

The Holy Spirit in the Epistle to the Philippians

by Arno Clemens Gaebelein

Arno Clemens Gaebelein emphasizes that the Epistle to the Philippians focuses on true Christian experience, which involves a walk of faith in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. This epistle does not promote the idea of needing supernatural manifestations or a 'second blessing' experience, but rather highlights the believer's life in Christ, the pattern of Christ to follow, the goal of being like Christ in resurrection glory, and the sufficiency of Christ in all circumstances. Gaebelein stresses that true Christian experience is about living Christ, being conformed to His image, and finding Him sufficient in all things, all made possible by the Holy Spirit.

Description

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Transcript

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"What is the difference between the unity of the Spirit and the work of the flesh?" a: "The unity of the Spirit is the unity of believers in Christ, while the work of the flesh is the cause of divisions and parties." quotes: - "A true Christian experience is the walk of faith in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ." - "To live Christ, to be conformed to His image, to have Him constantly before the heart, ever reaching out for that blessed goal, to find Him sufficient in all things-that is true Christian experience." - "If the heart is set upon Christ and controlled by Him, the needed supply of the Holy Spirit will never be lacking." applicationPoints: - "To live a true Christian experience, one must set their heart upon Christ and be controlled by Him." - "The Holy Spirit is the power and energy in the believer that makes true Christian experience possible." - "True worship is only possible by the Spirit, and it leads to rejoicing in Christ and glorifying Him." keywords: - "Holy Spirit" - "True Christian Experience" - "Philippians" - "Christ as Life" - "Christ as Pattern" - "Christ as Goal" - "Christ as Sufficient" - "Fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ" ---

THE epistle is not a doctrinal epistle like Romans, First Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, etc. It is a practical epistle unfolding true Christian experience, which is a different thing from the experience of a Christian. We do not find anything said in this document about some supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit, or that a true Christian experience consists in some great emotional experience, which brings with it extraordinary powers or certain gifts, like the gift of tongues. Of all this Philippians has not a word, nor is the teaching found in this epistle or in any other epistle, that a true Christian experience must start with an "individual Pentecost" or a second blessing holiness experience. These are terms nowhere sanctioned by the Word of God. Paul was the prisoner of the Lord in Rome and in writing this epistle he gives an inspired account of his own experience and what the true experience of every believer ought to be. A true Christian experience is the walk of faith in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Four aspects of true Christian experience are revealed. Christ is the believer's life. The believer is in Christ and Christ is in him, therefore the believer is to live Him, for Him, and his whole life is to be controlled by the Lord (Chapter 1). In the second chapter Christ is seen as the believer's pattern. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." In the third chapter Christ is revealed as the bright object before the believer's heart. The goal is to be with Him and like Him in resurrection glory. In the last chapter we learn that Christ is sufficient for all circumstances in which a believer may be found, and faith can say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." To live Christ, to be conformed to His image, to have Him constantly before the heart, ever reaching out for that blessed goal, to find Him sufficient in all things-that is true Christian experience. It is impossible without the Holy Spirit. He is the power and energy in the believer which makes such an experience possible. He is mentioned only three times in Philippians.

Philippians 1:19

Chapter 1:19. "For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." What salvation does the apostle mean? Salvation in the New Testament is used in a threefold way. We are saved in Christ, having believed on Him, and therefore delivered from the guilt of sins and from judgment. There is a future salvation, which takes place when the Lord comes. It will complete the believer's redemption. But there is also a present salvation which every child of God needs daily as he journeys towards the heavenly home. In the midst of trials, sorrows and many testings, hardships and different perils, salvation is needed. It was for this present salvation that Paul desired the prayers of the Philippians; for this he needed, as we all need, the supply of the Spirit. The latter does not mean another baptism with the Spirit, nor another outpouring. The Holy Spirit dwells in the child of God, as we have seen in the previous epistles. If the heart is set upon Christ and controlled by Him, the needed supply of the Holy Spirit will never be lacking. He always fills the heart of the believer who honors and

exalts the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:1

Chapter 2:1. "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels of mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, of one accord, of one mind." Believers are one in Christ and in fellowship with the Saints of God. In this fellowship is to be manifested the humility of Christ. There is to be likemindedness, nothing to be done through strife and vainglory. All this is made possible through the fellowship of the Spirit. He has united all the children of God into one body. There is the unity of the Spirit and if this unity is acknowledged, and the walk in the Spirit maintained there will be no discord and no division among the saints of God. Divisions and parties are never the work of the Spirit of God, but the work of the flesh.

Philippians 3:3

Chapter 3:3. "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Jesus Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh." True worship is only possible by the Spirit. The indwelling Spirit fills the heart and the eyes of the believer with Christ. He rejoices in Christ, in what He is and what He has done; He glories in Him and this leads to and produces the worship in the Spirit.

It is a sad fact that misguided Christians who seek special experiences, such as Pentecostal powers (so called) evidenced by talking in a strange tongue, are woefully ignorant of these truths. If they knew what Christ is and what the grace of God in Christ Jesus has accomplished for them, they would not become the victims of these most subtle delusions, the counterfeits of the enemy of the truth, garbed as an angel of light.

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