

Signs and Wonders Accompany His Word



By: Rev. John L. Witwer, Publisher & Bible Teacher

I made my annual visit recently to the office of one of my best advertising clients, to accomplish what had always been a routine renewal of our Church Guide advertising contract over many years. The meeting started in a most unusual way, with a negative tone, as my client said loud and clear to me,

“Things are not as they were in the past, the current economy and drastic downturn of our industry has left me strapped.” It was obvious that I was being set up for rejection for the first time in many years in this sales call. I sat and listened respectfully for a time, so that I could really understand his needs and determine how I might be able to help him experience restoration.

For five months I had been studying and teaching “The Prayer of Jabez”, and witnessed miracles in the Sunday School class that I was teaching. I began to share some of the exciting principles from my recent study, and encouraged him to trust God for his recovery. He had fallen behind in tax filings, so we searched for a new Christian CPA. We talked for quite a while. I sensed that no one had ever spent any length of time just listening and providing wise counsel on how to be successful again in business. I have an earned MBA, I’ve been in management consulting work for over forty years, and I enjoy helping my clients in this way. I shared some principles from “The Prayer of Jabez” -- how God blesses his righteous servants and enlarges their territory (good news for a Christian in sales), how the Hand of God goes with us and keeps us from evil, and how God hears our humble cries and helps us cope successfully with all the current negatives. He knew all of that was true; he just needed to hear it now, while he was in the valley, waiting for a spiritual lift.

My client’s eyes filled with tears as the Holy Spirit began to work in him. When I offered to pray for him, he eagerly submitted to God’s move in his life. When I was through praying, he choked up and was unable to speak because of the anointing in his office. There were no more excuses for him getting behind in paying our past bills, so he sat down, wrote a check and brought his account current. His faith soared and he renewed his contract with us for the coming year. He also made a promise to call me without hesitation, if he ever needed further ministry and encouragement. He knew he had a new member on his team to lend support, if needed. When I left his office, an excitement in his countenance had replaced his earlier gloomy demeanor. His faith was recharged and he resolved to move forward in victory.

God’s Word tells us, “The just shall live by faith” and Christ “came to give us life and that more abundantly.” The current economy doesn’t determine our success, God does.

Over a year ago, I visited the pastor of one of our most exciting and challenging client churches. This is a small church and they have had a very limited budget for advertising. I have really come to respect and love this pastor, he is so humble and gives God all the credit for the great things that have been happening in his church. He is constantly searching for how God can help him with his next step. So anything that I can do to encourage and help him is just such a great joy. As we sat down together to brainstorm things that he could do, I shared with him some of my favorite Scriptures for churches, as found in Acts 9:31 and 16:5. During that meeting over a year ago, he resolved to multiply his church based on those new insights.

I remember this first meeting so very well, because the pastor and the church were both at a turning point. The pastor was struggling mightily with a major career decision; should he leave his job and the security that it provided, so that he could focus on growing the church? After we talked quite a while and then prayed together, he found the courage to make the job transition and go full time in the church. His faith was rewarded and the church has grown about 300% over the past year or so. His church is one of the churches in the Denver Metro area that is literally multiplying, as I believe is the desire in the heart of God.

I have had a number of luncheon meetings with this pastor during the past year. Both of us have been refreshed, invigorated, and stirred to new heights in these meetings. So I have kept up with his progress and his new challenges. Like so many other churches that are planning further expansions of their facilities, this pastor has encountered many roadblocks while planning to build new facilities. Since I have been trained in civil engineering and have worked on a number of construction projects, I am able to share valuable insights with pastors who are in a current development phase. This pastor needs to raise almost a million dollars, just to make required utilities available to the new property. I tried to encourage him out of Psalm 18:29, “By my God I can run against a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall.” He became excited, when he had another Scriptural mandate to follow. The last time we met, he was wrestling with another decision: “The church continues to grow, so when must I start the second service?” What a joy it has been to be a vital part of helping this formerly small church to grow! Clearly God helps humble pastors to multiply their churches.

Continued on page 43...

Signs and Wonder Accompany His Word

Continued from page 42...

About twenty years ago, I was on a routine business trip to Hilo, Hawaii, on a Saturday, and I had an experience with the Holy Spirit that I will never forget. My work was finished for the day and late in the afternoon I was preparing to return to the airport, when I heard the still small voice of the Spirit say, "Find Henry Kahalahili." Pastor Henry was a wonderful man and had an incredible Hawaiian voice. He could move people in the Spirit with his powerful voice and huge stature. We had ministered together in a number of meetings and I had been to his church in Hilo a few times, however, we had not seen one another for quite a time. The voice of the Spirit seemed to be urgent, and I didn't have a lot of time, so I began a frantic search for Pastor Henry, being quite sure I had heard the voice of the Spirit.

I'd heard through the grapevine that Pastor Henry had been to the hospital. A call to the Hilo Hospital yielded no results, he had been discharged and they couldn't tell me where he had gone or how to reach him. I drove rather quickly to Pastor Henry's church and parsonage. He wasn't there either, and now I'm getting a bit frantic, because of approaching departure time for my flight. I needed the Lord's help quickly and I bowed my head in prayer. Within a few minutes a pickup truck pulled up, with the answer to my urgent prayer. It was Henry's son and he gave me instructions on where to find Henry in a nearby shopping center.

Pastor Henry ran a Big and Tall retail clothing store, which apparently wasn't doing very well, and I found him slumped in a big chair behind the counter. Pastor Henry was not well, as he coped with epileptic seizures. When he saw me, he greeted me by saying that his urgent prayers had been answered. I asked him what he meant. He explained that he could not preach in his church on Sunday because of his illness and announced that I was his replacement. I protested: Pastor Henry, I said, "I have to catch a plane very quickly, I have no extra clothes with me, and I'm just not prepared!" He wouldn't take no for an answer and grabbed my tickets. He was gone for a bit and came back with new tickets for departure the next afternoon. He made other arrangements and it was all set for me to speak in his church the next day.

I urgently sought the Lord about what I was supposed to do and say during the Sunday sermon time. The Holy Spirit gave me a word of wisdom ... "forgiveness." So I shared my own testimony about how I had to forgive an attorney who abused me wrongfully for over two years, and I shared how Job had to forgive many people. The Lord showed me from a very familiar Scripture what was the root cause of Pastor Henry's epileptic seizures. In James 3:14-16 KJV we read, "14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not

against the truth. 15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." When I was finished sharing about forgiveness, there was an incredible rustling in the congregation, as people on one side of the isle got up and forgave and prayed with people on the other side of the isle. Then I had an altar call and about one third of the congregation came to the altar for prayer. As I was going down the line praying for people, the Holy Spirit showed me the couple that had started the strife that was causing Henry's seizures.

What I didn't know as I was ministering, was that Pastor Henry had his resume out across the mainland. He was seeking a new ministry opportunity. But the Holy Spirit is the ultimate problem solver. Because of these dramatic events and changes that were inspired by the Holy Spirit, Pastor Henry completed his ministry at that church and a few years ago he went to be with his Lord, having fulfilled his call successfully. When the strife and unforgiveness was halted supernaturally, life at the church

returned to normal. In an environment that is peaceful, healing can proceed and life is better. I can take no credit for any of those miracles, because Jesus taught me how to "have an ear to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches." See Revelation Chapters 2 and 3, where Jesus taught all seven churches how to "hear the Spirit's voice."

Over the past thirty years I have been given the opportunity to pray for many pastors. Dr. Roy G. Sapp, Pastor of First Assembly of God in Honolulu,

had fallen off a big ladder during a church construction project. He was in such pain that he couldn't sleep in his own bed, he had to sleep sitting in a chair. My wife Diane and I went to pray for him in his home, and that night he was able to sleep in his own bed again, as he testified to the congregation the following Sunday. I spoke in a Catholic gathering of priests, bishops, and archbishops in Toronto, Canada. A bishop was in attendance who was having five or six epileptic seizures daily. He came for prayer, and the organizer of that function told me later that the bishop had no further seizures during that conference, after prayer. Again, I take no credit for these miracles, all I do is share the Word of God faithfully and the Lord is my ministry companion. As it says in Mark 16:20 NKJV, "And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen."

During the past six months the Lord has impressed on me that I once again must be ready to visit churches and businesses as He instructs. Who knows, I may be in your church or business soon, as the Holy Spirit leads. I know this -- wherever the Spirit leads, miracles are sure to follow, and to God alone be the glory.

"And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen."