of life we have lived. It reflects our character and what others think of us.

How do we secure a good name? We secure a good name by being surrendered to the Spirit, by making Jesus the Lord of our lives, by living according to God's Word, by acting with integrity, by keeping our promises and being trustworthy, and by being faithful in little things (Luke 16:10-12).

Think for a moment about people we respect. The mere mention of their names fills us with appreciation and confidence. We aspire to be like them. But we react differently toward people whom we do not respect.

Today, remember that other people are watching you. Your choices will impact how they think about you and how they think about the Gospel. Remember, you are called to seek a "good name." Be careful in your choices.

# The Benefits of Change

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ACTS 15

MONDAY  
September  
**23**

Paul and Barnabas had a partnership that helped spread the Gospel and led to the growth of the church. Many were surprised when a disagreement arose that caused them to be “separated from one another.” As we examine the results of this separation, we can see that it actually accomplished many positive results.

First, this separation increased the number of people who were involved in spreading the Gospel. By splitting into two groups, they were able to go in different directions, visit separate believers, and accomplish more for the Kingdom.

Second, Paul's ministry seemed to enter a new phase after being paired with Silas when they embarked on a journey that led to Europe. Silas may have been the partner Paul needed for this new outreach.

Third, this separation may have helped Paul and others renew their focus on God and not follow previous patterns. They were learning more about being led by the Spirit.

We don't know many details about Barnabas' life after this split. But we know much about John Mark. This man, who was so seemingly insignificant at the time, came to write one of the most important books in history, the Gospel of Mark.

Remember how easy it can be to be stuck in ruts and habits in your own life. God may allow change in order to accomplish His purposes for you. Stay sensitive to His Spirit; always be ready to follow His leading.

*There occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him...*

*Paul chose Silas and left.*

Acts 15:39-40 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, I commit my life to You. Keep me from being stuck to negative habits. Lead me by Your Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen.

*Men of Athens, I notice that you are very religious...one of your altars had this inscription on it: "To an Unknown God." This God...is the one I'm telling you about.*

Act 17:22-23 NLT

## PRAYER:

Father, these are questions I face: \_\_\_\_\_.  
Thank You that You have all the answers I need.  
I trust in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Charles Ives was a kind of maverick. A full-time insurance executive, he also became an important American composer. Born in 1874, he was a kind of revolutionary, pioneering approaches to music no one previously had considered.

Perhaps his most performed composition has been "The Unanswered Question." Originally composed in 1906, this relatively brief piece leaves listeners pondering existence and their lives. The work is dominated by a trumpet solo playing a simple melody that asks questions over a background of strings. All but the last question, the unanswered question, are answered by a flute quartet.

Throughout time, men and women have pondered the seemingly *unanswered* questions of life. Paul witnessed this perspective when he was in Athens. A central part of their community was an altar dedicated to "an unknown God." Paul urged them to realize that God did not need to be unknown. In fact, He desires to be known.

In your life, you likely will face many unknowns: questions that don't seem to have answers, events that don't seem to make sense, and things you don't understand.

These are reminders of how much each of us needs God in our lives. We need to realize our own human limits and depend on Him. We need to foster our relationship with Him, to know His Word, to seek Him for the answers we need, and to find meaning and purpose in serving Him.



TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ACTS 19

What do people talk about? It should be no surprise to learn that we spend much of our time focused on *ourselves*.

According to a recent study, people talk about themselves about one-third of the time. In their social media and other similar activities, that number jumps to 80%! People just love to talk about themselves.

This pattern has been true throughout history in every culture. Paul discovered that the people of Ephesus were so concerned with themselves that many were closed to the Gospel. All that mattered were their culture, their traditions, their business interests, and their religion. They only cared about what they felt was best for themselves at that moment.

Self-interest remains a primary motivation for people in the world – not what is best for eternity, but what seems best for them right now. People aren't motivated by God or His Word, or even doing what is right. Sadly, this pattern also is true for many believers.

Think about *your* life. To what degree are you focused on yourself? Are you *really* living for God? Is your conversation filled with talk about yourself? Or are you talking about God and His Word? Are you talking about the impact of serving Jesus?

Make a definitive decision to follow Jesus and seek first God's Kingdom. Talk more about the Gospel and less about yourself. Serve Him, regardless of what other people may do or say.

*Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade...this trade of ours [is] in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised.*

Acts 19:25-27 NKJV

## PRAYER:

Father, I surrender my life to You. Direct and guide me. I seek first Your Kingdom. In Jesus' name, amen.

*The city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed with one accord into the theater, dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia.*

Acts 19:29 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, I commit my life to serving You. Show me the role You want me to play. In Jesus' name, amen.

It took a high level of courage and commitment as well as a sense of calling to bring the Gospel to the first-century Roman world. Paul was trained and chosen for this task. But he did not travel alone. One of his companions was Aristarchus, a believer from Macedonia.

While in Ephesus, a huge disturbance erupted after Paul shared the Gospel. Paul was the center of the confusion, but Aristarchus was there with him, facing the same dangers.

Aristarchus was one of Paul's "traveling companions." Some might have abandoned the journey because of the hazards. But Aristarchus remained loyal, traveling with Paul after leaving Ephesus (Acts 20:4).

For a time others traveled with Paul but, along the way, some abandoned him. But months later when Paul boarded a ship that was to take him to Rome, Aristarchus was one of the few to accompany him (Acts 27:2).

In the introduction to his letter to the Colossians, Paul described Aristarchus as "my fellow prisoner" (Colossians 4:10), which demonstrated their developing partnership.

Paul recognized that followers of Christ were like a body with many members, each of whom was important (1 Corinthians 12:14).

Aristarchus was a powerful example of this principle in action. He did not get attention himself, but he supported Paul. He was a man of encouragement and partnership, totally committed to the Gospel, a faithful servant, and an example for all of us.

# Is Custom Our King?

FRIDAY  
September  
**27**

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ACTS 22

As he compiled the first thorough study of world history, Herodotus (writing in the fifth century BC) was struck by the dominance of *traditions*. In fact, he concluded “everywhere custom is king.”

We see this pattern during the ministry of Jesus and the early church. Determined to protect their heritage and the purity of their faith, religious leaders allowed customs and traditions to *dominate* their lives and shade their interpretations and beliefs.

Over and over, audiences were closed to the Gospel as presented by Jesus and His disciples. In effect, people were fighting against God and distorting His plans and purposes.

We see this pattern when Paul addressed a crowd in Jerusalem, sharing what God had revealed to him. But the crowd rejected his message. They were closed to the possibility that he was declaring the truth.

Paul himself might have reached the same conclusion earlier in his life. But he could not deny God's revelations to him. He had been forced to look at God and His Word in a new light.

We can be critical of those people in Jerusalem, but the fact is that the same patterns are true today. We, too, can find our attitudes shaped by *customs* and *traditions*. We can be closed to God's attempts to open our hearts to help us understand His Word more accurately.

Ask God to open your mind and heart to His understanding.

*Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live.”*

Act 22:22 ESV

## PRAYER:

Father, I seek Your wisdom and understanding. Teach me Your ways. In Jesus' name, amen.

*I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, but kept declaring...that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.*

Acts 26:19-20 NASB

Paul's life was changed by a vision. When Jesus appeared to him as he approached Damascus on a mission to persecute Christians, Paul was transformed from a persecutor to an apostle.

To help Paul understand this vision, Jesus sent Ananias so that Paul could understand that he was "a chosen instrument" who would "bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel" (Acts 9:15). Paul also needed to be prepared for difficulties he would face.

Paul never forgot this vision. Wherever he went, its message was a constant reminder of God's call and his personal ministry.

By focusing on this vision, Paul showed the consistency of his message. He was not motivated by the reactions of people but His obedience to God. He spent his life fulfilling that call, going wherever God called him to go. By staying faithful to this vision, he had boldness, confidence, and clarity.

This message applies to all who have made Jesus their Lord. All believers, through this relationship, have been given a *personal* assignment that may include particular places to go and special things to do. We are prepared, trained, and equipped in special ways to accomplish these assignments.

Today, remember God's call on *your* life. Do not be disobedient to *your* "heavenly vision." Dedicate yourself to finishing your task, running your race, and winning the prize set before you (Hebrews 12:1-2).

## PRAYER:

Father, thank You for Your plan for my life. Help me focus on completing this assignment. I dedicate my life to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

# A New Beginning

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: MICAH 7

SUNDAY  
September  
**29**

*Rosh Hashanah* begins today at sundown. This, the Jewish New Year, starts a special ten-day period that ends on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). God commanded that during this special time, His people were to search their souls and seek to make things right with Him and others (Leviticus 23).

On this day, many Jewish households carry on the tradition of *Tashlich* (“to cast off”). As Sam Nadler describes, this “involves going to the sea shore or to the bank of a river.” There, “participants toss bread crumbs into the water as prayers are said regarding God’s forgiveness.”

It is a reminder that God promises to forgive us. In fact, He casts our sins “into the depths of the sea.”

There was a reason God commanded that Rosh Hashanah was one of His feasts to be celebrated (Leviticus 23:2). He knows that all of us sin. We all need a new beginning.

Today, seek to cleanse your heart. Are there things that block the flow of His blessings for you? Are you troubled by anxiety or worry? Have you allowed sin or bad habits to dominate your life?

Be honest with God. Lay your burdens at His feet. He is ready to forgive you (1 John 1:9). He wants to bless you in new ways. Experience the joy of forgiveness and being clean. Then start celebrating. Let this be a day of new beginnings!

*Who is a God like  
You, who pardons  
iniquity?...He does not  
retain His anger forever,  
because He delights in  
unchanging love...  
You will cast all their  
sins into the depths  
of the sea.*

Micah 7:18-19 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, cleanse my heart. Thank You for forgiving me. Thank You for setting me free! In Jesus' name, amen.

# Whom Do You Trust?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ACTS 27

*Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul.*

Acts 27:11 NKJV

## PRAYER:

Father, I commit my life to You. I seek Your will. Speak to me. Guide me. Direct my steps. I trust in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

The ship carrying Paul toward Rome faced dangerous conditions. He warned passengers and crew that the voyage ahead would be a disaster. There would be economic loss. And some would die.

Pondering his options for the voyage, the centurion in charge of prisoner transportation could have listened to the ship's captain, who had experience steering a ship, or he could have trusted Paul.

From a human perspective, there was no reason to trust Paul. He had no experience piloting a ship. And he was just a prisoner. But Paul knew God. Paul had spiritual discernment and was sensitive to God's leading.

Nonetheless, the centurion believed the captain. It was a dangerous choice.

Each day we face many crossroads. As we ponder our options, we can be caught up in the pressure to think like the people around us and rely on human logic. But the Bible reminds us that we always need to trust in God and allow Him to guide us, to fill our minds and hearts with His Word, and to stay sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

Right now, think about the decisions you face. Whom do you trust? The people of this world? Or God and His Word? Are you basing your decisions on the world's wisdom, or following the leading of His Spirit?

In every situation be sure to seek God. Cry out for His wisdom. Stay sensitive to His Spirit. Trust Him.

# Developing an Unshakable Identity

By Mark Maulding

You might be surprised to learn that God's opinion of you doesn't change every day. Regardless of whether you're having a good day or a bad day, His opinion of you is amazing. Though you might feel *awful* at times, God's opinion is that you're *awesome!*

A Biblical self-image is a great self-image, but you must believe what your Heavenly Father says about you in His Word. Even when everything around you seems to be shaking, here are a few examples of how your life can be grounded on God's steadfast opinion about you.



**Mark Maulding** is the founder of Grace Life International in Charlotte, North Carolina. This is an excerpt from his book *God's Best-Kept Secret*.

## Because I'm in Christ

### I Am Loved

I am a child of God – John 1:12  
I am beloved – Romans 9:25  
I am chosen – Colossians 3:12  
I am Jesus' friend – John 15:15  
I am inseparable from God's love  
– Romans 8:37-39

### I Am Acceptable

I am accepted by God – Romans 15:7  
I am righteous – 2 Corinthians 5:21  
I am not condemned – Romans 8:1  
I am completely forgiven – Colossians 2:13  
I am holy and blameless – Ephesians 1:4

### I Am Valuable

I am God's masterpiece – Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)  
I am adopted – Ephesians 1:5  
I am God's treasure – Matthew 13:44  
I am a new creation – 2 Corinthians 5:17  
I am designed by God – Psalm 139:13-16

### I Am Secure

I am more than a conqueror – Romans 8:37  
I am complete in Christ – Colossians 2:10  
I am surrounded by Christ – Colossians 3:3-4  
I am eternally safe in Christ – John 10:28





# **'BECAUSE YOU HAVE OBEYED ME'**

## **Here's why faith and obedience are twin pillars of the kind of life God blesses.**

by Jonathan Miller

Throughout the Bible, God gives promises to His children. Whether promises of financial freedom, physical or emotional healing, or family reconciliation, God has made promises meant to give us hope amid our difficult circumstances.

However, often the Lord's promises must be activated by a faith-filled offering or sacrifice, as we see in the life of Abraham. After promising Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars, God asked Abraham to do something unthinkable: to sacrifice his son Isaac as an offering on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:1-18 NLT).

In complete obedience,

Abraham trusted God with his only son through Sarah, even though Isaac was the only possible means to fulfilling the Lord's promise about multiplying his descendants. Little did Abraham know at the time, but his obedience to the voice of the Lord was the key to unlocking incredible blessings, both for himself and for his offspring. God told him:

*Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your son, your only son, I swear by my own name that I will certainly bless you. I will multiply your descendants beyond number, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will conquer the cities of their enemies. And*

*through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed – all because you have obeyed me* (vs. 16-18).

Notice that twice in this short passage God uses the phrase, “*because you have obeyed me.*” In another pivotal moment in Abraham’s life, we’re told that he BELIEVED God, and it was counted as righteousness (Genesis 15:6). But in this story in Genesis 22, the focus is on the blessings Abraham received because he OBEYED God.

What a beautiful illustration of how faith and obedience work together to unleash God’s favor and His blessings in our lives.

## LESSONS FOR US

As a later parallel to the story of Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac, God willingly sacrificed *His* only Son to unlock the gift of salvation for all who would believe. You see, God will never ask you to do something He has not already done Himself.

Consider this: If God had simply asked one of the disciples instead of Jesus to die for our sins, it would have never sufficed. Both Abraham and God literally sowed their sons as seeds to activate their promises...and both Isaac and Jesus were given new life instead of death!

The Bible clearly states, “*Faith without works is dead*” (James 2:26). When you act in obedience to God’s prompting to give Him something He requests, He sees your faith and rewards you for it. That’s why the apostle Paul wrote, “*He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully*” (2 Corinthians 9:6).

What kind of bountiful harvest has God promised YOU in response to your acts of faith and obedience? Often God is waiting for you to release what you’ve been holding on to, in order for Him to replace it with something far better.

Today, I encourage you to listen to God’s voice and be willing to step out in BIG faith to give Him your offering. When you do, He will fulfill His promises to you in BIG ways. As He did with Abraham in Genesis 22:14, He will reveal Himself to you as *Jehovah-Jireh*, your faithful provider.



**Jonathan Miller** is the senior pastor of New Beginnings Church in Orlando, Florida.

# This Month on Inspiration TV

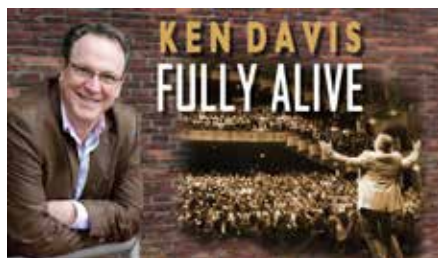
## *September highlights of Reel Inspiration Movies and our new ministry programs*



A financially desperate couple faces unintended consequences when they break into a mansion. The terminally ill owner refuses to let them leave until they repent and follow Jesus!

**Saturday**, September 7  
9 p.m. US Eastern, 21:00 UK

**Sunday**, September 8  
5:30 p.m. US Eastern, 17:30 UK



You'll laugh and be inspired as Ken Davis shares his own journey from lethargic resignation to a new life of adventure and spiritual renewal. He will help you learn how to become fully alive in the power of Christ.

**Saturday**, September 14  
9 p.m. US Eastern, 21:00 UK

**Sunday**, September 15  
5:30 p.m. US Eastern, 17:30 UK



After Jack witnesses a mob murder, the FBI relocates him and his wife Julie to a place the gangsters will never look. But will they survive the transition?

**Saturday**, September 21  
9 p.m. US Eastern, 21:00 UK

**Sunday**, September 22  
5:30 p.m. US Eastern, 17:30 UK

## New Ministry Programs



### **Watch Therefore with Dov Schwartz**

On location at the Sea of Galilee, this program is designed to help followers of Messiah Jesus obey His command to watch and be ready for His return.

**Wednesdays** at 11 a.m.  
US Eastern, 11:00 UK



### **Concepts of Faith with Charles Capps**

Charles Capps and his family have discovered that the spiritual truths Jesus taught can be applied to the everyday circumstances of life...bringing hope and transformation.

**Thursdays** at 11 a.m.  
US Eastern, 11:00 UK



### **Amazing Facts with Doug Batchelor**

Pastor Doug Batchelor explores the Scriptures and offers practical guidance on Christian living, Biblical prophecy, and much more.

**Sundays** at 9:30 a.m.  
US Eastern, 9:30 UK

For airtimes or more information on these and other great programs, visit [ini.tv/schedule](http://ini.tv/schedule).

**Don't miss out on these and other Christ-centered programs for your Christ-centered family!** You can watch Inspiration TV 24/7

on Roku, Apple TV, Amazon Fire, Chromecast, via livestream at [ini.tv/livestream](http://ini.tv/livestream), or on the free Inspiration TV mobile app.





## Transforming Lives Everywhere

**From Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Libya, Germany, Austria, England, Ireland – over 200 nations and territories – come great testimonies like these!**

Right from the beginning, Inspiration TV has acted upon the Biblical command in 1 Chronicles 16:24 to “*declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples!*” As a result, God has transformed lives all over the world, even in countries where preaching the Gospel is a crime.

### **Christian material isn’t allowed here...**

*“I have recently been born again. It’s a miracle to hear from you and receive your broadcasts, because Christian material isn’t allowed here in Saudi Arabia at all. Your material has helped my spiritual growth, and I will share it with my small group. Please keep me and this country in prayer.”*

**– RICHARD, SAUDI ARABIA**

### **We all accepted Jesus...**

*“I, my wife, and our kids all accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior recently here in Bahrain. Now we are sharing the Gospel with our parents and relatives. Please pray for us so that many souls may be saved in the name of Jesus.”*

**– CLIFFORD, BAHRAIN**

### **I prayed the prayer of repentance...**

*“I am writing to tell you I have received Christ as Savior. It happened when I saw your program on Inspiration TV and prayed the prayer of repentance. I love Inspiration TV, and your programs have greatly blessed me.”* – **ALIENBESUNU, GERMANY**





## Reaching Teens for Christ

Young people are one of the most important mission fields in the world today. Our *Steelroots* program on Inspiration TV has changed the lives of thousands of teenagers like these with an uncompromising Gospel message.



STEELROOTS

### *Now I'm with God...*

*"Steelroots has changed my life! I thought God didn't accept me, but then I watched your program. Now I'm with God!"*

– ERIN

### *I would have been dead...*

*"If it weren't for you guys at Steelroots, I would be dead right now. I want to thank you so much for helping me find God and accept what He wants for me."*

– JOSEPH

### *Freed from addiction...*

*"After being addicted to alcohol and drugs, Jesus transformed my life and healed me. Steelroots is the real thing and is ministering to many."*

– JOY

Thank you, Inspiration Partners! Through *Steelroots* and other great programs on Inspiration TV, you are helping to fulfill the Great Commission. Philippians 4:17 says this amazing fruit is abounding to YOUR account in Heaven!

To sow your Seed for Souls this month, visit [inspiration.org/souls](http://inspiration.org/souls) or return the enclosed response form.



# Salvation and Discipleship Through Social Media

**Because of your generosity, lives are being changed  
in the Philippines – and all over the world!**

Each day, David Cerullo strengthens the Christian lives of thousands of people worldwide through his powerful *Strengthen Your Walk™* discipleship videos. Last year alone, there were over 27 million views of David's videos!

The response from the Philippines has been particularly

amazing, and last year 95,847 people in that nation made Christ their Lord and Savior through our evangelistic outreaches!

Here are just a few of the many testimonies we've received from precious people in the Philippines who have been impacted by our daily discipleship videos...

## *Reminded of God's promises...*



*"I saw David's video about breakthroughs on Facebook. I've been a Christian for years, but at some point I forgot God's Word and lost sight of my dreams. I was bombarded with life's battles, and my spiritual life grew faint after both my parents had strokes. I thank God for this ministry because it was God's tool to remind me of His promises and encourage me to keep holding on. Indeed, God is good all the time!" – GLEZIEL*

## *Assurance of God's love and favor...*



*"I was experiencing spiritual dryness, but David's timely message touched me and gave me assurance of God's love and favor, even during times of weakness. Your message refreshed me and reminded me of His faithfulness. May God bless you more and more with His anointing and wisdom!" – MARILOU*



To watch these powerful, three- or four-minute discipleship videos each day, follow Inspiration Ministries on Twitter, Facebook, or YouTube. Visit [StrengthenYourWalk.org](http://StrengthenYourWalk.org) to browse the video archives or sign to up to receive new videos via email.



# Perfect Peace in Stormy Times



If you're anchored to God's Word, you'll never go adrift amid the wind and waves of life.

by Ben Cerullo

In a world facing uncertain times, God's people need His peace more than ever. Our prayer ministers at Inspiration Ministries pray every day with people who are experiencing serious health problems, financial pressures, family conflicts, and other stressful situations.

However, I'm convinced that it's possible to find God's peace even amid the stormy and stressful seasons of life. During difficult times, I encourage you to pause and look past the temporary cares and trials of this world. Fix your eyes on Jesus, *"the author and finisher of our faith."* When you do, you'll be able to walk safely through the howling wind and waves around you, for He's telling you, *"Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid"* (Matthew 14:22-33).

Isaiah 26:3 promises that when you are fully trusting in the Lord, you can experience His supernatural peace even when times are

tough. *"You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You."* Isn't that good news?

Jesus offers hope for the hopeless. He's our strength and confidence, our rock in times of trouble. Although He never said life would be easy, He gave us this great promise: *"Trusting Me, you will be unshakable and assured, deeply at peace"* (John 16:33 MSG).

So stop dwelling on your problems, and start looking at Jesus. Stay focused on who HE is, and remember who YOU are in Him. Stay anchored in His Word no matter what you see happening around you.

When your life is anchored in God's faithfulness, you will *"abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit"* (Romans 15:13). Regardless of the storms that may come, your anchor will hold firm, and you'll be unshakable even in life's fiercest storms!

# One Phone Call...

*Could Be the First Step to Your Breakthrough!*



*Our prayer ministers want to pray for the turnaround you and your loved ones need.*

## **Husband now sober...**

*"After you prayed with me about my husband's alcoholism, he stopped drinking." – LINDA*

## **Restored family...**

*"I've got my family back! The Lord gave me a great job; my wife was willing to take me back, and I've been clean from drugs and alcohol for almost a year. God is so good to us!" – LAWRENCE*

## **Daughter healed...**

*"Through the prayers of your caring and anointed prayer ministers, God has given my daughter a miracle, healing her of cancer and thyroid problems!" – DARLENE*

## **Canceled debt...**

*"After you prayed with me, I received the cancellation of a \$23,000 medical bill. The hospital called it an act of charity, but I say it was God." – MELVIN*

**What God did for these Inspiration Partners, He can do for you!**

**Contact our International Prayer Center today, and ask our prayer ministers to agree with you in prayer.**

**US / CAN / CAR: +1 803-578-1800 • UK / Intl: +44 (0) 84 5683 0584**

A Merry Heart...

A merry heart does good, like medicine. – Proverbs 17:22



## BULLETIN BLOOPERS



*Barbara Jones is still in the hospital. She's having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of Pastor Jack's sermons.*

**The peacemakers meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to a conflict.**

**Jerusalem Jewelry Shops...**

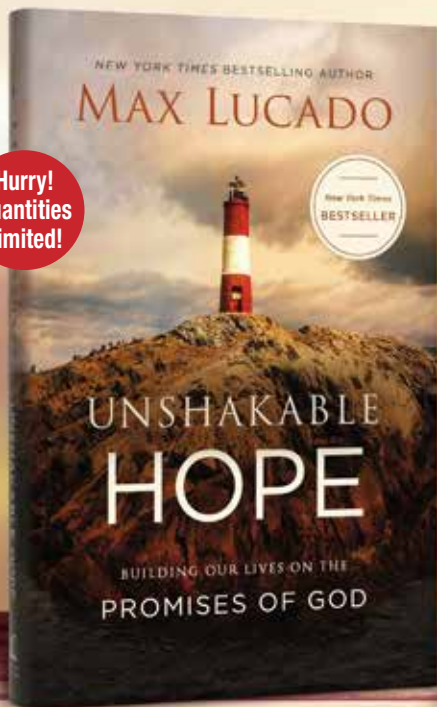
**Q:** Why was Jesus banned from the jewelry shops in Jerusalem?

**A:** They were afraid He would break every chain.

The *Inspiration* devotional magazine is looking for examples of humor in the church or Christian life. If you have humorous stories, jokes, or photos you would like to share, please send them to [MerryHeart@inspiration.org](mailto:MerryHeart@inspiration.org).

# Dying Inside Because of a Lack of Hope?

Max Lucado's powerful book will give you the tools you need to develop bedrock faith and confront life's problems with God's promises.



Turn to [Page 32](#) for details on how you can receive *Unshakable Hope* by Max Lucado and *Simple Steps to Handling Stress* as our **THANK YOU GIFTS** this month (while supplies last).

Send your gift with the enclosed response form, by visiting [inspiration.org/SEP2019](http://inspiration.org/SEP2019), or by calling our special resource line:

US / CAN / CAR: +1 855-331-4585 • UK / Intl: +44 (0) 80 0043 9673