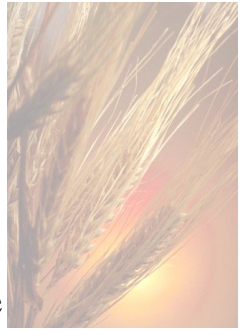




Faith as a Seed

“If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain” (Matt 17:20)



Even relatively new Christians who have very little experience with the Scripture immediately recognize Jesus' words, “the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Yes, “the truth shall make you free;” however, we need to carefully examine Jesus' exact words so that we are not misled by the over simplification of that phrase. In the context of the passage, many of the Jews were beginning to follow Jesus and were becoming new believers. In addressing these new believers Jesus said, “*If ye continue in my word*, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And *ye shall know* (*future tense*) *the truth*, and *the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:31-32). So the Lord reveals a sequential process; in order to get set free by the truth, the believer must first continue in His word and as a result of continuing in the word they will begin to understand the truth which will then set them free!

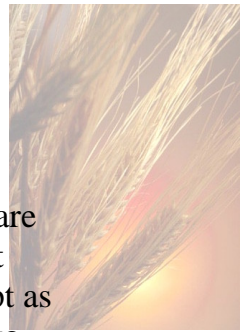
The point is that having the truth all by itself is insufficient; it is the knowledge or understanding of truth that sets us free. There is not power in the truth that you have; rather it is power in the truth you know! A person can be set free only by the knowledge of the truth that he/she possesses. For example everyone that has a Bible in their home technically has the truth “thy word is truth” (John 17:17); however, one must read and understand the Bible in order to continue in His word; further, only those who continue in His word are set free from various bondages. In actual fact, we are all ignorant to one degree or another of certain bits of Biblical information! That is why the Scripture says, “*Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God*” (Eph 4:13). In other words, we all need to “*grow* in grace, and *in the knowledge* of our Lord” (2 Peter 3:18).

We are going to study a simple application of the Word of God in a way that you may not have previously put into actual practice. From what we have just learned, if one has not understood various Biblical truths then to one degree or another they have existed in some sort of a spiritual bondage because of their ignorance of God's Word on that specific matter. As the prophet says, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hos 4:6). When it comes to God's word, knowledge is power!



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However, before we get to our specific lesson, we are going to revisit a Biblical concept that came up last week; we will use the reexamination of that concept as the foundation for what we are going to study tonight. In that spirit, let's return to the topic of creation. Last week we touched on the Biblical fact that Jesus was the actual creator of all things; indeed, the New Testament clearly reveals Jesus' role in the creation of the universe. We can pick up Paul's revelation through an off-the-cuff statement that he made while discussing the grace that God gave him to preach among the gentiles. Paul wrote, “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in **God, who created all things by Jesus Christ**” (Eph 3:9). So we see clearly by that last phrase that God created all things by the one who became Jesus.

It is an undeniable Biblical fact; Jesus created all things! Now, let's take a look at the specific Scripture that we discussed last week. As we look at our Scripture, we are going to search out two major facts concerning creation; we will seek to uncover revelations of Scripture concerning: (1) when and (2) how Jesus created all things. We begin with the words of the Apostle John, “In the beginning was the **Word**, and **the Word was with God, and the Word was God**. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 **All things were made by him**; (i.e. *the Word whom we know from other Scriptures is Jesus Christ*.) and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:1-3). In this specific passage we learn that the Word was with and in God prior to any creation. Next, we learn that the Word made all things; however, John does not reveal the identity of the Word until verse 14, “And the **Word was made 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” (John 1:14). So far we have determined (1) when Jesus created all things, “In the beginning!” Next, we need to attempt to determine from scripture (2) how or by what method Jesus created all things!

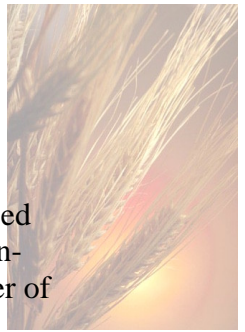
From the opening passage of the Bible we can observe the method that Jesus used to create all things, “the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And **the Spirit of God moved** upon the face of the waters. 3 **And God said**, Let there be light: and there was light. 4 **And God saw** the light, that it was good” (Gen 1:2-4). We learn from this passage that Jesus was not alone; the Holy Spirit was also present with Him at the beginning. The passage teaches that as a result of the darkness God performed a three-fold act in the process of creation, (1) “**the Spirit of God moved**,” (2) “**and God (the Word who became Jesus) said**,” and (3) “**And God saw**...” The second step which is described simply as, “**God said**,” agrees completely with what we find in another passage of Scripture, “Through faith we understand that **the worlds were framed by the word of God**, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Heb 11:3). In essence, Jesus framed the world by His word. The last part of that passage does not mean that God made the world out of nothing as many believe; rather, it means that He used invisible things for creation, i.e. things “not made of things which do appear.” The invisible entity in creation that Jesus used was His faith, “faith is **the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen**” (Heb 11:1). So exactly how did the Lord create all things? We are going to discover how Jesus literally spoke the universe into existence out of His heart of faith!



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We need to understand the simple concept that Jesus used His Word or speech to create everything. Notice the ten-fold essence of His Word as revealed in the first Chapter of



Genesis:

- (1) “And God *said*, Let there be light” (Gen 1:3);
- (2) “And God *said*, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters” (Gen 1:6);
- (3) “And God *said*, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together” (Gen 1:9);
- (4) “And God *said*, Let the earth bring forth grass” (Gen 1:11);
- (5) “And God *said*, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven” (Gen 1:14);
- (6) “And God *said*, Let the waters bring forth abundantly” (Gen 1:20);
- (7) “And God *said*, Let the earth bring forth” (Gen 1:24);
- (8) “And God *said*, Let us make man in our image” (Gen 1:26);
- (9) “and God *said* unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply” (Gen 1:28);
- (10) “And God *said*, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed” (Gen 1:29).

As we consider these ten creative statements used in the act of creation, we notice that God’s dominion or the manifestation of his rulership was expressed (*or spoken*) through the words that Jesus articulated. In other words the Master of the Universe (*Jesus Christ*) exercised his rule by speaking! We read, “For I am the LORD: *I will speak*, and *the word that I shall speak* shall come to pass . . . *I say the word*, and *will perform it*, saith the Lord GOD” (Ezek 12:25). We discover that God’s Word has always been the essence or the sustaining embodiment of His creation, “upholding all things by *the word of his power*” (Heb 1:3). Jesus Himself corroborated the concept that words are the elements that God uses to assemble the things that He creates. Notice how Jesus told his disciples, “whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; *and shall not doubt in his heart*, but *shall believe that those things which he saith* shall come to pass; *he shall have whatsoever he saith*” (Mark 11:23). Essentially Jesus identified the process as (1) say unto the mountain; (2) have not doubt in the heart; (3) believe those things which are said; (4) he shall have what he says! I hope that you can get a hold of the concept that through this specific teaching, Jesus actually shared with his disciples the secret of His dominion over all things (*the universe*)!

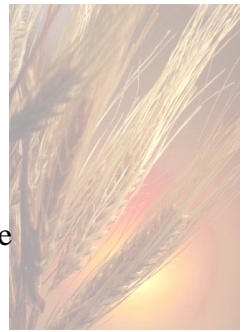
Remember that we just read in Heb 11 that, “faith is the *substance of things*.” The Bible identifies that, “*faith cometh by hearing*, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17). We must hear the Word of God in order to receive the faith of God; however as we have already studied, our hearing must be accompanied with proper understanding, “When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart” (Matt 13:19). Those last four words of Jesus teach us that the Word of God is like a seed that is “sown in” our hearts. We will return again and again to this important concept.

In John 15 Jesus revealed the steps to the process of acquiring the God kind of power, “If ye abide in me” (John 15:7); obviously, those who are born-again certainly abide in Jesus. However, the Lord did not end His statement with those words. He went on to say, “*and my words abide in you*, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7). Obviously, if Jesus words abide in us then His faith automatically dwells in us. According to Jesus, when His words abide in us, “ye shall ask what ye will;” did you notice that He did not say, “ye shall ask what God’s will is?” If we abide in Jesus and His words



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abide in us we can ask (*speak*) whatever we will! Obviously our will falls within the will of God when we fulfill the condition that His word abides in us. Let me

share an example; we must get to the point where we know God’s will based upon His Word! Once we cross over and are comfortable in this new position, instead of praying, “Lord if it is your will _____;” instead, we will boldly say, “Lord your word promises that _____, for this reason I claim and believe your word to be final on this issue! Therefore, I receive your promise in faith.”

The substance of everything living begins with a seed. Obviously then, you too began with a seed; hopefully everything that you ate today had its beginnings with a seed; everything that lives begins with a seed. So too, the Word of God is a seed. Jesus said that, “The sower soweth the word” (Mark 4:14); which is clearly the Word of God. (See the “sower” scattering seed at right.)



Faith, which is “*the substance of things hoped for*” (Heb 11:1), “*cometh by hearing*, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17). We just read Jesus’ words which claim that the word of God is a seed of faith that gets planted into our hearts, “When any one heareth the word of the kingdom . . . that which was sown in his heart” (Matt 13:19). Jesus clearly taught that the Word of God is like a seed and is therefore filled with faith; indeed, that is how we get faith by hearing the Word of God! You are growing in faith right now by hearing/reading this Bible Study! We need to begin to think of God’s word and all words for that matter as containers of either faith or fear.

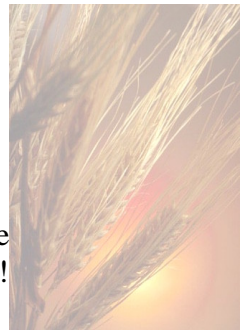


A sower throws seed on the ground; likewise, a parable is something thrown alongside: (1) *para* – alongside; (2) *ballo* – to throw. Jesus identified the parable of the sower as the most important of all parables because it contains the key to all parables; notice the verses from Mark 4:13 and 14, “*Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? The sower soweth the word!*” Here again, we observe that the word is compared to seed. Jesus was conveying the idea that within the parable of the sower, there exists a potential to unlock all



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other parables! Through understanding that specific parable, we literally can unlock much of the Bible! The parable of the “sower” is clearly a fundamental parable!

We are not going to examine the parable of the sower in this Bible Study; rather we are seeking to understand the importance of seed. We will recognize that the parable of the sower is a key parable because of the seed!

God has bountifully provided us with the seed of His word! However, just as if I were to give you a big 60 lb. gunnysack full of wheat seed (*see wheat stalk above*), what you would then choose to do with the seed would determine your own future. For example you could mill or grind the seed down into flour and make lots of bread; on the other hand you could plant the seed and greatly multiply your harvest. One thing is certain. If you do not plant the seed it will not multiply! You cannot pray over the sack of seed and expect to come back in several months to discover multiple sacks. However, if you plant the seed and gather in the harvest you certainly have the opportunity to make your sack multiply into many sacks of seed.

The word of God sown in our hearts is not some kind of common seed; instead, it is good seed, “Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed **good seed** (*That word “seed” comes from the Greek word*



“sperma;” what does that sound like?) in his field” (Matt 13:24). This is the first time that the Greek word “*sperma*” appears in the bible! The apostle John used the word when he wrote, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed (*sperma*) remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” (1 John 3:9). Paul told us, “if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed (*sperma*)” (Gal 3:29).

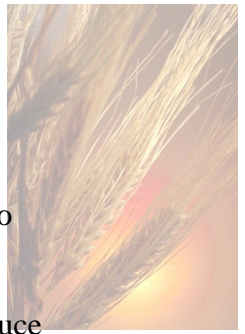
The concept of seed for the purpose of production of a harvest is extremely important to God who said, “Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding **seed**, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose **seed** is in itself, upon the earth” (Gen 1:11). God gave us the seed, “whose **seed was in itself, after his kind**: and God saw that it was good” (Gen 1:12). In essence, God pre-programmed the seed to reproduce after its kind! It works 100% of the time! You do not plant corn seed and expect to get pumpkins; nor would you ever need to send your pumpkin seed to the latest

“Pumpkin Seed Seminar” so that the seed can learn how to produce pumpkins! Likewise, God’s word is pre-programmed word. The seed of the Word of God will likewise produce after its kind, “According as his divine power ***hath given unto us all things*** that pertain unto life and godliness, ***through the knowledge*** (*remember the importance of knowledge of God’s Word*) of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ***ye might be partakers of the divine nature***” (2 Peter 1:3-4).



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Understand this! The seed of God’s word is designed to produce the divine nature of God in us! Let’s begin to think in terms of a “physical creation” and a “spiritual creation.” God created the physical earth to be germinated with physical seed and produce a physical crop. In the same fashion, God also created “spiritual creation” (“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and ***breathed into his nostrils the breath of life***; and man became a living soul” (Gen 2:7). It is important that we understand that God did not breath His breath into any other creature during creation! This set apart humanity in a special category from all other creatures of creation. The breath of God is spirit, “***The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life***” (Job 33:4). Notice how Job describes our spiritual existence, “***there is a spirit in man***: and the ***inspiration (breath)*** of the Almighty giveth them understanding” (Job 32:8). Man is both physical and spiritual and this is why Jesus told Nicodemus, “Except a man ***be born again***, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3)! Christians receive the very Holy Spirit of God! Jesus went on to say, “Except a man ***be born of water and of the Spirit***, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Just as the seed of the physical creation sustains your flesh, the seed of the spiritual creation sustains your spirit! We are spirit beings who live in a physical body; the seed of God’s Word sown in our hearts produces His divine nature in us!

Notice, “the Lord said, ***If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say*** unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you” (Luke 17:6). Now let’s examine this passage a little more closely. “If you had faith . . . as a seed you ***might say***.” Notice that Jesus uses the phrase, “***might say***;” this also means that you might not say! It is conditional and dependent upon your own mouth! Further, what on earth does the sycamine tree have to do with this whole passage? In order to discover we must go back to the context where Jesus had just been teaching His disciples a difficult lesson on the subject of forgiveness, “If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. 4 And ***if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him***” (Luke 17:3-4). Notice how His disciples immediately replied, “And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith” (Luke 17:5). What does their request for an increase of faith have to do with forgiving one’s brother?

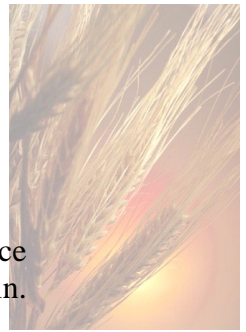
Jesus said, “If you had faith . . . as a seed you might say!” In this passage, Jesus was using a sycamine tree as an object lesson of something that might block our spiritual path. He taught that we must speak to our problems, “Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.” The Greek word translated “should” is a much stronger word than it appears in English; when properly translated it renders, “***would*** obey you.” This means that when the disciples asked, “Increase our faith,” Jesus’ reply was that they did not need to increase what they had; rather, “If you had faith . . . as a seed” He was teaching that they simply needed to begin to exercise (*or to plant*) the seed that they already possessed.

Two great secrets of the faith are evident in that last passage from the Gospel of Luke! The first is that faith works just like a seed; and secondly, we plant that spiritual seed by speaking it out of our mouths!



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Exactly what kind of faith does the seed of God’s word contain? We must first remember, “faith is the substance of things.” The Word of God has faith embedded within.

When we speak the Word of God, just like planting a seed it will reproduce, “***If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say*** unto this sycamine tree!” In Jesus’ object lesson above the disciples might say to their own tree that is producing the fruit of unforgiveness, “Unforgiveness, you can no longer hinder me; you are plucked up and cast into the sea! Jesus said that you must obey my word; therefore unforgiveness, be thou gone!” The very saying of this confession causes the individual to have even more faith that the problem is diminishing! On the other hand, if the individual were to keep saying, “But you don’t know what they did to me! I just can’t forgive that! They knew what they were doing.” Those ongoing words of unforgiveness that ultimately come from the devil are also seeds that bring forth a harvest! We must remember Jesus’ words, “Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28 He said unto them, ***An enemy hath done this***” (Matt 13:27-28). For thousands of years the enemy has been fooling humanity into speaking all of the wrong words! Whether good or bad we must remember that Jesus said, “he shall have ***whatsoever he saith***” (Mark 11:23). By our words we become prophets of our own future, “For ***by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned***” (Matt 12:37).

Another important element that we must understand in this whole principle is the realization that our mouths are a witnesses to what we believe deep down in our hearts, “for out of the abundance of the heart ***the mouth speaketh***” (Matt 12:34). Whatever we believe deep down in our hearts our mouths will speak corresponding words. This is exactly why the Lord told Joshua, “This book of the law ***shall not depart out of thy mouth***” (Josh 1:8). Christians should definitely take advantage over natural circumstances; we know that saints overcome the effects of the fall by, “the blood of the Lamb, and ***by the word of their testimony***” (Rev 12:11). Fruther, we clearly read in the Old Testament that, “***the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak***” (Num 22:38).

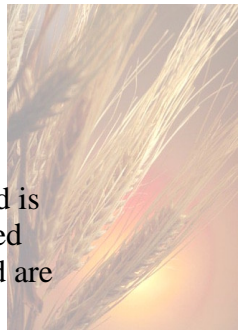
God put a prophetic word in Abraham’s mouth; let’s tie the concept of “speaking things into existence,” using Abraham the father of the faithful as our example. When we study his story we discover that Abraham was told to speak of things that did not yet exist. “Who against hope believed in hope, that he ***might become***, the father of many nations” (Rom 4:18). (*The tense of the words ‘might become’ requires that this is a desire for a future characteristic.*) Although he was yet fatherless, Abraham still spoke the truth! When God changed Abram’s name to Abraham (*meaning the father of many nations*) He caused Abraham to prophesy the future every single time that he introduced himself to others! When Abraham said, “Greetings, I am ***Abraham***, (*meaning the father of many nations*)” even though he was fatherless, he was not lying! He became the father of many nations as soon as God gave him the word. When his own words subsequently expressed agreement and belief in God’s word his desired future became a reality! Realize this powerful point! He had to perform the act of speaking this promise that he had received from God into existence! Abraham was given a word from God, “For ***this is the word of promise***. At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son” (Rom 9:9).

After we speak God’s promises, we need to wait for an indeterminate period of time before the words that we have spoken come to pass. Jesus said, ***The seed is the word of God***”



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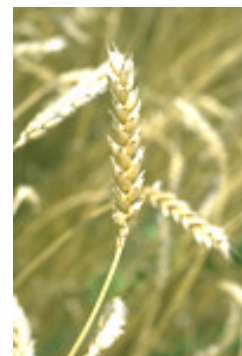


(Luke 8:9 & 11); or, stated in reverse order, God’s word is seed. Every time that God’s word is spoken, it is planted into a human heart, “But that (*seed*) on the good ground are they (*Believers who hear the Word of God*), which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and **bring forth fruit with patience**” (Luke 8:15). Now, did you notice the method through which they bring forth the good fruit? (1) They kept the word (*seed*); and, (2) they brought forth fruit **with patience!** Surely we recognize, patience requires time; this means that there is an element of time from the instant when the seed is planted and the time when the fruit comes to fruition.

Now let’s glean some truth from the “faith chapter” which starts out by recording, “Now faith is the **substance** (*This means that there is substance to faith. Substance is something that can be measured, touched and felt. For example, salt is a substance.*) of things hoped for, the evidence of things **not seen**. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good report. (*Abraham and Sarah’s faith in God’s promise framed the birth of Isaac!*) 3 Through faith we understand that the **worlds were framed by the word of God**, (*God framed the world using his words! You need to get this concept! Whether we realize it or not we are framing our world each day through our own words! God’s word is the most powerful force in the universe! You must get this point. Ps 103 says, “Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, **hearkening** (listen for and reacting) **unto the voice of his word**” (Ps 103:20)) so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear (*This means that the invisible realm created the visible world!*)” (Heb 11:1-3). God framed things with His words; in the same fashion, we are supposed to frame our world through our words! Speaking God’s word is powerful!*

The miracle in God’s word is that it is designed to create faith; however, it cannot create faith while it lays dormant on the pages of the Bible. His word must be spoken out of somebody’s mouth, “the word is nigh thee, **even in thy mouth**, and in thy heart: that is, **the word of faith**” (Rom 10:8). In the same fashion, faith will not operate in us as long as God’s words are just part of our intellectual knowledge; faith must be transferred to our heart! Jesus taught that the field in which the seed of God is planted is our own hearts, “that which was **sown in his heart**” (Matt 13:19). If I were to give you a sack of physical seed you might say to me, “Its great to have seed but I don’t have a field in which I can plant my seed.” That may be true. However, if you were given a sack of spiritual seed (*The word of God is an endless supply of seed!*) your own heart would be the field in which you may plant that good seed! The most effective way to get faith into your heart is by speaking the words/promises that God has already spoken, “For he whom God hath sent **speaketh** the words of God” (John 3:34).

The Holy Spirit produced the Bible and thereby gave the human family the very word (*promises*) of God, “As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, **and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed**, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever” (Isa 59:21).



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