

What God Can Do Part 3 of 3

by Yorrie Richards

Yorrie Richards shares his transformative experience of faith and the miraculous revival during his gospel crusade despite personal challenges.

Duration: 1:05:10

Scripture: Exodus 34:8, Psalm 46:10, Isaiah 41:10, Acts 1:8, James 5:16

Topics: "Divine Intervention", "Faith And Prayer"

Description

This sermon recounts a powerful testimony of a man's journey in sharing his faith despite personal struggles, including a chronic stutter. It highlights the importance of persistence, prayer, and reliance on God's power in the face of challenges. The narrative showcases moments of divine intervention, revival, and the transformative impact of God's presence in unexpected places like a town hall meeting and a prison service.

Transcript

Well, the Town Hall meetings, which happened not too long after my conversion, and remember that I still suffered from a chronic stutter in those days, but I had a desire deep within my heart to share my newfound faith with the people of my own town, with those who had known me. Some for years, others would have heard about me, but I just felt that I should share this new faith that I had found in a living Christ, and I wanted to share it with the town. It was upon my heart to hire the huge Maesteg Town Hall.

First of all, I spoke to a lovely brother of mine, Pastor Gareth Evans. I spoke to him. We had become friendly when I had moved to the village of North Kenelly, where Irian used to live, and we became friendly.

Gareth used to visit my house on many occasions, and this time, I shared with Gareth my desire to hire the Town Hall, Maesteg, to hold a three-day crusade, gospel crusade, and I was going to call it Christ is the Answer Crusade. I spoke to Gareth about it, and he looked at me much like Pastor Ivor Davis when I spoke about meeting this lovely girl. Gareth looked at me very seriously, and he said, I would advise against that.

He said, you don't have the vocabulary, you don't have the freedom of speech that you can stand on a stage and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and perhaps it is true to say that you would bring more disregard than regard for the gospel by doing what you want to do. But I could not get this out of my mind.

The fact that Jory would hold a campaign in Maesteg Town Hall horrified me, because he had a very, very bad stammer at the time, and he could not hold a conversation.

And I well remember that he was in our local church, and we were having a time of prayer together, and again my father spoke prophetically, and said the Lord would take away his stammering tongue. Of course, perhaps I was a bit naive at the time, I expected Jory to get up off his knees in a peremptory and speak as clearly as I could speak, but it didn't happen that way. And when it came to organise a campaign in the town hall, as I said, I was horrified at the fact that Jory standing in front of the town, in front of his mates, in front of the people he worked with in the colliery, in front of so many who knew him and knew his reputation, and he was standing there to give a testimony, I thought this can't be, it can't be right.

But God's hand was on Jory in a rather marvellous way. And my wife and myself helped Jory to distribute leaflets, we must have given hundreds, perhaps thousands out in the valley, in preparation for this campaign, which he held for three days. I fasted, I sought the Lord for an answer to this almost unquenchable desire to meet the people of my and tell them, you see, I was firing on all cylinders.

And I was moving in a first love experience, a first love experience, when nothing is too hot or too heavy. And I just wanted to share this glorious faith with the people of my town. My wife said to me, she said, why don't you write to the council, who own the town hall, and find out how much it would cost you to hire the hall for three evenings.

Something which I did, I wrote to them, and I got quite a prompt reply. And the reply was such that they had heard about my change of life. And see, the local council hearing about the change of a young man from my state, and that they had thought about my request, and have decided as a council to let me have the town hall free of charge.

The only charges I would be expected to pay would be for the caretaker's wages, for they would hire the hall to me, under the condition that I employ a council caretaker as well for each evening and pay him his wages. And I would also be expected to pay the cost of the power that would be used for the lights and the microphones, etc, etc. When I got this answer, I knew what I should do.

And I hired it. Much to Gareth's discontent, I hired it. But he went along with me, even though feeling that the venture wouldn't be very fruitful.

Can I tell you something that happened at that, my state town hall? On the very principles involved in this, are principles that are involved in any revival that takes place anywhere in the world. The principles are always the same. And I hired this hall.

We put a lot into advertising. We had a banner running from the town hall right across the street onto one of the walls of a nearby shop. And right across the road was, Christ is the answer crusade.

And the first night came along. I remember walking up the steps of the town hall and going inside and seeing so many young people inside. Some of them with studs in their jackets, others with painted skulls and crossbones.

And when I saw these, I began to think maybe Gareth is right after all. And I began to feel quite frightened because of what was going to face me. We started the service off with some hymns.

We had a beautiful gospel singer by the name of Inayrin Morgan. And when it came time for me to stand and give my message, this was another crossroads for me. I stood up at this bank of microphones.

I prayed and began to speak. I hadn't been speaking minutes when I was stammering chronically. I knew I couldn't go on like this.

This was a dreadful experience. I wanted the floorboards to open up and swallow me out of the sight of everyone. And I just kept on struggling, struggling to present this some form of a gospel message.

But I knew it was useless and I stopped. I wanted to run off the stage, head in home from that opening service. The only thing I wanted to do was to be near my wife.

I wanted the comfort of Irene. So we sat in the back seat of our friend's car who had driven us to the town hall. I was a broken man.

I really was a broken man. Devastated by this. It seems that the only thing I knew in my life was devastation in many things, like the leaving of the railway, my romance with the locomotive.

It had to come to an end. Everything seemed to run for a while and then come to an end. And that is how I felt when I left the hall that first night.

Now the following morning, there was an elderly man who used to live not far from our home. Uncle David or Uncle Di as those that knew him called him Uncle Di. An elderly man, a known intercessor in the body of Christ.

This man was an intercessor in the true sense of the word intercession. This man knew what prayer is all about. A very sensitive man.

I wanted to see Uncle Di. So I told Irene where I was going and walked the length of the village. And amazingly, when I got near to Uncle Di's home, who should be leaning on his garden gate was none other than Uncle Di.

And I approached him and said, I've come to see you, Uncle Di. He said, how did the meetings go last night? And I said, Uncle Di, I don't really want to talk about it. Come on in.

He invited me in to his front room. I can see it now. A little front room with glass sliding doors.

And Uncle Di, a very short, round faced man with a farmer's complexion. And I'm sure you know what I mean by a farmer's complexion. I told him everything that had happened on the previous night.

And he stood there and just listened. Then he said to me, I'm going to pray for you, Yuri. The next thing I knew, I exaggerate nothing.

The next thing I knew, Uncle Di was on his face in this little front room. And for the first time in my short Christian experience, I knew what it was to see intercession in action. And I heard Uncle Di groan.

You know the scriptures talk about it as the Holy Spirit groans with utterances. Groans. And I heard Uncle Di groaning as the Holy Spirit, as the Holy Spirit began to pray through him.

I had never seen the likes of this before. And I've never seen it since either. Uncle Di stayed on the floor for a long time.

And I was looking on. I didn't sit down. I kept standing.

And I looked at this figure laying on the floor, interceding on my behalf. Can't remember how long he stayed on the floor. I don't think it's important anyway.

But he stood up. He finally stood up. And he said to me, you're going to the town hall tonight, aren't you? And I said, yes, I'm going.

But I'm going to get someone else to stand in for my preaching, because I couldn't take any more of this. And Uncle Di, I remember him now, looked me straight in the eye and said, if you get someone to do your preaching for you, you are going to miss God. You're going to completely miss what God has in store for you.

Did he know something that I didn't know? And he looked me straight in the eye. He said, preach yourself tonight. I said, I'll think about it, Uncle Di.

And just as firmly, he said, don't think about it. Do it. Preach the word yourself.

Because you will gain such an experience with God that will stand you in good stead for the rest of your living days. And that night, I went up to the town hall. This time, this is the second night.

This was round two. The bell was about to clang and battle was about to commence. But this time, I'd got the backing of an intercessor, as well as my own mother-in-law, another intercessor.

This whole crusade was being covered by powerful intercession. And when it came to the time, I stood to my feet and began to speak. Oh, I remember so well the fear that struck me that night as I began to stutter once again.

And I said, I said under my breath, God, don't do it again. Please, not again. Please don't do this again to me.

And I stopped. And I seemed to take the situation in hand myself. And I calmed.

Just like that. I calmed myself down. And I began to speak.

The stammer left him completely. And he spoke clearly, audibly, for everybody to hear and understand. This caused a stir in the town, I can assure you, because the people who were there knew his past and they could see a man whose hand of God was on his life.

And he completely changed. To those of you that were not at that hall, you wouldn't know the power that seemed to be released that night. As I began, now, not in my own strength whatsoever.

I had totally fobbed it. I had failed completely. I was now totally founded upon the power of God.

And my trust was placed in the power of the Holy Spirit as I began to preach. But wonders of all wonders. Oh, the joy.

I had never known such clarity of speech as the power of God took hold of my life. And I began to give a simple gospel message. I can give you the basis of that message even now.

A, B, C of the gospel. A, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. B, but God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

C, come unto me, all ye that are willing. Come unto me and find rest in the living Christ. Come unto me.

God is bidding us welcome. And that is how I preached that night. But now the power was flowing.

But now the Holy Spirit's presence. I was cocooned again in the presence of a very near living Christ. And I felt God say, he drew my attention to a young teenage girl that was sitting on the last seat of the second row back from the front.

He said, watch her. She is your key. I've had a big lesson from that.

But I watched her. And I kept on with this simplicity of the gospel. We've left the simple gospel out of our preaching because we think it's not good enough.

It's not clever enough. But we, if we bring the simplicity that is in Christ into our gospel preaching, it works. It works.

And that night, God simply whispered into my ear, stop your preaching and wait upon me. So I said to the people, I am stopping speaking because God has said to stop. I'm calling everyone to silence.

Now this literally took place. Everyone fell silent. And it was so silent that on the top of the roof of the town hall, there stands the town hall clock.

It's almost like a mini Big Ben. It was so silent in the hall that one could literally hear the whirring of the mechanics in the cogs on top of the town hall clock. And we waited.

Someone struck up a hymn. I am coming, Lord, coming now to thee, trusting only in the blood that flows from Calvary. Nothing wrong with the hymn.

But it was not to be. God had said, silence, silence, wait, wait. So I called him to silence.

This man who had struck up this hymn, he hadn't heard me. So he kept singing. So I shouted silence.

And the hall fell into total silence. And we waited. And I kept my eye on this young teenage girl that God had said was my key.

And I watched her as she began to wring her hands like this. She began to wring her hands. She was having the battle of her life.

Do you know what this was? Good old fashioned conviction of sin. Something that we don't see too much these days. But she was passing through tremendous conviction of sin as the Holy Spirit was working.

The next part of what I'm going to tell you is just amazing. I have never got over it. Watching this young girl, the whole place in total silence.

This young girl, a schoolgirl obviously, fell out of her seat and fell to the floor and began sobbing. I'm not talking about carpet time that we hear of so much today. I'm not talking about that.

I'm talking about the release of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of sinful man and he brings conviction of sin. And this young girl broke down sobbing. Her sobbing filled the town hall.

And then it happened. Now this is what happened. It was as if there was a gentle breeze and it began at the end of the platform where I was standing.

And a gentle breeze began to move across the congregation. Can I bring to you a very familiar scene that you will no doubt understand what I'm talking about? How many of you have not walked out in the countryside on a lovely summer's day and seen the tops of the fields of corn swaying like a wave as the gentle breeze wafts across the top of the stalks of corn? The wind blows where it wants to go. You can't see it, but you can certainly see the evidence of where he is blowing.

And that's what happened that night on the second night. A gentle breeze from the presence of God seemed to waft across the congregation. And as he, I say he, as he moved back over the rows, over the seats, people began, some began to fall to the floor sobbing.

Some began to stand with their hands in the air, crying out on God. Others began sobbing where they sat and cried out on God for mercy. And I saw this gentle breeze, I will never forget it, gently move across the crowd on the floor level and then move up into the balcony.

And the same happened at the balcony. I knew now that I was witnessing revival. I was witnessing a literal Holy Spirit revival.

That night we had to appeal for many Christians to come and help us to deal with those that were responding, most of them young people. But let me tell you something else that I saw. Is this getting through to you? I saw many people whom I knew were professing Christians.

I saw them running for the exit doors to get out. Since then I say God is not only explosive, but God is explosive. If you get exposed to the rays of the glory of God through the power of the Spirit, it will, it will search you out.

It will make you feel dirtier than ever you have felt before. I know the power of conviction of sin and that young lady whom the Lord said she's your key, she knows the power of conviction of sin. And that night many other people knew the power of conviction of sin.

We literally had to carry them, hands and feet, we carried them into the dressing rooms at the back of the stage. And I went in there just to see what was going on. It was like a battleground.

The dressing rooms were filled with people sobbing men, sobbing women, but mainly sobbing teenagers. And on the third night, let me tell you, what a wonderful round to conclude this part of my testimony. During the final service, there was a young Baptist school teacher in the service and she came to the man who was leading the service and she asked him, would it be possible for her to share a testimony regarding the previous night? So he said, certainly.

So we were all sitting on the platform when this young Baptist school teacher got to her feet and came up onto the stage and stood at the microphones. And she said, how wonderful. She said, yesterday was my birthday and she said the Lord gave me the best birthday present that I have ever received in all my life.

He gave me 60, six zero, gave me 60 of the young students at my school on the top of the hill. Sixty responded last night to the gospel from our brother, Yuri. And she said something which was wonderful.

Today in school, when the dinner bell rang, those that had come to Christ here last night, we spent our dinner time in a classroom. And I was reading the scriptures to them and we were praying. If that is not revival, I don't know what is.

But that testimony did something for me and I knew that if we stick to the principles of simplicity in Christ, that the power of the gospel will never lose its efficacy. The gospel will always attract those if it is presented in a way that is irresistible. And I said, during a message that I preached in Lecha down in South Wales, I said, if the God that we are presenting to the unsaved world, if the God that we are presenting is not a God of holiness, we don't have another God to share.

He must be presented in holiness and our messages must be present in a God which is holy, a God who cannot be played with, a God who means what he says, that the soul that sins, it shall die. If we present a holy God, we will see a holy God working with us. And I have clung on to that conviction all through the years, all through the years since 1959 when I got converted and began to find out the holiness of God.

I have clung on to that conviction that we must present a God of holiness or we don't have another God. After we had moved up to Nottingham, I'm shooting ahead now to the year of 1970 when we moved to Nottingham. I had an occasion through an ex-prisoner who was kept at Lincoln Prison, a man called Royce.

He had found Christ and not quite sure how I met him, first of all, but he made a way for me to preach at Lincoln Prison. And that day, it was an early afternoon service at Lincoln Prison. I had a whole group with me, some from other churches, some were going to sing and others were going to do something else as a program, and I was going to be the speaker.

When it came time for me to preach, I faced a prison chapel of about 250 to 300 prisoners, all wearing blue shirts with white stripes. And I faced these men, and I began to preach, holding the Bible in my hand like this, and I stood up at the rostrum. This, again, is not an exaggeration.

This was 1970, and I stood in Lincoln Prison, and I was holding the Bible in my left hand, and I was saying, I read that God says that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and the Bible says if we confess our sins, He is just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and the Bible says, and that's how I went on, and the Bible says, and the Bible says. Now, you know, those of you that knew the ministry of Billy Graham, that's the very style that he used. It was his individual style, but I was trying to copy, and I began to stutter.

I knew I missed it, and I began to stutter, and I saw various prisoners around this hall, this church, with the floor sloping upwards to the cells at the top, and I saw them looking around, looking at the ceiling, looking at their watches, doing anything but giving attention to the speaker, and I knew that I wasn't getting through. Again, I knew I had failed. When was I going to learn? I dropped my Bible to the prison lectern and bowed my head in prayer, and I said in all sincerity and true earnestness, I repented of my sin of presumption, and I said, Father, forgive me for presuming that you would bless me irrespective of my spiritual condition when I come before you to do service.

I thought that you would automatically bless me because I'm preaching your word, but I knew that was not the case now because I had lost these men, but here I'm confessing my sin. I stood before those prisoners with my eyes closed, and again this almost deafening silence began to fall upon the prison chapel. I'm getting used to this now.

The silence fell, and I kept my eyes closed, and my body seemed to tingle. It's as if I had my finger in a socket of light current of electricity, and I felt this pass right through me. I shall never forget it, and I stood there in total silence.

All of a sudden, a colored man sitting in the first row of the prison chapel just to my right, he boomed out, Preach to us, man, and I began to preach. This time, much like the same that took place at the Mystic Town Hall, with total fluency. You know, those of you that have got your faculties of speech, you thank God for your faculties of speech.

I didn't always have that. I don't have it now, thanks be to God. But I began to preach with total fluency now, and I began to say things that just came out of my heart, what notes I had.

I didn't preach any notes, but I said to them things on this line. I know that many of you sitting before me now have a quest, you have a search in life. You have a search in life for a true sense of peace and proper living, but the more you search, the more your goal seems to elude you, and you can find no peace.

Let me tell you this, the God who saved me is the God who can save you. The only difference between you and I, you were caught, I was not. You're paying the price for what you did.

Perhaps I got away with it. But that night, that morning, much the same took place. A presence came down to such a degree that I saw prisoners, desperate prisoners, falling to the ground, crying on God.

And what was most amazing was, even amongst the prison warders that were lining the church aisles, even amongst them, I saw those falling to their knees. There is a scripture here which says, God made no difference between the bond and the free, for all needed Christ. And that day, warders as well as prisoners came into liberty because of the release of the Holy Spirit upon them.

Some years later, I've skipped forward a few years, I was wanting to go down to my state because we had by now, I had married and I had the family moved up to Nottingham, where we are living now. And I was wanting to go back to my state on a nostalgic visit, down memory lane, if you like. Now, there is something that I want to share with you about this nostalgic visit to the bridge.

As I walked along the lane that would eventually come to the bridge, it was a beautiful October morning. All I could hear was the rippling of the water that was passing under the bridge, a distant barking dog and the sound of the chirping birds in the trees. Other than that, I was totally alone and yet obviously not alone, I didn't feel alone.

And I got to the stone wall of the bridge and just quietly leaned on the stone wall, looking down into the river that was passing underneath. And seeing as I got my wellingtons on, I thought it would be good to go down into the water and stand on the spot, so far as I could recollect it, to stand on the actual spot where I nearly lost my life. So I put my camera onto the floor and stepped down this bank and went into the water.

And I stood in the water, I raised my hands in praise, I raised my hands in prayer, I was conscious of the nearness of the Lord and I closed my eyes and I began to pray. Now I want to tell you something that

happened there and here is proof of it. As I stood in that river, there was a mist began to gather.

When I got at the bridge initially, there was no mist, it was a beautiful clear October morning. And I now stood in the river and thanking the Lord in prayer for all his grace, for the way that he had kept me, for the way that he had strengthened me in times of great weakness. In times when he drew so close to me, in terrible times when I felt so lonely and so alone.

And I was thanking God, standing in this cold, rippling water, unbeknowing to me, because my eyes were closed. I saw no mist gathering, but a mist had gathered within minutes and a shaft of sunlight was coming through the trees. It was as if I was watching a sort of a biblical epic, something like the Ten Commandments or the robe or something like that.

But I didn't hear angels singing and all I knew was there was this shaft of sunlight, sunlight. When I talk about this, I make it plain that there is nothing ethereal in this. There is nothing, nothing mystical, nothing ghostly about this.

This is all nature doing what it wants to do. But the miracle to me is the timing of the event. It's the timing of it.

And the moment that I was in prayer, God was, while my eyes were closed, preparing this scene for the moment when I would open my eyes. Which wasn't too long, I can tell you, because the water that was flowing over my wellingtons, my feet were getting so cold, I knew that I would soon have to come out of the river. But I opened my eyes and that is what I saw and I felt, I said to the Lord, Lord, are you talking to me? Are you trying to tell me something? And I came out of the river, climbed up again, took hold of my camera and took about six shots of the scene that was before me.

And while I was photographing these, I was saying to the Lord, Lord, let it stay, let it stay. I felt God's presence so near me that morning, that glorious morning. I felt I wanted to stand.

Actually, I did. I went down into the beam of the sun that was penetrating through the trees and I stood in the glory of the sun that was shining upon me. I only wish that I had the means of photographing myself in the midst of this glow.

What a wonderful experience I was experiencing right now and God was doing this for me. I stood there for a long time, didn't know what to do next until the sun had warmed up the ground so much that the mist began to disappear. And so I headed my way from the bridge once again to continue my nostalgic visit and I went to other places of interest as well.

But this shall never leave me. And when I got to the church on the Sunday morning, I was still, I was still basking in the sunlight of this experience. And when I stood up to preach on that Sunday morning, I felt as if I had come straight from the top of Sinai where God was meeting with Moses.

I felt I had come from His presence to the church. And my ministry that morning, I remember it so well, was like liquid fire as the presence of God was flowing out in my preaching. And before I knew it, most of the church were prostrate on the floor.

And I want to tell you, I joined them. I joined them. I am reminded of Moses in Exodus 34, when he had asked the Lord to show him His glory.

The Lord answered his prayer. And Exodus tells us that the presence of the Lord came down and the Lord proclaimed His name unto Moses. And verse 8 of Exodus 34 says, And Moses made haste, bowed his head to the ground, and worshipped.

And that's how I felt that Sunday morning. God came into that church. And we were on our faces on the floor before Him.

I shall never forget that visit. And I was surprised to learn that most of the local Christians now refer to the bridge as Yuri's Bridge. They called it Yuri's Bridge.

But it was where I met with God that Saturday morning, round about 10 o'clock. God did a wonderful thing. I shall never forget it.

I am thankful for all these wonderful lessons that I have learned over the years. And I believe with all my heart, as my son-in-law confirmed to me recently, when Shane said, You are going to see the likes of Lincoln Prison again. You're going to see the likes of the Mystic Town Hall again.

Praise God. I look forward to it. May I say then, in closing, thank you for listening to me.

Thank you for those who are watching this DVD. And I pray God's blessing upon you all. Thank you for taking the time to look and to watch.

And I pray that you have learned many spiritual principles that apply today to the Scriptures. I want to thank you all. It's been a joy to have the opportunity of giving what I have experienced of the power of God within my life.

And I just want to say, in closing, the end is not yet. Praise the Lord.

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