

THE AUSTRALIAN ANABAPTIST

God's solid foundation stands firm. 2 Tim. 2-19

Vol. 11 No. 4 – APRIL 2014



Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel,
but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in
the house.

Matthew 5:15

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For A Conservative Anabaptist Perspective

From The Editor's Desk

THE RESURRECTION.

Remembrance, Recollection, Reminiscence, these are words that we can apply to the Easter period that we are entering.

We need to remember that if Christ had not been sent by God the Father, John 3:16, we could still be awaiting the sacrificial atoning death of Jesus Christ when He shed His blood for the atonement of sin, His resurrection from the dead was the final proof of His victory over sin and we too have been given access to that victory, 1 Corinthians 15:57.

We should consider that God has provided us with the means to remember and recollect past events either in our own lifetime or in ages past and yes there are events that in our own personal experience we would rather forget but they form part of our experience and can be used to mold our character and also assist others in using those experiences to avoid the pitfalls of life.

Whilst remembrance and recollection often are our own personal choice the idea of reminiscence is more of a collective or interpersonal nature through the recollection of past events or experiences in speech or writing or other visible external means by others and also ourselves.

On the basis of the three words remembrance, recollection and reminiscence we can look at Scripture as the perfect vehicle when it comes to understanding faith in Christ Jesus, His atoning sacrifice and resurrection. The whole of Scripture we believe is how God through the Holy Spirit inspired the writers to put down for all ages and all peoples those things which God wants us to remember, recollect and reminisce on.

We can all acknowledge that there are special events in our life or in history that we do remember and reminisce on, it is good to think on those special occasions how they have shaped our lives. In our Christian life there are many things that we can receive from God's Word that will put us in remembrance not only of the important events which have offered us the hope of salvation but will bring us to the place of taking up that offer of salvation and ultimately worship the King of Kings and Lord of lords, 1 Timothy 6:11-16.



From the Pulpit

The Work of the Holy Spirit *Brother Jay Schrock*

“And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory.” [Isaiah 6:3](#)

If I was going to assign a spot up here this morning maybe this area right here and I would say if you would come and stand in that particular area that you would experience the presence of God what would you do before you stepped on that spot?

I realise I do not have the power or the authority to assign that spot but just think about it, if that was the essence of God’s presence right there then before you stepped into that area what would you do with your life, how would you feel about your life?

I would like to talk today about the work of the Holy Spirit.

I have a burden because I sense a need in my own life to understand what it is to experience the work of the Holy Spirit in my life and I realise the truth of God’s Word must give us, must provide us with the concepts that we have, the thinking, the feeling that we have about the work of the Holy Spirit.

We realise I can stand up here and try and tell you this or that is the Holy Spirit but finally it has to be Truth, it has to be what God said it is, it has to be the standard of the Scripture this morning if we are truly going to know what it is and to understand the work of the Holy Spirit.

I sense a need in my own heart that is why I am presenting it as a burden this morning.

You know we should know without stepping on a spot here, we should know what it is to dwell in the presence of a holy, holy, holy God because we claim to have the presence of the holy, holy, holy God in our hearts today.

And we could take those youth from PYC that want to spend an evening with Jesus Christ and we can tell them, “You can do it right here, right here in this prison, you can.” And I hope that our lives, and this is a burden I have for these men in my heart but it is evident that I have spent many evenings with Jesus Christ and many nights, many days with Jesus Christ because of the work of the Holy Spirit in my heart and it is evident.

We don't have to go out and spend an evening with Christ, it is good to think about those things because it gets our minds stirring, we don't have to go out and spend an evening with Christ and take Him out to supper and ask Him questions, we can do it because He has sent His Spirit into hearts and we can ask Him questions, we can find direction for our lives and we can understand what it is to have Jesus Christ in our hearts because of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Where does the Holy Spirit dwell?

Let's look at Romans five, we need to get a foundation for the work of the Holy Spirit because like I said we can have all kinds of concepts and there is a lot of teaching, of thinking, a lot of books theorising about the Holy Spirit, a lot of misunderstanding, even in my own heart at times about what the work of the Holy Spirit actually is, we have to come back to Truth and so let's provide a foundation through the Scriptures.

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: and,

Romans 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

The Holy Spirit this morning dwells in the hearts of the justified, He dwells in the hearts that are at peace with God.

What foundation do we have for this peace?

The foundation that we have for that peace is very simple when everything that is between us and our Creator has been taken care of.

It is not, we will talk more about this later, but it is not that wonderful feeling that we are free and everything is going well. The foundation that we have for peace is when everything is taken care of between us and our Cre-

ator, the devil also loves to put that free and wonderful feeling into our hearts when it is not supposed to be there.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of those that have peace because everything has been taken care off between them and their Creator.

[Acts 5:32](#): “And we are witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God has given to them that obey him.” Here is another foundation for the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts whether or not we are in obedience to God; the Holy Ghost is a witness of that.

[Acts 2:38](#) says: “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the penitent.

These are foundations, the very essence of the trust that we have the Holy Spirit that is the foundation.

There are many other things that we can try and feel like they are foundations but this is the foundation, Truth right here.

Is your heart penitent before God?

[Galatians 3:14](#) says: “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

The Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of those that have accepted Jesus Christ. This is the foundation wherewith we can claim the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

Galatians 4 is the next chapter, [Galatians 4:4-6](#): “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, ⁵ To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. ⁶ And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

Here is another foundation of being a child of God through adoption.

How do we feel about God this morning? Do we cry Abba, Father, because we understand who God is? Do we see our need for Him so therefore we

cry out to Him, therefore we are His adopted sons and therefore we can claim the work of the Holy Spirit not because of anything other than these Truths, these foundational Truths.

Ephesians chapter 2 we are focusing here mainly on God dwelling in individual hearts and that is where it begins in a sense, here in [Ephesians 2:22](#): “In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

God dwells in His Church, His bride. This is speaking particularly about the local congregation and it says in verse 21 in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. [Ephesians 2:21](#). God dwells in our congregation as we have individuals that have accepted, and are claiming their lives on the foundation of Truth that we just read about.

God dwells in the individual, God dwells in His Church that is where the Holy Spirit dwells today.

Let’s turn to Acts chapter 2.

I would like to talk about the Holy Spirit and emotion a bit here because I have been confused at times about the Holy Spirit and emotion.

And once again unless we have our lives, unless we have our emotions, unless we have our spirits in line with Truth we will quickly become confused, it is amazing to me quickly we can accept what seems like Truth but what isn’t.

I was reading a book a week ago, it is a very common, very popular writer who made waves in the evangelical world of our time, waves of emotion and the seeming power of God, I’m not discrediting that, but he made a statement in this book that God never breaks our will and I liked the thought and I like the way it sounded, I thought yes that is true, but when you compare that with Truth you realise that God does break our will. He says take up your cross daily.

How quickly we can stray from Truth, how quickly we stray from the truth about what the Holy Spirit is.

We must come back to the Scriptures, we must understand the Truth and what these are in the Scriptures what it says about the Holy Spirit and what He is.

Acts 2:16-21: But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; ¹⁷ And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: ¹⁸ And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: ¹⁹ And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: ²⁰ The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: ²¹ And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

You know the first thing we see here is excitement don't we, as natural human beings that is what we see. We see action, we see great emotion. Is that what is actually here in the Scriptures? Is that actually what it is?

God says, I will pour out my Spirit.

And we begin to think that because of that we must perform, we begin to think that we must have visions, God uses visions but it is God's work it is not our work, God uses vapour and smoke, He uses all kinds of things to fulfil His purposes, we do not see emotion in this at all.

But that is so quickly what we as human beings tend to see, that's what we see first, we see excitement.

What happens when your excitement dies down? What happens when we are not seeing all this action that we thought we should see? Does that mean that the Holy Spirit isn't there?

We need to come back to the foundation of God's Word.

Where does God dwell? He dwells in the penitent heart.

Where does God dwell? He dwells in those that obey Him.

He dwells in those that have accepted Jesus Christ.

That is the foundation of the Truth for the work of the Holy Spirit.

It does not say here that because you are out having visions and all that that you have the Spirit of God. Satan can put those things there also.

It says that God will use those things and He will use it in His way, God will stir the hearts of men, He will direct in our hearts but we must understand that the foundation for the work of the Holy Spirit is not emotion it is Truth.

[John 14:26](#).says: “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

We read this verse and so quickly we begin to have warm fuzzy feelings, yes, that’s what it is to have the Holy Spirit in our hearts, this comforter! And yes He is a comforter and He provides that sometimes but that is not what it is.

The Comforter is the Holy Ghost.

Where does the Holy Ghost dwell? He dwells in those that have accepted the foundation of Truth into their lives.

Therefore when we face days when the warm fuzzy feelings are not there, the emotions are gone, where is the Holy Spirit, is He gone too? Not according to the foundation of Truth.

According to the foundation of Truth when we have accepted who the Holy Spirit is and where He dwells then we can accept how God is bringing about these feelings, these emotions, these things that we tend to hinge our relationship with God on.

I’m not saying that God does not work through that and we will try to bring a balance to this as we go, but it is not the foundation for the work of the Holy Spirit to have warm fuzzy feelings, to have action, to have demonstrations of God’s power, God uses those things and those things will be among His people, there will be visions, there will be things that are evidences.

But it is not the foundation for the work of the Holy Spirit.

[Acts 5:3](#).says: “But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to live to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?”

And as we read on and understand it says here he lied to the Holy Ghost, it is the work of the Holy Ghost that made this come about and Ananias fell down dead.

We see power, we see God vindicated, we see God being feared and revered through this situation and we say: Yes, that's the work of the Holy Spirit when there is power clearly supernatural unusual circumstances vindication of God, that's the work of the Holy Spirit!

That is not what it says, that is not according to the foundation of Truth. Those evidences will be there but that is not foundation the work of the Holy Spirit.

Mark 16:15-18: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. ¹⁷ And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ 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.”

Those are signs that shall follow those that are following God. And once again we see excitement, we see great signs, we see unusual happenings and we wonder why those things are not happening among us, and we may ask where is the work of the Holy Spirit? God is moving, God is still directing, God is doing these things among us but we must place the work of the Holy Spirit where the Scripture does if we are going to understand how the Holy Spirit works. The foundation for the work of the Spirit dwells in the hearts of those that obey Him and we could go on and list all those things that were the foundation of where the Holy Spirit dwells and works and God follows with the signs in His time and in His way.

I believe that if we are going to understand the work of the Holy Spirit we are going to have to place these things where the Scripture places these things. We so often try to because of how the Scripture speaks begin to think that this is what it means to have the Holy Spirit among us.

How often, may I ask you how often as we read on through the Epistles, how often was somebody bitten by a snake and they did not die? How often was it? Could someone tell me?

One time, [Acts 28:1-6](#).

Where was Peter, did he not have the Holy Spirit?

It happened to Paul he must have been the only one that had the work of the Holy Spirit in his heart.

How many times were devils cast out as it's mentioned in the Epistles, we have about three times it is mentioned, it was sort of in passing, just something that happened.

How about the sick being healed, it does mention some, but it was not the predominant work during the time of the Epistles, the time of the New Testament church being established, it was not the predominant work.

How many times were tongues mentioned? Once again it was three times.

How many times was it mentioned that someone drank poison and they were still alive when it is all over with?

Could not find any in Scripture.

I am just simply saying these things to try and help us to get perspectives on how quickly we often get off-track of what the work of the Holy Spirit is.

The message of the Epistles is not the supernatural signs, it is not the snake bites and not dying or all of that, but it is Jesus Christ, that is the message of the Epistles that is the foundation for the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, it is the work of Jesus Christ not the supernatural things.

God says He will follow with the signs and these signs will be among us and we have seen evidences of them, but it is not what is predominant, it is not the message that we carry forth to the world, we don't carry it forth and say: Listen if you become a part of us you will be able to do this and you will be able to do that, you will be able to play with snakes and get bitten and it will be okay and you will be able to drink whatever you want and it will be okay.

That is not the message that we should have at all, that is not what is predominant.

There are things happening among us that are evidences that are signs I should say, there is a difference.

I don't know whether now is the time to make this clear or not but I feel like the Scripture makes a clear difference between evidences of the Holy Spirit and signs of the Holy Spirit and we need to understand that if we are going to understand the work of the Holy Spirit.

There is a difference between evidences and signs of the Holy Spirit.

Evidences are what are lived out daily and are called fruit of the Spirit.

Signs are what God chooses to use to demonstrate His power to man through us.

And God has done that, He is doing it among us.

Is He doing it enough? Yes, if we are standing on the foundation of why and where and if we can claim through the promises of the Scripture where the Holy Spirit dwells, yes God is doing it enough and we must rest in that.

If we cannot claim that, if we cannot claim penitence in our heart, if we cannot claim obedience, if we cannot claim that we have accepted Jesus Christ in our hearts we have no foundation for any signs or the good they do among us but if we are there, if we are standing on the foundation of the Truth of God's Word we can say, yes God is doing it enough among us.

I don't think that it ought to be that every time we get together we can tell each other of some new thing that happened as a sign of God's power, God's Holy Spirit working through us, those things we can sometimes encourage each other in that but that is not the foundation for our relationship with God.

If it would have been it would have been mentioned over and over and over and over in the Epistles, they do not say: Did you hear that Peter did this and this is what happened or did you hear about how James had this happen to him?

It was mentioned some but that is not the foundation for their claim to have the presence of God in their lives.

We could note that all of these things that happened, they were mentioned there in Mark, all of those things that happened were mentioned in the book of Acts and I don't know that that is something necessarily that we have to take note of but I think that as we read through the Epistles we catch the message, Jesus Christ, the Kingdom of God, we catch the message.

The Church was being established in Acts and God used it seemed like more signs during that time and He continued to, and He continues right up into our times to use signs that His Holy Spirit is working in touching and guiding men.

But it seems like in the book of Acts it was mentioned more.

That was just a note that is not to say that God won't use tongues or He will not use being bitten by snakes and nothing happening, God can use those things.

Once again what we do when these warm fuzzy feelings are gone, when there is no excitement, when loved ones gets sick and die and we cannot understand that language, what do we do? Blame God? Try and claim that what God says about His work is not right? That is what many have done, and given up.

Sometimes we can follow the devil's thinking right out into the world, and we may say, there is no power in it, there is no excitement in this, I may as well go out into the world.

We can do that or we can come back to the foundation and claim by faith that God dwells in the hearts of the obedient, He dwells in the hearts of the penitent, He dwells in the hearts of those that have accepted Jesus Christ.

John chapter 16 just to emphasise that, verse 13 it says:

“Howbeit when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all things, for he will not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak and he will shew you things to come.” [John 16:13](#).

The Spirit of Truth will guide you into Truth, the Holy Spirit will guide you into Truth and you can rest in that, He will guide you into Truth.

It does not say that He will guide you into great emotion or wonderful signs or excitements; these will be there as God directs, but it says here that He will guide you into all Truth.

In fact we could look at Luke Chapter 11 and we could see what Jesus said about this.

[Luke 11:29](#): “And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.”

The message that Jesus was giving to those who are seeking for a sign was you can do that, you can seek for a sign and that is actually what the Gentiles do, that is actually what those who do not have a relationship with God are going to do, they are going to seek for a sign.

We can rest as we are on the foundation of Truth as God describes the Holy Spirit, we can rest that God will bring those signs to us. We do not have to seek for a sign.

What is the work of the Holy Spirit?

[John 3:5](#) says: “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

The work of the spirit is regeneration.

As you think about that word, I know it is kind of a big word, you think about regeneration being reborn we could say, made new, completely new, a new individual, new creature in Christ, that is His work, that’s what He does.

[Romans 8:11](#) says: “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

We can be quickened in Christ; we are regenerated through Christ’s work. We can be renewed in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit, we can experience that.

Now once again back to the thought of the Holy Spirit and emotion, what happens if I do not feel renewed? What happens if I don’t feel quickened, regenerated?

We must go back to truth.

First Corinthians chapter 6 verse 19 through 20, this is another work of the Holy Spirit it says:

[1 Corinthians 6:19-20](#): “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ²⁰ For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”

The Spirit provides the indwelling presence of God.

Now what happens today when I feel like God is about 150 feet away, whether He is somewhere up in the air and we're just down the road? What happens when we feel that way?

I think you know what I'm talking about, sometimes we feel that way don't we, does that mean that God is not there, does that mean God is not dwelling within my heart?

He shall lead you into all Truth; we can rest in Truth no matter how we feel.

[2 Corinthians 3:17-18](#): "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty."

Another work of the Holy Spirit is providing liberty, verse 18:

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The Spirit of the Lord provides liberty.

So what if I'm feeling in bondage today? Come back to Truth.

He shall hear penitent, have you taken care of everything between you and your Creator? Are you resting in Truth?

[Romans 5:5](#) we have read that verse already, God's love through His spirit will penetrate into our hearts

That is another work of the Holy Spirit, God providing love.

Now what if I do not feel loving today, what if I struggle with appreciating my brother or somebody that did me wrong, what if I struggle with that?

Does that mean God's Spirit is not there?

It is another work of the Holy Spirit providing that love.

Another work of the Holy Spirit is to guide God's people and we can find evidence of that with Philip in [Acts 8](#), we can find evidence of that with Paul, in [Acts 16](#) they were told through the work of the Holy Spirit not to go to Asia and preach. [Galatians 5](#) talks about walking in the Spirit.

God through His Spirit guides His people.

Now what if I can't feel and see today, what if I cannot seem to find direction for my life, does that mean that God's Spirit is not there?

Come back to the foundation of Truth.

We must be honest with ourselves and many have tried to disclaim and discredit the Holy Spirit because they could not feel it.
Come back to the foundation of Truth.

The Spirit makes God's message understandable.

[2 Peter 1:20-21](#): “Knowing this first that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. ²¹ For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.”

The Holy Ghost made it clear to man what God's will was, what God's work was, what God wanted written down and God is still doing that work in the hearts of those that have the Holy Spirit, He is still making the Word of God clear to us, He is still doing that.

So what if we are struggling to understand that passage of Scripture?

Claim by faith that God will do that for you and He will reveal Himself to us, He will show who He is. The Holy Spirit gives assurance.

[Romans 8:16](#) says: “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”

A very simple verse.

So what if we do not feel like a Christian today? Are we a Christian?

I think the answer is clear; we need to come back to Truth, what is Truth, what God does, what is truly the work of the Holy Spirit in my life.

The work of the Holy Spirit provides continued sanctification, provides power for service.

Some of these things are mysteries to us how this works, it really is.

Paul said he knew he was supposed to be powerful in God and yet he felt weak and he finally accepted the fact that when he felt weak he was stronger, when he is weak then he is strong. [2 Corinthian 12:10](#)

We need to reach out by faith and claim some of those truths in our lives and keep in perspective how that it is that God works whether we understand it completely or not.

As I mentioned before there is a difference between signs and fruit.

The Fruit of the Spirit according to [Galatians 5:19-21](#) will be there.

Signs – God works those signs in His ways.

Fruit is an evidence a proof that God is in our heart.

Once again it is not the emotion, we can have joy without the emotion, we can have long-suffering, gentleness without feeling like being gentle we can do that because of the Holy Spirit in our life, because of the power of the Holy Spirit in our life.

There is a difference and I think we want to emphasise that again, there is a difference between signs and fruit.

And when these things are lived out in our daily life, we are talking about fruit, when they are lived out in our daily life then they because of Truth, because of the foundation of Truth they will produce evidence, they will produce the truth of the fact that there is a work going on, it will become evident that we have spent evenings and days and nights and weeks with Jesus.

There will be evidence. And not just fire, signs, excitement, and all those things that we would love to have being worked in our midst.

But it must be because the Holy Spirit is truly working, because it is based upon Truth, because our hearts are penitent before God and we are living in obedience.

We must wait for God to work out His signs among us.



PRAYER

The subject of prayer is vast, almost to the point of being incomprehensible. So it is with reluctance that I undertake to write on it. At the same time, it is a subject of such importance and diversity as to warrant more sharing and meditation. We need to understand that prayer, either verbal or nonverbal, is the only means by which a meaningful relationship can be established with our Creator.

Reduced to its simplest form, prayer is the heart-cry of the soul, expressed or unexpressed. Prayer is directed to some deity of known or unknown origin. To us who believe in a known, omnipresent, omnipotent God, the Creator of all things visible and invisible, this does not pose a problem as compared to the person who is unfamiliar and unacquainted with the true God. This discourse addresses itself to the first group, those of us who by reason of use have become conversant in our relationship with our Heavenly Father.

Someone has remarked that prayer is the greatest untapped and unused power source in the world. Then we do well to remove all hindrances, which ground out or short circuit the functioning of effectual praying. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

Right here we see a few of the requirements needed for God to answer our requests. Open confession, fervour (genuineness), and righteousness open wide the Lord's door to hear our supplications. "The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous" (Proverbs 15:29). Resentment, unforgiveness, pride, and any other sins, concealed or unconcealed, will close our door to effective praying.

Now, it does not naturally follow that all our requests will be answered to our immediate satisfaction. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 55:8). We must allow God to say and do as He sees best. His long-range plans may vary significantly from our short-sighted ones. But upon our total resignation comes the assurance that our prayers have been heard. Can we then not say that our prayers are, in fact, answered? As we rise to our feet, our hearts assure us that the matter rests in the very capable hands of the One who makes no errors. The person who humbly and earnestly perseveres in prayer always re-

ceives a blessing.

Now why, if we know this, are we frequently reluctant to seek the place of prayer? Or why do we allow Satan to tempt us with some flimsy excuse, such as, "It will suit better later on," and then fail to go at all? Do we not realize that "prayer is the Christian's vital breath" (Christian Hymnal, no. 355)? Upon failure to breathe due to lung disease or related malfunctions, the blood no longer carries oxygen to the brain, and the body perishes. So without an active prayer life the spiritual man withers and dies.

All Christians are an answer to prayer. Somewhere, sometime, someone was interceding, even storming the gates of heaven on our behalf. We unhesitatingly concede that there is ample evidence of the power of intercessory prayer. All those who have felt the power of the convicting Spirit will readily admit to that fact. Satan will, however, try, by taking advantage of our mortal, earth-dimmed vision, to block this from our perception. But our awareness of Satan's subtlety should increase our constancy in prayer. Let us continue to labour in prayer in behalf of deceived, procrastinating, degenerate, unrepentant loved ones, as well as for other conditions the Holy Spirit brings to our minds.

How shall we appear before the judgment seat of God if a failure on our part in this respect causes some soul to go without help, or even be eternally lost? Ponder the parable of the unjust judge (Luke 18:1-8). In verse 7, we read, "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?" A pauper indeed is he who has no one praying for him!

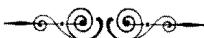
Can we assume that when our prayers are answered that we are in the perfect will of God? We must remember that if God did not answer a sinner's prayer, no one could or would be saved. Our first pleas for mercy, directed heavenward, came from lives and lips begrimed with sin. And then because God so dearly loved us, through the efficacy of the shed blood of Christ, He very graciously forgave us. While not necessarily confirming that we are in His perfect will, our answered prayers do assure us that God is real and for us.

God's aim and design is to continually draw us closer to Himself. If that takes place upon our requests being answered and we stop to give thanks to Him for the great kindness shown to us, well. But what if He withholds the answer? Does that tend to weaken our faith? Can we still say like Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away"? Upon that kind of total resigna-

tion, our prayers will always get through to the One who is bending a loving, listening ear toward His children. Our requests, whether for ourselves or for others, will be registered before God and given the attention God deems best.

We must never forget, though, that God has created all of us, whether saved or unsaved, free moral beings and will never override that which He has originally decreed. Let us with sincere forthrightness make our requests known unto God, and may we never forget to add, "Thy will be done."

Brother Alfred



THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Believer

Do I have the Holy Spirit dwelling in my heart? This is a legitimate question, and we need to be sure of the answer. The Bible says, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:9)!

Question: How can one know if he or she has the Holy Spirit?

Answer: "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20).

Quotes: "And where the Spirit is, there shall also be the fruits of the Spirit, as it is infallible that if the Spirit is in man, whether evil or good, it will manifest itself by its fruits" (Complete Writings of Menno Simons, p. 448).

"Therefore whosoever has not died unto sin, and does not live unto righteousness, has not the Spirit of God. But whoever has not the Spirit of God does not comprehend the word of God, and cannot discern spiritual things. How then can he rightly teach God's word or rightly dispense the gift of the Spirit" (Dietrich Philip, p. 184)?

Question: Can an experienced Christian lose the Holy Spirit and not realize it?

Answer: We read in Judges 16:20 of Samson, "And he knew not that the Lord had departed from him." Samson was powerless and didn't know it until the test came. Example: A person can become so accustomed to his home and the arrangement of the articles within that he can move about in the middle of the night and find the article he wants without the aid of a

light. Likewise a Christian can, by observation, knowledge (intellect), or habit, talk, walk, dress, or act like a believer on the outside but be empty inside of divine inspiration!

Unless the Holy Spirit Resides in Us

(a) We cannot know Jesus, because only the Spirit reveals Him to us (without the Spirit one knows Jesus only by hearing or reading, not intimately as a father or close friend).

(b) We cannot understand the Scriptures; only the Spirit opens our understanding (we can have head knowledge but be completely void of the spiritual meaning).

(c) We cannot speak with power (like a sounding brass or a tinkling symbol, our speaking or our tears do not move and warm the hearts of others with inspiration).

(d) There is no conviction of sin (man can disobey the Scriptures and feel no condemnation).

(e) There is no true worship.

(f) In essence Christ remains meaningless to us unless the Spirit makes Him precious to us.

(g) Man cannot come to the Father except he be drawn by the Holy Spirit (John 6:44).

(h) Evil cannot be overcome except by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Determination and sheer willpower can go a long way in changing habits, etc., but they cannot regenerate the heart. Only the power of the Holy Spirit can do that.)

Comments: The Holy Spirit is given only to those who are obedient to Him. "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32).

In a Sunday school lesson this comment was made: "If the Holy Spirit were taken out of the world, many churches would continue on, not aware that anything had happened!"

To Receive the Holy Spirit One Must

(a) Repent of every known sin in his or her life. "By repentance and faith in Christ Jesus, the Holy Ghost comes into the penitent and believing heart. He is received simultaneously with the new birth" (Bible Doctrine and Practice).

(b) Trust in the blood of Christ to cleanse him. "And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

(c) Resolve with all his heart to be obedient to the light he receives through the Word.

(d) Make a complete surrender to God, with nothing withheld from Him.

(e) Accept the Holy Spirit in a simple act of faith. (Baptismal vow: Do you believe in the Holy Ghost which proceeds from the Father, that he is an abiding Comforter who comforts us when we do right, and reproves us when we do wrong, and guides us into all truth?)

Comments: Receiving the Holy Spirit is not a mere act of the will but is the fulfilment of God's promise upon true repentance and faith in Christ Jesus.

Attributes of the Holy Spirit

(a) He is our Comforter. 'And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever" (John 14:16).

(b) He is our Teacher. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

(c) He dwells in human hearts. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Romans 8:9).

(d) He leads. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

(e) He intercedes for us. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought. but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27).

(f) He reveals to us the great mysteries of God. "But as it is written Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:9-10).

(g) He is the giver of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:8-11, 28).

Comments: The influence of the Holy Spirit promotes equality. He brings together people of all walks of life and blends them into one body. This "oneness" knows no one by their status in life, their nationality or colour of

skin, whether they are rich or poor, or by their level of education or natural gifts and abilities. The tenor of the Scriptures substantiate what Abraham Lincoln spoke: "All men are created equal."

The body the Holy Spirit uses is ours. God cleanses our being so His Spirit can dwell and work in us.

The Holy Spirit is more than just a good influence. We must know Him as a person; then we will want to know Him better. The Holy Spirit must become precious enough to us that we obey His still small voice from a willing heart, lest He be grieved and be taken from us!

The Nature of the Holy Spirit:

(a) Divine personality. The Holy Spirit is a person. Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as "Him" or "He," not "it." John 14:16 says, "And I will pray the Father, and he [God] shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

(b) Very trustworthy. He has no ambition of His own; He is a mouthpiece for God (John 15:15). (We must realize that when the Holy Spirit speaks to us, it is none other than God Himself speaking!)

(c) Speaks only the truth. He speaks the same message to all people in similar settings, no matter who, what, when, or where.

(d) Quiet (still small voice).

(e) Peaceable and gentle (came upon Jesus in the form of a dove).

The Holy Spirit Works with the Spirit of Man in Conversion

The Spirit of God strives with man and teaches him that he cannot be accepted of God at the Day of Judgment because of his iniquity and defilement. The Spirit of God teaches man that God is holy and just and that no unclean person can come to Him and dwell with Him. When the Spirit of God moves upon the spirit of man, this makes a person restless; so that the spirit of man is troubled and groans after the liberty of the children of God (Romans 8:19-22). The Spirit of God teaches man to know the corruption of his heart and his many trespasses and sins. The immortal spirit (soul) of man groans to be delivered from the bondage of this corruption and desires to come to the glorious liberty of the children of God. This, in its united working, makes a person feel his sins and works repentance in him

Hindrances that Prevent an Infilling of the Holy Spirit

- (a) Not earnest or sincere, casual.
- (b) Carnal, light-minded.
- (c) Pride.
- (d) Hypocritical life, covered sin, unwillingness to confess sin.
- (e) Neglect (one can be lost by doing nothing).
- (f) Resisting the Holy Spirit by ignoring His conviction.
- (g) Iniquity abounding and love of God waxing cold.
- (h) Hardness of heart.
- (i) The flesh (that which must be crucified). "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh ... (Galatians 5:24).

Comments: As man rejects this convicting Spirit, he becomes hardened in heart and lessens his opportunity of being saved. God convicts and draws through the Spirit, and aside of this, the sinner has no desire for salvation. "The Spirit has been grieved and quenched, and the heart has, by continual rejection, become so hardened that the Spirit cannot convince the sinner anymore, and thereby cannot move him to repentance. The condition described here is very sad and should be feared; for without a miracle by God, this is hopeless"

The Work of the Holy Spirit

- (a) The Christian's surety, or guarantee (Ephesians 1:13-14). As long as the Holy Spirit dwells in the believer, he will not be lost.
- (b) The "earnest of our inheritance." The Holy Spirit is the "down payment" for the promised eternal rest in heaven.
- (c) Reveals God's will to man because He knows the mind of God (1 Corinthians 2:11). He knows the future much better than we know the past. Can we trust the Spirit to lead us into the future?
- (d) Relays our prayers to God. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought. but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26).
- (e) Dwells in the heart of the Christian and gives direction for a life of sanctification.
- (f) Enlivens the Holy Scriptures. Without the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures are as a dead letter. The Scriptures were inspired and written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Therefore the Holy Spirit must interpret them and

unlock that which inspires the hearts of men.

Comments: Take special note in each of the next five points to determine what is the work of the Holy Spirit and what is man's part. Then answer the question, "Do men sometimes usurp the part that is for the Holy Spirit?" And on the other hand, "Do we neglect our part and expect the Holy Spirit to perform what is our responsibility?"

- (g) Brings a message to the lost, which convicts by reproving sin.
- (h) Convinces the sinner, causing him to realize his need of the Saviour.
- (i) Shows the sinner the great difference between right and wrong.
- (j) Shows the terrible consequences of the Judgment without Christ.
- (k) Points sinners to Calvary, the only place of hope.
- (l) Teaches and guides into all truth. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth ... and he will shew you things to come" (John 16:13).

Brother Don



In trouble we are prone to forget all that we have heard and read that makes for our comfort.

Now what is the reason that a man comes to think of that which otherwise he should never have called to mind?

The Holy Ghost brings it to his remembrance; He is a Comforter, bringing to mind useful things at such times when we have most need of them.

Richard Sibbes



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