

# Put Up or Shut Up!

By Jim Golden

"Put up or shut up!" was the challenge from the dealer. The pot was a huge one and Jim was holding two Aces and two eights "dead mans hand." It was a relatively good hand, but Jim knew that it would only take three deuces to beat it. What Jim didn't know was that he was holding the winning hand. The pot was great, but so was the chance of loosing. It would cost him all the money he had to call the bet. The pressure was enormous. If he won he would win big, but if he lost he would spend this Christmas on the street or in a local shelter. "I fold," was the reply, "better safe than sorry." A pair of Jacks took the pot and Jim's hope for a better Christmas and life. While this scenario is fictional it illustrates an "all-to-often" picture of the Christian life.

As I lay in bed the thought kept coming to me, "Put up or shut up!" Over the last 35 years I would say that the Lord has given me many dreams and visions. Some would call me a prophet and a man of revelation. God has used me to perform significant miracles. Healing the blind, the cripple, raising a dead man to life, laying hands on open wounds and having them heal and close immediately, not to mention praying for hundreds maybe even thousands over the years and seeing them filled with the Spirit and fall down under His power.

It sounds like I am trying to toot my own horn, doesn't it? However, it is quite the contrary. I know that part of my calling is to tell people what I have seen or heard, but there comes a point in our metamorphosis when it is time to, "put up or shut up." I guess I am saying that I, maybe the church, am entering a new level in God's timing. There is a Scripture that declares that knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. Some time ago I heard the Spirit of the Lord say that knowledge and revelation are similar in that if revelation is not turned into reality it too can deceive us and make us think that we are something when we are not.

Paul the Apostle was, to say the least, a man of revelation. Most theologians credit him with the writing of 13 books in the New Testament. That is a lot of revelation. In fact Paul tells us that because of the exceeding amount of revelation that he had there was given to him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger sent from Satan to buffet him lest he should be exalted above measure. Some conjecture is put forth as to whether this was a physical infirmity, but the trials and persecutions in his life were probably more the true "thorn in the flesh." God told Ananias to go pray for Paul to be healed and receive the Holy Spirit because God was going to show him how much he must suffer for His name.

Recently I put out an "e-Newsletter" to those on my mailing list called "AFFLICTION — Good or Bad?" In it I wrote about how affliction is used by God to take our faith out of the intellectual realm into real world reality. I wrote about faith as seeing God for who He truly is regardless of what the circumstances or situations of life would declare to try and contradict the truth of His Word. I then wrote that hope, which was a confident expectation of good, was the way we were to look at the "afflictions" or the circumstances and situations of life confronting us, as just another opportunity for God to reveal His power and be glorified. An example would be Lazarus, the seemingly hopelessness of the situation, was just an opportunity for God to be glorified. I wrote that when we lived in this way it released the demonstration of God's love or power.

The hard part about revelation, which comes from God, is that it has a way of holding its revelator, in this case me, accountable to not just talk the talk, but to walk the walk. I truly believe that faith, hope and love are the keys that Jesus gave to Peter and that they are the keys to the Kingdom of God, but we all receive a set of keys to the house when we become His children and we must learn to unlock the door.

Many years ago Jesus gave me a gift. Like most children it was fun at first, but then I began to look around at some of the gifts He gave to others and began to think, "I want that gift!" Gifts that brought them recognition and power and a large following seemed to me to be what I needed. The gift that He gave me was the ability to lay hands on people and have them receive the Holy Spirit. Sometimes it would be a dramatic outcome like them falling on the floor or other manifestations that would inadvertently call attention to the fact that I was being used by God. But more often than not they would just slowly change without much instant or visible affect.

I became bored and ungrateful and over the years the Lord dealt with me concerning my attitude and understanding of this gift. When He confronted me it brought me to repentance. I would rather give people things like a healing and have attention drawn to me rather than to impart to them the very Spirit of the living God! **Wow, did I have my priorities out of order.** I felt the pain in His heart. What could possibly be a greater gift than the Spirit of God?

Even more recently God has been speaking to me about a verse that John the Baptist spoke. "I baptize you with water, but there comes one after me who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and Fire..." For years I taught that the section of Scripture in the book of Acts where Jesus commanded them to wait in Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Father was a command and not an option. "You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you shall be my witnesses..." The word power is the Greek word from which we get the word dynamite. Having been in the military I have seen first hand the destructive power of dynamite or one of its derivatives. The word witness is the Greek word from which we get the word martyr and we all know what a martyr is. I used to teach that the Holy Spirit doesn't come to bless your ministry, but to crucify you with Christ—He comes to kill the "Old Man" so that He will have an empty house to fill.

The second part, which I have only come to understand recently, was the baptism of fire. I have seen many manifestations over the years, burning sensations like liquid fire poured all over others and myself. I am not saying that these are not valid, but I believe that the baptism of fire is what takes the "man" that the Holy Spirit martyrs and raises "him" up into a new realm of existence. You can have a lamp full of oil, but unless you ignite the oil it never functions as it should. It is obvious that after His disciple's encounter on the day of Pentecost that their lives were never ever the same. They burned with passion and devotion to Jesus. Their own lives meant nothing to them and they were all prepared to die whatever death God would choose to glorify His name.

I, on the other hand, have been going through a personal experience with my health that has put me into the realm of silently and subtly doubting God's desire to do what He said He would do. I have to take insulin every day for diabetes as well as a combination of many other medicines for my heart, blood pressure and poor circulation.

I have written that trusting God with our lives is what Lordship is all about and now the Lord has told me it is time to “put up or shut up!” I know deep inside that I am holding the winning hand, but do not know if this is just a personal word for me or if this is a word for the church. I have asked my wife to pray about me “putting up!” I will need her support and understanding.

Smith Wigglesworth, when he was challenged to stop taking a medication he needed, came to the conclusion that he would rather die in faith than live in fear. I had to ask myself the question, “Is my life more important to me than trusting God?” I think that could be what the Scripture means when it asks; will Jesus find faith on the earth at His return? Will He find a people who trust Him so much that they do not love their lives, even unto death? I think it is time for me to cry out for Jesus to baptize me in the Holy Spirit and Fire again!

Please pray for me—pray for the church. It is sometimes difficult to discern the difference between presumption and a real word from the Lord. God’s Word in God’s timing equals God’s results, but a word out of this context can be a pre-text. If my suspicions are correct we are all at the doorway of “Put Up or Shut Up!” How many will make the right call?