

Eric Butterworth Speaks

Essay #10
FROM WISHING TO BELIEVING

There is an old song, "Wishing Will Make It So." Will it really? So often we hear words such as "Oh, I wish I had a different job. I wish I could take a trip and get away from it all." This is what I call "wistful wishing." Actually, Jesus gave us a pretty good method for bringing anything that we desire into our lives. He said, "Whatsoever things that ye pray and ask for, believe and you shall have them." He wasn't saying you could have everything you wished for--there is a difference.

Actually, his statement contains two keys. The first is found in the word "believe." Our whole spiritual teaching places stress on this word. When we hold our minds and wills in a positive attitude of faith, we discover the power that lies there. We must also consider the second word. We must carefully analyse our desires, the things we pray for, since Jesus prefaced his teaching in the power of belief with the words "Whatsoever ye pray for and ask..." He showed that our lives can be molded only from thoughts that are strong and sure within us not from vague wishes.

Our wishes commence when we are very young, and through the years they grow like a long ball of string on which bits are added. The wishing never seems to end. We all have the responsibility to check the depth and importance of our wish in its place in the divine plan. In other words, our wishes must grow up and mature into faith and belief. Amelia Erhardt, the great woman flyer, once said, "I flew across the Atlantic because I wanted to." To want in one's heart to do a thing for its own sake; to enjoy it and to concentrate all of one's energies on it--that is not only the surest way to success, it is also being true to yourself.

Your greatest power comes from the fact that you want tremendously to do the very thing very well. Now, do you really know what you want? Can you put on paper the steps you would take today in an effort to make your lives completely what you desire it to be? These are questions we should ask ourselves if we are going to come to the point of being true to ourselves, true to the divine flow in us. Not long ago, a teacher asked a roomful of people to write down their wishes. Many wishes were mentioned, many dreams were discussed, perhaps for the first time in public. But after all of them were carefully thought through it was discovered that out of the persons present, there were only five who formulated their basic desires and were actually trying to bring them into manifestation in the world in the way Jesus had taught.

Yet, when we concentrate all our senses on a certain aim, as Amelia Erhardt did, then we raise the creative, positive, intuitive forces within us. If you study the minds of the persons who have really added to the storehouse of good, of power, of knowledge, you will find that one fact appears again and again in the pages of their biographies or autobiographies...these people knew what they wanted from life, and what they wanted to give to life. Some had this knowledge in their earliest years, some acquired it in their later years; some came from homes where prayer was as important a part of the day's routine as was eating and sleeping, others discovered the power through schools and books and friends...but all learned how to charge themselves from the great creative force.

In his autobiography Hans Christian Anderson indicates that from his earliest days he linked himself in the divine process. He writes, "When we left Neiborg and came out on the great bay completely away from my native island, I realized how alone and left to my own resources I was, and now I had none other than God in heaven. As soon as I stepped ashore in New Zealand, I went behind a shed on the beach, fell on my knees and prayed for guidance and help until I felt comforted." Now this incident and all others of a similar nature show that positive forces first do not start from without; they are generated within the person who seeks the truth, who works to get

into the flow of this process that comes from within outwards. This attracts similar occurrences which increase the power.

Remember, Jesus repeatedly told his followers that only those who tried his message saw the results. He said, "Many are called, but few are chosen." His calling is the desire we feel and the inner yearning to be something more, to do more with our lives, but God's choice of us depends entirely upon us, because unless we make our desires of paramount importance He cannot use them. In other words, many are called but few choose to accept the calling, to bring it into focus. Thus, we can analyze our desires week by week, day by day, hour by hour, and choose to keep ourselves in the flow of the divine process, and cut away all the things that hinder us from that purpose. Unless we do this, our desires recede into a dream stage; they become part of this expanding ball of vague wishes. Perhaps they even fade entirely from consciousness.

When we hear the still, small voice, when we feel our desires concentrated and pointed toward a single direct line, we know where to prepare ourselves for a new and greater work. Our part is to hold our mind open to all new thoughts; none are to be rejected because they appear to upset our present plan. God alone sees the true plan completely, and the divine process will work through us taking care of the details if we are faithful to the call.

The lives who have followed the inner calling are varied: some are single, some married; some rich, some poor, but all of them found truth and wholeness when they responded to the inner call and were faithful to it. Albert Schweitzer followed his inner promptings though it had taken him in the direction that others thought was insanity for him. At first he could only follow this great prompting blindly; he knew the great talents he had been given. He was already recognized as a great musician and theologian in Europe. Yet, the inner voice spoke. It was a guidance, a direction, telling him to give up everything he had thus far achieved and led him to a path that was far different from anything he had ever known. He started to study medicine, and several years later left Europe for Africa, a continent where persons lived in disease and ignorance, all but forgotten by the more fortunate people across the ocean. But God had not forgotten; he chose Albert Schweitzer as his instrument.

We want to ask ourselves a question in the same way that Albert Schweitzer did, "What do we truly desire in our lives." Perhaps in all honesty we admit that we don't really know; we wish for something but we have not really been desiring anything. Our thinking becomes so muddled that what we put into our heads over the years causes us to lose the clear purpose that was given to us when we were born. Here's where Dr. Schweitzer's thought might help us. He says, "I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know...the only ones among you who will be truly happy will be those of you who have sought and found how to serve." As we use ourselves for God and our brother, the light grows brighter, the voice within grows stronger. We discover powers we didn't know we possessed. Truth becomes understandable. Forces of happiness and love awaken and start a creative flow through our minds so that new ideas, new thoughts surround us. Then, suddenly, we know what we want; suddenly the wishes either fade away or expand into a clearer vision, and we know. We should never be disturbed because we cannot say immediately what we desire.

A great ideal can be held by all of us, to live with God and for God. But the choice is ours. We can choose to continue in the narrow way, thinking limited thoughts of lack and inability, wishing for this and for that and the other. Or we can become part of the divine process; we can let our wishes mature into strong, deep-seated belief. We can believe that we will accomplish, and we will accomplish. What question will we follow? Will we keep on wishing? Or will we keep on believing?