



## CELEBRATE

Becky Combee

The day we accept Jesus as our Savior and Lord our journey of ever-increasing faith begins. At that time we dedicate ourselves to the Word of God and although our knowledge is little, we lay aside our past and begin our walk with God. We begin by continually hearing God's Word. Through the Word of God faith comes!<sup>1</sup>

This road to faith is the same for everyone. If we travel it successfully, we dismiss our own mortal suppositions and yield to the Spirit of God who is our teacher. We meditate on God's Word and He increases our knowledge.

Meditation means to ponder, imagine, study and talk about God's promises. When we study the Scriptures, we deposit these glorious truths in our spirit. They are in our heart to guide us to victory. The apostle John said, "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, faith which comes from our meditation in God's Word gives us victory. Through our faith in God and His Word, we can be winners.

Winners believe the Word they have heard and speak it boldly. The path of their victory is simply I HEAR, I BELIEVE, I SPEAK. Speaking the Word of God from a heart filled with faith is essential to success. It is the roadway to overcoming power.

The woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5 is a great example. The scriptures record she had HEARD of Jesus and she SAID if I may touch but his clothes, I SHALL BE whole.<sup>3</sup> Jesus said her faith had

## HE GAVE THANKS

Suzanne D. Williams

*"And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it."*<sup>7</sup> Thanksgiving is easy in good times. When all is going well, your kids are happy, your job is going great, and everyone's healthy, anyone can lean back and say thanks, and that's a good thing. But in this moment, Jesus was facing a cruel death, and He knew it. He knew the symbolism of what we call communion. He knew the man at the table who would betray Him. Yet, with all that in His mind, He took up the cup and told them, *"This is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many."*<sup>8</sup>

In order for His blood to be shed, men would have to do the unthinkable to Him. He'd have to allow those He'd come to save to give into their basest, most demonic instincts, and without protest, walk the road to Golgotha. I think of Him in this. The gospels tell us He had to grow up. He who is the Word of God, who was at the beginning as God and with God, gave up all He knew to be born as an infant, to become His own creation. He went from the glorious stories of the Old Covenant, to a kid, running the fields of Judea, and by age thirty had come to the full realization who His Father was and His purpose on this earth.

He held that cup having prophesied His death and Resurrection, as assured He would rise from the dead as that He was King of Kings. He gave thanks, though, not for who He was, but for these men who believed in Him. He said so to His Father, in a beautiful prayer recorded in John 17, and

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healed her. Because she had heard, SHE BELIEVED and SHE SAID.

After we speak God's Word, our works will verify our continuing faith. Without works our faith has no life, no overcoming power. The apostle James confirms this when he says that faith without works is dead.<sup>4</sup>

Although there are many different works that could verify our faith, in every case, shouts of victory, songs of praise, words of thanksgiving and testimonies of past triumphs could be included. For instance, when Israel walked around the walls of Jericho on the seventh day they shouted victoriously. The walls fell down after they shouted. Their shout was not an emotional response but a command from the Lord. It was a work of faith.<sup>5</sup>

In 2 Chronicles 20, God sent Judah to the battle after declaring that the battle was not their battle. It was His battle. In response Judah appointed singers to lead the way to the battleground. They were singing about the goodness and mercy of the Lord when they discovered that their enemy had been killed. We also remember that Paul and Silas sang while in prison and their praises caused a great earthquake that opened the prison door.<sup>6</sup>

So often, praise precedes victory. Shouts of triumph before the battle confirm our confidence in God's promise. Thanksgiving verifies our faith and testimonies that remember God's help in the past encourage us as we walk toward the finish line.

So, here is our summary from God's Word. The road to victory, the road of faith, says I HEAR, I BELIEVE, I SPEAK, I CELEBRATE.

This Thanksgiving HEAR, BELIEVE, SPEAK AND CELEBRATE. HEAR God's Word and let the sound of faith fill our hearts and our homes. BELIEVE in our great God who cannot lie. SPEAK His magnificent promises and let faith reign. HEAR, BELIEVE, SPEAK AND CELEBRATE. Celebrate Thanksgiving and have a wonderful day.

<sup>1</sup>Rm 10:17 <sup>2</sup>1Jn 5:4 <sup>3</sup>Mk 5:27-28 <sup>4</sup>Jas 2:17, 20, 26 <sup>5</sup>Jos 6:5, 20 <sup>6</sup>Act 16:25-26 <sup>7</sup>Mk 14:23 <sup>8</sup>Mk 14:24

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asked for their protection, their blessing, and for them to see Him in all His glory. What sounds pompous to some was, in fact, the most humblest part of all because in His human mind, He was simply the son of Joseph, a carpenter. He was a young boy who grew up in the town, Nazareth, who'd eaten meals at the family table with His brothers and sisters, who'd gone to synagogue, who'd traveled to Jerusalem for feast days. But in His heart, He was God, the Messiah, the Christ.

He raised from death and returned to the right hand of His Father in heaven, having accomplished all He'd been sent here to do. We downplay our humanity, but it was not for our sins He came. It was because we held value that He gave up all He had. He would carry our sins and sicknesses on Himself, then make of us something eternal, something abundant that He'd proven we could be when He held that cup in His hand and gave thanks. When you give thanks this holiday for all the good things He has done, whatever the pressures around seem to be in that moment, think of Him first and raise your gaze to heaven, knowing the Great One of All still sits on the throne. That makes beauty of everything to me.

*Psalm 20:1-5 lsb*

*May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.*

*May He send you help from the sanctuary and sustain you from Zion.*

*May He remember all your gifts and look favorably on your burnt offerings. Selah*

*May He give you the desires of your heart and make all your plans succeed.*

*May we shout for joy at your victory and raise a banner in the name of our God.*

*May the LORD grant all your petitions.*