

Will You Ride With Him?

There is no difficulty in life that can hold you captive when you know that the victor, the word of God, lives in you.

As Christian women we are often told to read the Word of God. "The Word is your defense against the attacks of Satan," people say. So how come it looks as if the enemy is winning in our lives more often than not?

"Lord, am I faithless?" I cried out to Him not long ago. "Do I doubt your Word? Why isn't there more victory in my life?" In response, God led me to Revelation 19:11-13—a picture of the victorious Christ riding into battle on a white horse. But what did this Rider have to do with me and my battles, right here and right now? I wondered. Again, God responded, leading me step by step through the Scriptures until I understood this powerful message of hope and victory.

He began in the first chapter of John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (vv. 1,14, NKJV).

Sensing that I needed to look more closely at the conception and birth of Jesus, I turned back to Luke 1 and began to read about Mary's initial visit from the angel. Why was she chosen to give birth to the Son of God? She was, of course, a virgin, untouched by any man. Yet she was not saved, because God's plan of salvation had not yet come into the world.

So what qualified her? The angel explained it: "'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God'" (Luke 1:30). And Mary responded, "'Let it be to me according to your word'" (v. 38).

Christ had to come through a vessel that was willing and

obedient. He needed to live in a body that had the DNA traits of obedience found in it. All of us have some traits that resemble our mothers and some traits that resemble our fathers; the same was true for Jesus. He got His flesh from his mother and His spirit from God, His heavenly Father.

Still, how could someone so earthly give birth to someone so holy? That was the gist of Mary's question to the angel when she asked, "'How can this be, since I do not know a man?'" (v. 34).

We often ask similar questions. "No one has ever succeeded at what God is telling me to do. Why should I try?"

"How can this be?" Mary asked. Again, the angel explained: "'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you'" (v. 35).

The birth of Jesus gives us a pattern for conceiving the Word in our own lives. When we recognize God's grace toward us, when we embrace the favor He has imparted to us and accept His Word as truth, then the Spirit of the Lord descends upon us with power and guides us into all truth.

The Holy Spirit had to come upon Mary so that she could accept and then carry God's Word. Whenever the Word of God is ready to be activated in our lives, the Holy Spirit will always be present to come upon us with power to carry it out.

At Jesus' baptism, He stood before John and, at that moment, the heavens opened up: "And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, 'You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased'" (Luke 3:22).

You see, whenever the Word is activated, the power of the Holy Spirit is present. Here, Jesus—the Word—had not yet done any of His great works. Yet the Spirit of God spoke from heaven, declaring that He was pleased. Why? Because the Holy Spirit

knows all things. The Spirit already knows the power that has been given to the Word to accomplish His purpose; therefore, whatever the Word is about to do, the Holy Spirit counts as done.

After Jesus' baptism and time of testing in the wilderness, He returned to His hometown of Nazareth to begin His ministry. Arriving at the synagogue, He was handed the book of Isaiah and began to read, "'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor'" (Luke 4:18).

Even though Jesus is the Word, He still had to find the place in the Word that outlines His destiny. Before he could do anything, the Word spoke the Word! He had to read the passage in which the Holy Spirit had gone before Him and prophesied of His works—because that Word assured Him of the power of the Spirit to perform everything that was written.

You and I must follow the same pattern in our daily lives. We must get into the written Word and find the place in the Bible that speaks to our circumstance—for in that Word resides the power of the Holy Spirit to perform it.

CLEANSED BY HIS WORD After coming to a deeper understanding of the process of conceiving the Word, I still had questions. How could the power of the Word be activated in my life? And what did it have to do with the victorious Rider in Revelation 19?

The Lord led me next to Psalm 51:1: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions." The psalmist spoke for all mankind when he asked for mercy and cleansing from sin.

That's why Mary's virginity was important; it represented a degree of purity and cleanliness before God. She was a vessel untainted by ways that were not God's ways. A clean vessel was a requirement for housing the Word!

We, too, must be cleansed through the experience of being born again so that the Word, after entering in by grace, may have a place to reside. As the psalmist wrote, "Behold, you desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part you will make me to know wisdom" (v. 6).

It is not enough to know Christ through head knowledge; our inner hearts must be transformed by the Word of God. Revelation power is birthed out of purification. If we are not cleansed and purified, the Word will still exist with power; we simply will not have access to it.

THE CALL TO VIRTUE My understanding was growing deeper, but God still had one more Scripture passage for me. I turned to 2 Peter 1:2-3: "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue."

How do we receive "all things that pertain to life and godliness"? According to "His divine the knowledge of Him." His power performs when there is knowledge of His Word!

Notice that these verses say God has called us "by glory and virtue." Remember, Mary had to be a virgin in order to give birth to the Word. If we are going to activate the Word in our lives, we will be required to answer the call to virtue. But what exactly does that mean? Webster's defines virtue as: conformity to a standard of right; moral excellence.

For the believer, it also means: to be obedient or compliant to the will of God.

The implications of this passage are enormous. I had always believed that the power of God was something that just happened—that if we only had faith, we'd see God's power at work in our lives. But Peter seemed to be saying something more.

Ephesians 3:20 also came to mind: "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us" (emphasis added). Power does not come from mouthing words and calling it prayer. It does not come from turning away our plates and calling it a fast. If there is no change or transformation in us, then no change or transformation can come out of us!

The Bible says that when crowds of people went to hear Jesus, they were healed of their diseases and delivered of unclean spirits. "And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all" (Luke 6:19). In the King James version, the word "power" is rendered "virtue."

Now if virtue means to conform to a morally excellent standard of right, to be obedient or compliant to the will of God, then what went out from Jesus was that which He had obtained from God through His relationship with God. During the entire time He was on earth, Jesus never broke fellowship with the source of His power!

He knew that as long as He conformed to the right standard and remained in moral excellence, as long as He stayed in obedience to the will of God, He would be able to do what God does. He could heal the sick because God is Jehovah Rapha. He could give peace to troubled minds because God is Jehovah Shalom.

Everything God is, we can become through spending time with Him, abiding in His Word and conforming to His ways. When we answer the call to glory and virtue, according to 2 Peter 1:4, we are given "exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these [we] may be partakers of the divine nature."

When we are vessels of God's virtue, we are "partakers of the divine nature." His Word is not only conceived in us but also performed in power.

RIDE ON TO VICTORY And that brings us to the Rider in the Book

of Revelation, dressed for battle and in a posture of war. Go to Revelation 19:11-13 with me: “Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful”—He will always be faithful to His Word—“and True”—He cannot lie; He is the Truth!

“In righteousness He judges and makes war” (v. 11). This means the enemy is not striking us first but responding to our attack. Satan does nothing first. He is not the Alpha; God is.

“His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns” (v. 12). He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! “He had a name written that no one knew except Himself” (v. 12). That name could be revealed only to those who were of like spirit and like nature.

“He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood” (v. 13). I believe this represents His blood shed on the cross. He had already won the greatest battle ever fought.

You and I are covered by the power of that blood. We are partakers of the divine nature. We are identified with the Rider! Great power is available to us to win the battles in our lives. Why? Because, as the passage in Revelation continues, “His name is called The Word of God” (v. 13).

The Rider lives on the inside of you and me. He is the very Word of God! And when the Word is ready to be activated—when our lives have been cleansed and transformed to show forth the virtue and character of Jesus—then the Holy Spirit will come upon us to perform that Word with power. Whatever the battle, the victory is ours. Ride on, King Jesus!

Read a companion devotional.

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