

## Chapter 18

# A Ministry Of Deliverance

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever would believe on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (*John 3:16*)

This was Jesus, speaking of His reason for having come and for His Father’s reason for having given Him as a gift to the world. He was anointed and sent to set captives free, to open the prison houses, and to set at liberty those who are bound. None but God could think of so gracious, so necessary a gift to give to mankind as the gift of a Deliverer. We thank God that this message of deliverance was not given to Jesus alone, but to us as well. Jesus declared,

“All power is given to me in Heaven and upon Earth. . . go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.. (*Matt. 28:18, 20*)

“These signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. Freely ye have received, freely give.” (*Mark 16:17*)

Knowing that the Lord had also anointed and called me to a ministry of deliverance, I was never so happy as when the Lord would allow me to be His instrument in delivering lost and bound humanity from the clutches of the enemy of their souls. That He so selected me was proved many times in the early days of the Bethesda Tabernacle, and through the years since those spare and trying days.

Previously I told of the deliverance of the woman who was an alcoholic - of the joy and thankfulness of her family to whom she was restored whole again. That was the beginning of a real ministry of

deliverance among men and women, both young and old, who were bound by alcoholism and unable to deliver themselves without God's help. As time went on, more and more were rescued from this thrall. This work became known in all walks of life in the city not only among individuals who had witnessed, heard, and experienced this redemption, not only among churches to whom this striving became evident, but even among business concerns. Many of whom would send us employees who had become overwhelmed, for whom they felt sorry and had pity for their families.

The Lord was merciful through our prayers to deliver everyone who was sent to us. God's works are wonders to behold. We have seen hopeless derelicts delivered in an instant of time. We have watched as God strengthened and renewed them until once again they could take their rightful places in society as competent, dependable men and women freed of the scourge, restored to themselves, their families, and their work.

These afflicted people all in one accord became Christians. Many of them were Spirit-filled Christians who labored and carried the burden for the deliverance of others whom they would find in life's circumstance of helplessness. Their desire was to repay God's grace by serving Him in the rescue of those who were like they themselves once were.

We even had in our congregation one brother who became the leader of what he termed "The Drunkards' Prayer Band." This group of worthy and laboring Christians met once a week, all men and women who were delivered, to pray over the requests that were sent to the Tabernacle for loved ones who were bound and helpless. It is most gratifying and edifying to receive and read letters of thanksgiving and testimony from all corners of the globe telling how these prayers were answered.

But deliverance from the hopelessness of degradation that results from chronic drunkenness was not the only weapon God gave us to wield in His behalf. We also found, going forward in faith, that the Lord had also given us the ministry of deliverance from addiction to nicotine and drugs. From subjection to the grip of this slavery, we have seen the possessed and the oppressed go free.

I shall never forget the joy that came to my heart when I became conscious of the fact that the Lord had also given me power over disease and sickness. We have seen infirm spirits, demons, and sickness of disease leave wrecked bodies. We have witnessed the healing virtue

of the Lord Jesus Christ enter into these bodies and make them every whit whole.

We have also seen unhappy captives set free, captives as shackled and ironed as any medieval galley slave or dungeon-buried prisoners of a tyrant – prisoners of lust and unholy desire, people bound by thieving and lying spirits. From all the forces of evil, of self-indulgence, of human frailty, wickedness and weakness, it was our privilege to see the bonds struck off men and women by the incomprehensible love of God, expressed through the obedient work of His ministry. We have seen the spirit of Truth take possession of life upon life in countless numbers, dedicated to the cause of Christ in a real ministry of deliverance. We have seen “mighty oaks from little acorns grow.” We have learned that “little is much, with God in it.” How true are the words of these songs:

“The Lion of Judah shall break every chain  
And give us the victory again and again.”

“Let the oppressed go free;  
Let the oppressed go free;  
There is deliverance in Zion for you and me,  
Let the oppressed go free.”