

# THE HOLY SPIRIT Chapter 15 The Spirit Drawing

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## Transcript

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Chapter 15

The Spirit Drawing

There seems to be a pressing need for a clear and full exposition of the Spirit's work of grace in the souls of God's people. It is a subject which occupies a place of considerable prominence in the Scriptures—far more so than many are aware—and yet, sad to say, it is grievously neglected by most preachers and writers of today; and, in consequence, the saints are to a large extent ignorant upon it. Reasons for Ignorance of the Spirit's Drawing The supernatural and special work of the Holy Spirit in the soul is that which distinguishes the regenerate from the unregenerate. 1. The religion of the vast majority of people today consists merely in an outward show, having a name to live among men, but being spiritually dead toward God. Their religion comprises little more than bare speculative notions, merely knowing the Word in its letter; in an undue attachment to some man or party; in a blazing zeal which is not according to knowledge; or in censoriously contending for a certain order of things, despising all who do not rightly pronounce their particular shibboleths. The fear of God is not upon them, the love of God does not fill and rule their hearts, the power of God is not working in their souls—they are strangers to it. They have never been the favored subjects of the Spirit's quickening operation. "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44). This emphatic and man-humbling fact is almost universally ignored in Christendom today, and when it is pressed upon the notice of the average preacher or "church member," it is hotly denied and scornfully rejected. The cry is at once raised, "If that were true, then man is nothing more than a machine, and all preaching is useless. If people are unable to come to Christ by an act of their own will, then evangelistic effort is needless, worthless." No effort is made to understand the meaning of those words of our Lord: they clash with modern thought, they rile the proud flesh, so they are summarily condemned and dismissed. No wonder the Holy Spirit is now "quenched" in so many places, and that His saving power is so rarely in evidence. 2. With others the supernatural agency of the Spirit is effectually shut out by the belief that Truth will prevail: that if the Word of God be faithfully preached, souls will be truly saved. Far be it from us to undervalue the Truth, or cast the slightest reflection on the living Word of God; yet modern ideas and present conditions demand that we plainly point out that it is not the Truth, the Scriptures, the Gospel, which renews the soul; but instead, the power and operations of the Holy Spirit. "You may teach a man the

holiest of truths, and yet leave him a wretched man. Many who learn in childhood that 'God is love,' live disregarding, and die blaspheming God. Thousands who are carefully taught, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,' neglect so great salvation all their days. Some of the most wicked and miserable beings that walk the earth are men into whose consciences, when yet youthful and unsophisticated, the truth was carefully instilled. "Unmindful of this, and not considering the danger of diverting faith from the power to the instrument, however beautiful and perfect the instrument may be, many good men, by a culpable inadvertence, constantly speak as if the Truth had an inherent ascendancy over man, and would certainly prevail when justly presented. We have heard this done till we have been ready to ask, 'Do they take men for angels, that mere Truth is to captivate them so certainly?' yes, and even to ask 'Have they ever heard whether there be any Holy Spirit?' "The belief that Truth is mighty, and by reason of its might must prevail, is equally fallacious in the abstract, as it is opposed to the facts of human history, and to the Word of God. We should take the maxim, the Truth must prevail, as perfectly sound, did you only give us a community of angels on whom to try the Truth. With every intellect clear and every heart upright, doubtless Truth would soon be discerned, and, when discerned, cordially embraced. But, Truth, in descending among us, does not come among friends. The human heart offers ground whereon it meets Truth at an immeasurable disadvantage. Passions, habits, interests, yes, nature itself, lean to the side of error; and though the judgment may assent to the Truth, which, however, is not always the case, still error may gain a conquest only the more notable because of this impediment. Truth is mighty in pure natures, error in depraved ones. "Do they who know human nature best, when they have a political object to carry, trust most of all to the power of Truth over a constituency, or would they not have far more confidence in corruption and revelry? The whole history of man is a melancholy reproof to those who mouth about the mightiness of Truth. 'But,' they say, 'Truth will prevail in the long run.' Yes, blessed be God, it will; but not because of its own power over human nature, but because the Spirit will be poured out from on high, opening blind eyes and unstopping deaf ears. "The sacred writings, while ever leaving us to regard the Truth as the one instrument of the sinner's conversion and the believer's sanctification, are very far from proclaiming its power over human nature, merely because it is Truth. On the contrary, they often show us that this very fact will enlist the passions of mankind against it, and awaken enmity instead of approbation. We are ever pointed beyond the Truth to HIM who is the Source and Giver of Truth; and, though we had Apostles to minister the Gospel, are ever lead not to deem it enough that it should be 'in word only, but in demonstration of the Spirit and in power'"(William Arthur, 1859). It Is the Spirit Who Draws John the Baptist came preaching "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4), but by what, or rather Whose power was it, that repentance was wrought in the hearts of his hearers? It was that of the Holy Spirit! Of old it was said, "He shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17). Now the "spirit and power of Elijah" was that of the Holy Spirit, as is clear from Luke 1:15, "he (the Baptist) shall be filled with the Holy Spirit." Similarly, it should be duly observed that when Christ commissioned His Apostles to preach in His name among all nations (Luke 24:47), that He added, "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (v. 49). Why was the latter annexed to the former, and prefaced with a "Behold" but to teach them (and us) that there could be no saving repentance produced by their preaching, except by the mighty operations of the Third Person of the Godhead? None will ever be drawn to Christ, savingly, by mere preaching; no, not by the most faithful and Scriptural preaching: there must first be the supernatural operations of the Spirit to open the sinner's heart to receive the message? And how can we expect the Spirit to work among us while He is so slighted, while our confidence is not in Him, but in our preaching? How can we expect Him to work miracles in our midst, while there is no humble, earnest, and trustful praying for His gracious activities? Most of us are in such a feverish rush to "win

souls," to do "personal work," to preach, that we have no time for definite, reverent, importunate crying unto the Lord for His Spirit to go before us and prepare the soil for the Seed. Hence it is that the converts we make are but "man made," and their subsequent lives make it only too apparent unto those who have eyes to see that the Holy Spirit does not indwell them nor produce His fruits through them. O brethren, join the writer in contritely owning to God your sinful failure to give the Spirit His proper place. The renewed heart is moved and melted when it contemplates the holy Savior having our iniquities imputed to Him and bearing "our sins in His own body on the tree." But how rarely is it considered that it is little less wonderful for the Holy Spirit to exercise Himself with our sins and hold them up to the eyes of our understanding. Yet this is precisely what He does: He rakes in our foul hearts and makes us conscious of what a stench they are in the nostrils of an infinitely pure God. He brings to light and to sight the hidden and hideous things of darkness and convicts us of our vile and lost condition. He opens to our view the "horrible pit" in which by nature we lie, and makes us to realize that we deserve nothing but the everlasting burnings. O how truly marvelous that the Third Person of the Godhead should condescend to stoop to such a work as that! "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him" (John 6:44). No sinner ever knocks (Matthew 7:7) at His door for mercy, by earnest and importunate prayer, until Christ has first knocked (Rev. 3:20) at his door by the operations of the Holy Spirit! The Natural Man Rejects God As the Christian now loves God "because he first loved" him (1 John 4:19), so he sought Christ, because Christ first sought him (Luke 19:10). Before Christ seeks us, we are well content to lie fast asleep in the Devil's arms, and therefore does the Lord say, "I am found of them that sought Me not" (Isa. 65:1). When the Spirit first applies the Word of Conviction, He finds the souls of all men as the angel found the world in Zechariah 1:11; "all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest." What a strange silence and midnight stillness there is among the unsaved! "There is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. 3:11). It is because of failure to perceive the dreadful condition in which the natural man lies, that difficulty is experienced in seeing the imperative need for the Spirit's drawing power if he is to be brought out of it. The natural man is so completely enslaved by sin and enchained by Satan that he is unable to take the first step toward Christ. He is so bent on having his own way and so averse to pleasing God, he is so in love with the things of this world and so out of love with holiness that nothing short of Omnipotence can produce a radical change of heart in him, so that he will come to hate the things he naturally loved, and love what he previously hated. The Spirit's "drawing" is the freeing of the mind, the affections, and the will from the reigning power of depravity; it is His emancipating of the soul from the dominion of sin and Satan. Prior to that deliverance, when the requirements of God are pressed upon the sinner, he in every case, rejects them. It is not that he is averse from being saved from Hell—for none desire to go there—but that he is unwilling to "forsake" (Prov. 28:13; Isa. 55:7) his idols—the things which hold the first place in his affections and interests. This is clearly brought out in our Lord's parable of "The Great Supper." When the call went forth, "Come for all things are now ready," we are told, "they all with one consent began to make excuse" (Luke 14:18). The meaning of that term "excuse" is explained in what immediately follows: they preferred other things; they were unwilling to deny themselves; they would not relinquish the competitive objects—the things of time and sense ("a piece of ground," "oxen," "a wife") were their all-absorbing concerns. Had nothing more been done by "the Servant"—in this parable the Holy Spirit—all had continued to "make excuse" unto the end: that is, all had gone on cherishing their idols, and turning a deaf ear to the holy claims of God. But the Servant was commissioned to "bring in hither" (v. 21), yea, to "compel them to come in" (v. 23). It is a holy compulsion and not physical force which is there in view—the melting of the hard heart, the wooing and winning of the soul to Christ, the bestowing of faith, the imparting of a new nature, so that the hitherto despised One is now desired and sought after: "I drew them with cords of a man (using means and motives suited to a rational nature) with bands of love" (Hosea 11:4). And again, God says of His people

"with loving-kindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31:10). The Spirit's Drawing the Elect Even after the elect have been quickened by the Spirit, a further and distinct work of His is needed to draw their hearts to actually close with Christ. The work of faith is equally His operation, and therefore is it said, "we having received (not "exercised"!) the same Spirit of faith" (2 Cor. 4:13) i.e., "the same" as Abraham, David, and the other Old Testament saints received, as the remainder of the verse indicates. Hence, observe the careful linking together in Acts 6:5, where of Stephen we read that, he was "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit"; full of "faith," because filled with the Spirit. So of Barnabas we are told, "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (Acts 11:24). Seek to realize more definitely, Christian reader, that spiritual faith is the gift of the Spirit, and that He is to be thanked and praised for it. Equally true is it that we are now entirely dependent upon Him to call it into exercise and act. The Divine Drawer is unto God's people "the Spirit of grace and of supplications" (Zech. 12:10). Of grace, in making to their smitten consciences and exercised hearts a wondrous discovery of the rich grace of God unto penitent rebels. Of supplications, in moving them to act as a man fleeing for his life, to seek after Divine mercy. Then it is He leads the trembling soul to Calvary, "before whose eyes Jesus Christ" is now "evidently (plainly) set forth crucified" (Gal. 3:1), beholding the Savior (by faith) bleeding for and making atonement for his sins—more vividly and heart affectingly than all the angels in Heaven could impart. And hence it follows in Zechariah 12:10, "they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced." Then it is that their eyes are opened to see that which was hitherto hidden from them, namely the "Fountain opened. . .for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1), into which they are now moved to plunge for cleansing. Yes, that precious "Fountain" has to be opened to us, or, experimentally, we discern it not. Like poor Hagar, ready to perish from thirst, knowing not that relief was near to hand, we—convicted of our fearful sins, groaning under the anguish of our lost condition—were ready to despair. But as God opened Hagar's eyes to see the "well," or "fountain" (Gen. 21:19), so the Spirit of God now opens the understanding of the awakened soul to see Christ, His precious blood, His all-sufficient righteousness. But more— when the soul is brought to see the Fountain or Well, he discovers it is "deep" and that he has "nothing to draw with" (John 4:11). And though he looks in it with a longing eye, he cannot reach unto it, so as to wash in it. He finds himself like the "impotent man" of John 5, desirous of "stepping in," but utterly without strength to do so. Then it is the Holy Spirit applies the atonement, "sprinkling the conscience" (Heb. 10:23), effectually granting a realization of its cleansing efficacy (see Acts 15:8, 9; 1 Cor. 6:11—it is Christ's blood, but the Spirit must apply it.) And when the awakened and convicted soul has been brought to Christ for cleansing and righteousness, who is it that brings him to the Father, to be justified by Him? Who is it that bestows freedom of access unto Him from whom the sinner had long been absent in the "far country"? Ephesians 2:18 tell us, "for through Him (Christ, the Mediator) we both (regenerated Jews and Gentiles, Old Testament and New Testament saints alike) have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Ah, dear reader, it was nothing but the secret and invincible operations of the blessed Spirit which caused you—a wandering prodigal—to seek out Him, whom before you dreaded as a "consuming fire." Yes, it was none other than the Third Person of the Holy Trinity who drew you with the bands of love, and taught you to call God, "Father" (Rom. 8:15)!

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