

The Memo I Never Got-gm

By B. D. Tate

Introduction:

I grew up in an Assemblies of God church that preached the ***Baptism of the Holy Spirit*** with the evidence of speaking in tongues, and believed in healing. I spoke in tongues in praise and worship of God when I was twelve—that was an awesome experience. In the church, my exposure to the gifts of the Holy Spirit and healing, primarily focused on believing in them and seeing sporadic evidences here and there of tongues and interpretations in church services. I don't remember hearing of, or seeing one person healed, although I did see persons at the altar being anointed with oil often.

My own family was torn with illness when it struck my father. He'd been hospitalized with a mental and physical break down due to overworking. The result was almost constant migraine headaches, and it would leave him de-habilitated and in bed for days at a time. The strain on the family was enormous. Many prayers were said and many altar calls for healing were sought—nothing. At times, a new pain medicine would bring relief, only to lose effect again and again. Years passed and eventually my father found his relief in alcohol.

I was introduced to the ***Word of Faith*** camp back in the 1970's, and attended a church where this message was promoted. We were encouraged to build up our faith and then we'd see results. There was a lot of hype as I would call it now, but very few, if any, testimonies of actual healing were seen or given.

There was this sense that some were anointed with special healing ministries, and from these, we might hear of some outstanding miracles. Ministers were promoted as having special callings to work miracles, but the sense that *we are all called* was not communicated very well.

We were encouraged to live holy, speak the word to ourselves and our situation, and came away feeling that if God approved of our faith, He would move on our behalf. If things didn't manifest, then we didn't have enough faith.

I was taught and embraced the theology that God saved all and wanted to heal all. The frustration increased as failure to receive put a lot of pressure on us. We wanted God to move, to heal, to deliver, but reality was something else. It was as if I could see through a glass the promises, the power of God, and the deliverance; yet, because of the glass could not experience it. I was on the outside trying to get in. Those who did receive were seen as blessed of God, God's favor was upon them, they had made it through to the other side of faith where God answers.

There was a sense of power because the Word of God was presented in an uncompromising way. When we did speak the Word of God over our lives, we could generate joy and power deep inside. I knew there was more, I was so close it seemed, but never broke through the glass to experience it.

We left the Word of Faith camp a little disillusioned, but also having gained a great deal. I entered the ministry in the **United Methodist Church** and served for seventeen years, before leaving the denomination to start a church. I had seen people get saved over those years, and one or two get healing. I didn't

preach much, if any, on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, or healing, because I didn't want to make waves. I also didn't know much about healing to make it a priority. I knew there was more to faith than I was experiencing, and from a distance, use to see other ministries touting and proclaiming the things I believed in.

In short, I lived behind that glass barrier and as the years passed, it became more and more a burden to me. I felt as if God had not chosen to use me like He used others. I felt God had shown me things, but not how to get to them.

At my last UMC appointment, we had a growing thriving church, as far as numbers. We went from 150 to over 300 in five years. We had three youth groups with over 45 kids. We had two praise teams and two services; yet deep inside I was dying in ministry. I was unhappy and felt very frustrated. It may have looked good to others, but I knew we were only skin deep in our faith.

When we left the denomination, we decided that we wanted more, whatever it took; I didn't want to leave the UMC only to repeat the same experience in this new church. I had a deep seeded hurt and disappointment with ministry. I knew that God's power included healing, deliverance, salvation, and authority, but wasn't experiencing it.

I Made a Very Heartfelt Challenge to the Lord

I spoke to the Lord, from my heart, that I didn't want the same old things. I also laid out this proposition: I would pray in the Spirit (tongues) everyday for six months, asking for some answers as to why I could see His power and promises on the other side of

the glass, but could not get to it. I promised within my heart that if I received nothing in that time period about healing, the power of God, deliverance, etc., that I would never approach the subject again, it just hurt too much. In other words, I would let it go.

I began my game plan and prayed often every day in the Spirit. Weeks passed and I was hopeful that a breakthrough would come. I was serious and I wasn't going to give up until I had fulfilled my personal pledge—my part of it. It was roughly one month into this challenge that I decided to check out the TV ministries again. From time to time over the years, I had done this just to see if they were still teaching the same things, and for the most part they always did.

This time I ran across a man sitting at a table teaching. Most of the TV ministers wanted us to see the size of their church and ministry. This man was sitting at a table in a studio room. I decided to listen. I must have tuned in two or three times when I heard him say, "Your faith will not move God!" He went onto to explain how grace and faith must work together in balance.

I was stunned. I'd always heard how our job was to build up our faith enough so that God would move on our behalf. His message said that was wrong. He said that our faith doesn't move God, it moves us! He said that grace is not just unmerited favor, but included all that God has already done. Grace is what God has already given, accomplished, and provided in the cross two thousand years ago. Our faith will never get God to move, if God hasn't already moved.

We are misguided in our thinking that our faith is going to get God to do something. We are actually expecting God to do

something He's already done, as if He hasn't done it—that's unbelief. I was amazed and went to his website and found that very message and printed it out to read it over and over again. I underlined those points of contention and confusion to meditate upon them. I thought that I'd heard all of the major issues of the gospel, but this I'd missed. How could I miss such a major teaching and meaning in scripture?

Over the next few weeks, I was convinced that I had missed that memo. I had never understood God's **grace to be everything He's already done for us in Christ**. I remember hearing this point: How could you ever doubt that God wants you to have something, if He's already given it to you? I began to re-examine the scriptures and noticed, just as he was teaching, that God had put his promises in the past tense. God has already given it, done it, provided it, including our healing. When we go to God and ask for healing, we are missing it. We don't go to God about what He's already done; we go to the problem and speak to it to get in line with what God has done (Mark 11:23, 24).

This changes everything! This is huge! I was living in a realm of unbelief and didn't know it. I wasn't accepting the Word of God as it was written. **I didn't believe the testimony that healing was accomplished in the atonement**. I was considering it as some special new act of God that would happen if I had enough faith.

A new paradigm shift occurred, and it took some time to re-orient my thoughts (and prayers) to agree with what the scriptures actually taught. For example: God has already **given** unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness in Christ (II Pet.

1:3). When the scripture testifies, as Peter wrote, that by “His stripes we WERE healed (1 Pet. 2:24)” that it puts it as a fact already done. Just like our salvation is already done in Christ, so is our healing, deliverance, provision, protection, guidance, and His presence.

He went onto explain how grace and faith must be in balance for salvation to work. We are not saved by grace alone, because if that were true, then all would be saved, not needing to exercise faith. We are not saved by faith alone, because without grace, what God has done, our faith has nothing to base itself on. We are saved by grace THROUGH faith; the scripture testifies that this (grace & faith) is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, lest anyone should boast (Eph. 2:8).

My faith moves me to believe God and act upon His grace. Grace was God moving on our behalf, even before we had the need. We have been saved from the foundation of the world. Understanding this major shift in trying to get God to do something He’s already done, to realizing He’s already done it, takes all of the pressure off of us. We simply receive and/or accept what God has done—that’s faith. God is the author, initiator, finisher, and sustainer of our faith. **Our job then isn’t to get Him to move, but to believe Him that He’s already moved!**

Healing then isn’t some mystery any more than salvation is; Jesus Christ came to save sinners and heal the sick and in the atonement, these things were completed. When we receive Christ as Savior, He didn’t go back to the cross to die for each one, as each responds to salvation. Jesus Christ died once and for all time; and when we come, that is when we accept what He did.

The same principle applies to everything else involved in the atonement (Col. 2:6).

Healing isn't something we by faith get God to do when we have the need, it is already finished in the cross; therefore, when we believe we are healed, accept what Christ has done and begin to act upon it, we receive what was already done. We aren't getting God to do something new, but accept that the cross covered every sickness and disease then.

We now confront the curse and the misaligned symptoms in Jesus' name. Our faith is established in the fact of healing already provided in the atonement, and we thank God for restoring our health. We speak to the symptoms, the sickness or illness, to leave by the authority of the name of the Lord. Now, we are standing on what the word actually teaches, and in a place of belief in what it says. Now, we are taking our place as God intended to believe His word and speak to the mountain.

The Glass Barrier Is Gone!

The results have been awesome. We have over eighty testimonies in the past three years of healing, deliverance, and God's power to provide and protect (See our Website: Lordsbcc.org/testimonies). The testimonies range from warts, blemishes, and skin cancer diminishing to nothing, to those on their dying bed recovering. We've had demonic oppression stopped, demon possession dismissed, and lung cancer, tumors, and injuries disappeared.

What is even greater is to realize that these testimonies are coming from **all** of us. Some occur during our services, but

most happen during the week at various places, by many different people of our congregation. We know now that God has given to ALL OF US the same Spirit for the same reasons, to accomplish the same things, for the same purposes (Matt. 28:20). We all know now that our born again spirit is joined with the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead (Rom. 8:11). We all know that God's Great Commission always included healing, along with saving of souls. As Jesus said,

John 14:12 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father."

I am grateful for understanding grace in such a dynamic and comprehensive way now. I understand that faith is just my response in believing what God has already done. There are other issues that have also come to light such as: discerning the difference between doubt and unbelief; what the prayer of faith is; what the fiery darts (weeds) are; what hardness of heart is; the issues with natural unbelief; the importance of speaking to the problem; our authority in Christ realized and others...

Conclusion:

I don't believe I would have engaged in this challenge had I stayed in the denomination, and I don't believe I'd been rescued from my misunderstanding of grace and faith. I'm in the most dependent position I've ever been; if God didn't manifest, work His miracles to confirm His word, move and convince the hearts of this congregation, I would surely have failed (but I already was). I take no credit whatsoever for the results, I'm just eternally glad to have the reproach of seeing God's promises, but being unable to

reach them, end. We have definitely crossed over the barrier of unbelief and doubt; we haven't arrived, but we have left. This is true in so many ways, but it all began by receiving the memo I had never gotten—Grace is what God has already done; Faith is our positive response to believe Him and act upon it.