

In a Moment!

Pastor Steven Scibelli is a graduate of Stevens School of the Bible. In 1988, he led a team that included his wife, Linda; their two children, Lysa and Peter; and twelve others to Ghana, West Africa. Today, Greater Grace World Outreach in Africa has expanded to 107 churches in North, South, East and West Africa.

Staying true to the vision to spread the Gospel and to make disciples of men in the uttermost parts of the world, Pastor Scibelli has ministered in more than 20 African countries and 50 other countries over the last 20 years.

In between church planting and his frequent trips to Africa, the Scibellis live in Baltimore where he teaches at Maryland Bible College and Seminary and serves in the Missions and Outreach departments at GGWO.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

GRACE PUBLICATIONS

P.O. BOX 18715

BALTIMORE, MD 21206

Printed in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.

Copyright © 2004

Grace Publications is a ministry of
Greater Grace World Outreach, Inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 5

Chapter 1 7

HOW QUICKLY THINGS CHANGE

Chapter 2 11

FROM DECISION TO DESTINY

Chapter 3 17

MOMENTS MAKE OUR LIVES

CONCLUSION 21

INTRODUCTION

Think about what can happen in just a moment. The average human being who lives 70 years experiences 2.2 billion seconds. Think about that. The person who reaches eighty years lives 2.5 billion seconds. Do you realize what God can do in just one second? But even a second is made up of moments. Think of what He can do in just one moment.

I remember being at the airport in Ethiopia and spending two days waiting to get out. Because of a cloud covering, no planes could fly. We were at the gate, and the flight was going to three countries, but the airline decided in the last five minutes that it was not going to Cameroon. The Cameroonians threw themselves to the floor at the gate and said, "We are not moving!"

I was sitting there thinking, "This is unbelievable. There are thirty people lying at the gate, piled on top of each other, and they are saying, 'Nobody gets on the plane.'"

I needed to get on that flight, and I was thinking, “God, You need to do something in a moment.” Well, I turned around and there was the Ethiopian army. And you know something? That situation cleared up in just a moment.

God is the God of moments. He takes situations and turns them around in an instant. And you know what? He is always on time with His provision. My prayer is that these pages will stir you up to understand that anytime, anywhere, anyhow, the God of all things can make a way for you and change your circumstance—in a moment!

Chapter One

HOW QUICKLY THINGS CHANGE

“And the devil, taking him up into a high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time” (Luke 4:5).

The temptation that Jesus faced was one He faced after being led by the Spirit. In this test of Jesus Christ, Satan took Him up to a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world. Kenneth Wuest and a few other commentators believe that Satan showed Jesus every kingdom of the world, from beginning to end, in one moment. In one moment, the devil showed Him everything.

The word for “moment” in this verse is derived from the Greek word, *stigma*, which actually speaks of a puncture, like going through something just enough to make a mark. If Jesus had actually submitted to that one moment in time—the smallest particle of time, which can-

not be divided into any smaller parts—He would not be the perfect Son of God. In one moment, everything could have changed.

So often we look at situations in our lives and we think, “This is going to take such a long time.” “I don’t believe I’ll ever get out of this.” “Is it ever going to end?” “Where is this going?” “How are we going to do this?”

How long did it take to finish the work of salvation? One moment, according to John 19:30:

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”

Even though the Greek grammatical construction perfect indicative passive indicates an action that took place in eternity past, the fact that the work was finished in a moment is an absolute truth. Yes, Jesus was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the earth, but Eternity punctured the limits of time, and the perfect Man became the perfect sacrifice on the Cross. The subject received the action of the verb, grace and the Spirit, and in one moment the work was finished. One moment!

People get caught up in so many situations in life. I know those situations are there, and I know they are real, but do you know what God

can do in a moment?

In Africa, we had four days of outreach, and ninety people came for the first meeting. Ninety people, after just four days! I look at what God did, and in every case, an eternal decision was made in a moment.

I made a decision to go to Bible school in a moment. I received my call from God in a moment and became absolutely assured of the purpose that God has for me. That happened in a moment—in just a moment.

Think of the thief on the cross. It only took a moment, and now he is in heaven, saved forever (Luke 23:42-43).

In a moment, deliverance can come to your life. Less than a second is all that it takes.

All Things Are For Us

“For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:15-

17).

“Get this affliction out of me! I can’t take another moment of it. I can’t take another moment of this sickness, another moment of this husband, not another moment of this wife, not another moment of these kids! Not another moment!”

But then I read in Romans 8:28 that all things work together for good to them that love God. Is that in the Bible? It is for *your* sake. That is good counseling, isn’t it? These things work for you because the Bible says that all things work together for you.

Wait on God. In a moment, He will turn things around.

Chapter Two

FROM DECISION TO DESTINY

“And now for a little space grace hath been shewed from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage” (Ezra 9:8).

In Ezra 9, the nation was one heck of a mess. If you read it, the nation of Israel was guilty of intermarrying with the people of the land, which is an abomination. Ezra said, “I can’t even lift my head up. I am so overcome with trespasses, and evil, and iniquity. I am so ashamed of what’s taken place. And the leaders are the chiefs in this sin,” he said. “I’m can’t even lift my head. We’re a mess. We are committing abominations. We are influenced by seven unholy nations. Apostasy is everywhere. Evil. Iniquity. The things—seventeen things—that are going on here are unbelievable.”

“And now for a little space grace hath been shewed from the LORD our God...” reads Ezra 9:8 in the King James Version. The translation from the Hebrew goes like this: “But for a brief moment, grace was shown us from the LORD our God.” Grace is revealed so that God may lighten our eyes and give us a little reviving while we wait for the ultimate deliverance.

Do you know how long it took for you to get saved? A moment.

What did you go through? Did you labor through some psychological counseling and then get born-again? Did you happen to have somebody explain something for thirteen days and then you finally said “yes” to it? No. It happened in a moment.

Decisions Change Our Course

“And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

“And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

“And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

“And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

“And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

“And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus” (Acts 9:3-8).

Just like that, Saul of Tarsus was saved. Saved forever! In just a moment! Just like that. It is really incredible.

We make decisions, and our lives are changed forever.

This is what I think about Mary, the mother of Jesus. I could be wrong, but then I could be right. She said in Luke 1:38, “Be it unto me according to your word.” I think the conception may have happened at her reception of the promise from God’s Word. I think she conceived the moment she believed. If you trace it chronologically, you will find that the timetable is pretty darn close.

As soon as I believe something, it happens. Are you with me? As soon as I say “yes” to God,

there is a change in me.

We had a missions night in Togo, West Africa, and I preached a message, and then another pastor got up and preached. Then I preached again. I didn't care what people thought about how long it was going, because I don't go there that often. But at the end, we had a mission call, and 150 people came forward to be missionaries. It all happened in a moment.

Just a moment.

All of a sudden, heaven opens up. Somebody gets healed in a moment of time. A marriage is reconciled in a moment of time. Jesus Christ sent His word to heal (Matthew 8), and the servant of that centurion was healed in a moment. It all happened just like that.

In Mark 5, the demoniac came out of the cemetery and was delivered from a legion of hell's forces in a moment. In John 4, the woman at the well was talking to Jesus, and the next moment she was in town evangelizing. In John 8, the woman taken in the very act of adultery was forgiven, forever, in a moment. She looked up, and Jesus said, "Where is everybody? Who is condemning you?"

She said, "No man, Lord."

In a moment, she was translated from the

kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God.

Corrected by Grace in a Moment

Have you ever faced a situation where your first thought was: “Oh, this is going to take time.” Sometimes we get this idea based upon all kinds of books we get into. But that is not what *The Book*, the Bible, communicates to us.

Back in 1965, I was walking through a corridor in Holyoke Community College in Massachusetts, and there she was. I thought, “Wow, this one is pretty.” So I put my foot up and blocked the doorway. And, she pushed it out of the way. I said to myself, “This one is interesting.” All of these years later, my wife is still with me. It all happened in one second. It was one moment, that’s all.

People get so overwhelmed with their failure when they could be restored in a moment. The prodigal son, in Luke 15, was restored in a moment. Most of us would look at that guy in the pigpen and say to him, “Now this is going to take a while.”

But the Bible says, in Luke 15:17, that “he came to himself.” He came to himself—just like that! He said, “You know something? This pigpen stinks. I’m out of here.” And he came to

himself and headed home, where his father waited to welcome him with open arms.

One time in Africa, a guy knocked on my door at two o'clock in the morning and said, "I've got to tell you, there are demonic powers among us."

I said, "Really?"

"Yes," he said. "People are trying to take the ministry from me, and we are just starting out. You want me to plant this church, but these other pastors are moving in on me."

I said, "You are right about one thing. There *is* demonic influence among us, and *you* are the influence."

He backed up for a moment. Then he said, "You're right," and now he's doing fine. He's got a church. But you know what? It only took a moment for the correction.

We have a big God who is bigger than any problem. God can do in a moment what human beings cannot do at all.

Chapter Three

MOMENTS MAKE OUR LIVES

You were born in a moment, and you die in a moment, and you will be raptured in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, according to 1 Corinthians 15:52. I love it! Blink, and we are gone. Just gone—in a moment.

I made a three-point basket to win a basketball game one time. It only took a moment. But being quite old at the time, playing with young guys, I said, “Just watch this,” and it went in. In a moment, a near loss turned into a win.

Second Timothy 1:9 tells me that I get my purpose in a moment.

Are you with me? I get hope in a moment. I might be discouraged (1 Samuel 30:6), and then hope comes in a moment. God reveals something to me—an expectation in Him—and I get a hope in a moment. I get mercy for my sin in a moment. I get strength for my weakness in a moment (2 Corinthians 12:9, Acts 4:33).

Wow! Look at what God can do! In a moment, He can confound anything the devil, the flesh, or the world does. He does it in just a moment. But Satan wants to convince everybody this is going to take a long time.

"There has to be a long healing process. It's going to take you about twenty or thirty years to get *this* act together."

"You know how many years of negativity you have already sown? You have sown so much flesh and wrong thinking and wrong decisions, why it will take years to get out of it."

Those are lies, lies, *lies*.

No, God can do it for us in a moment. We came out of a destiny in hell and darkness in what? In a moment. Don't let the enemy ever convince you otherwise. I don't care what his argument is.

Immediate Results

Just recently I was thinking about some of the things that are happening overseas. We see these Greater Grace Churches in Africa where 1,700 people have been added in two years, and we don't even know what we're doing! I'm serious. I'm thinking, "What in the heck is going on here?" I scratch my head. It's Ghanians. It's

Ugandans.

Something happened in a moment, and now we have this great move of God.

Get delivered in a moment. Get direction in a moment. Have friendships restored in a moment. Minister reconciliation in a moment.

Do you know what the word “immediately” is in the Bible? It is used about seventeen times in the book of Mark, and the Greek word, *eutheos*, means “well placed.” In other words, God is going to make something to be well placed, just in time, so that you can make a decision in a moment.

Think of Matthew, the tax collector (see Matthew 9:9). Jesus walked by and said, “What are you doing?”

“Oh, I’m just collecting money.”

“Follow Me,” He said, and Matthew got up and went right after Jesus. That all happened in a moment.

Ruth made a decision in a moment (Ruth 1:14). Abraham was in the Ur of the Chaldees, and he decided to come out and go to another country in just a moment (Genesis 11:31; 12:4).

You can make one prayer, and in one moment something happens. God answers your prayer in a moment.

Never buy the lie that this is going to take a lot of time, though we sense the insolence of the enemy. Never forget that even when it seems to be taking a while, our light affliction is working in us for just a moment, and it is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, for which cause we faint not (2 Corinthians 4:16,17).

We are not looking at the things that are seen. We are looking at the eternal through that small puncture in time, and God does that which is eternal in a moment of time.

CONCLUSION

God waters and keeps His vineyard moment by moment (Isaiah 27:2-3). What He did for the people of Israel was astounding. He made a remnant to escape. He lightened their eyes. He gave them revival so they could build the house of God. It was incredible what happened in a moment. Seventeen things were reversed in a moment, according to the book of Ezra.

My life can be reversed in a moment. A life can be transformed right now, or tomorrow on outreach, or any night that we are just ministering to people. It happens in one moment.

Right now, this is one of those moments out of 2.5 billion seconds where somebody can say “yes” to God. Say, “Jesus, I believe, and I receive You as my Savior.” It happens in a moment.

In a moment, you are forgiven and your sins are paid for. The Finished Work happened on the Cross in a moment of time, and it was for you.

God cares for you.

God loves you.

He can save you in a moment and deliver you from darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son in just a moment.

We are called in a moment. We are strengthened in a moment. We receive power in a moment. Hope comes in a moment. Joy is ours in a moment. We have patience in a moment, gentleness in a moment, meekness in a moment, humility in a moment.

God is in our moments. Our prayers go to Him in a moment, for Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us, moment by moment. Thank God for what He can do in a moment.