

The Holy Spirit, Our Loving Friend

by John R. Rice

The Holy Spirit is a loving person who dwells within Christians, guiding us into truth, convicting the world, and providing comfort in times of trouble.

Scripture: Matthew 12:31, Romans 15:30, Ephesians 4:30, 1 Thessalonians 5:19, Hebrews 10:29

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

John R. Rice preaches about the importance of honoring the Holy Spirit, emphasizing the need to view Him as a beloved Person equal with the Father and the Son, rather than reducing Him to mere manifestations like speaking in tongues. He highlights the love, care, and work of the Holy Spirit, including His role in dwelling within Christians, guiding them into truth, and helping them in prayer. Rice discusses the significance of the Holy Spirit's indwelling in believers, the promise of His presence, and the transformation that occurs when Christians are filled with His power for soul-winning. He also warns about sins that can grieve, quench, and insult the Holy Spirit, urging both believers and non-believers to honor and respond to His leading.

Transcript

I. The Holy Spirit Dwells Within

I want to speak to you this month on the Holy Spirit. Today it will be "The Holy Spirit Dwells Within." It is sad there has been so much foolishness taught about the Holy Spirit. Instead of thinking about that sweet Person the Spirit as a beloved Person, equal with the Father and the Son, people think about talking in tongues or some other strange thing. I want you to think about our Friend, the Holy Spirit.

In Romans, chapter 15, verse 30, Paul says, "I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me."

"... the love of the Spirit." The Holy Spirit is a Person. He loves us. Oh, it is wonderful to think that the sweet Spirit of God who is within us and hovers about us, loves us and cares for us all the time.

And then He hears prayer. He is going to raise these bodies from the dead, as He raised the body of the Lord Jesus. He took part with Christ Jesus in the creation of the world, and when people are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, He is part of the Godhead, the Family of God.

The sweet Spirit of God is our Friend.

Now we find some sweet promises about the Spirit. We know in the Old Testament He came upon people; He endued people with power; He made revelations from God; He gave instructions - led people in what they should do. He was with God's people - not in them, but with them.

1. The Holy Spirit Was Promised to Dwell Within Christians

In John, chapter 14, verses 15-17, the Lord Jesus said:

"If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 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."

Now here is a promise that the Holy Spirit of God will one day live in the bodies of those Christians who were there with Jesus. He said that "he dwelleth with you ..." at the present time. Before Christ was raised from the dead, He lived with Christians. He moved Christians and sometimes empowered Christians. He did not live in the body of the Christians, but He was to do so later.

John 7:37-39 says:

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"

Notice here that Jesus says, "There is coming a time after I am raised from the dead and glorified, when I will be in you a Well of water, a Pouring-out Fountain, a Spring of water, a River of water flowing out from a Christian's body, which will be My headquarters." "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." Now, this is only for Christians. He said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said..." So one who puts his trust in Christ can have the Holy Spirit within; but it was not true when Jesus gave these words. It was to be future - after Jesus was raised from the dead.

There is a similar teaching in John, chapter 4, when Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, "If you drink of all the waters of this world, you will find they do not permanently satisfy. But if you will drink of the water I will give you, it will be within you a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Now, a person could come to Christ and drink and have salvation, but as far as the indwelling, permanent homecoming of the Spirit of God in the body, that had to wait until after the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

2. When Did That Happen?

Turn to John, chapter 20, Jesus had been crucified. But He also is raised from the dead. So John 20:19-21 says:

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."

Oh, I would be, too! They said, "The debt has been paid; the blood has been shed. Christ our Passover Lamb has died for us." They were glad, "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Redeemed from Hell? Yes.

But there is more. Now you can have the Spirit of God dwelling in you. Jesus continued, "Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The Holy Spirit was to be received in their bodies. When? When Jesus was risen from the dead and in His glorified body. And now the time has come. The same day He rose from the dead, He came to that Upper Room where His poor, frightened disciples were huddled for fear of the Jews. He showed His hands and His side, then said, "Now I am going to send you, just like My Father sent Me. You will have to have heavenly help. I am going to be gone, but the Holy Spirit of God will come." And He breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

Evidently that is the same thing He promised in John 14, "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Evidently that is the same promise of John 7:37-39, "... If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"

You have to have a Fountain from which the river flows. So the Lord Jesus said the Spirit of God will be within you, and will pour out from you, living within the body of a Christian, flowing out from the body of a Christian.

3. Now the Spirit Lives Always in the Christian's Body

We are thinking now about the indwelling. It necessarily follows that this indwelling Holy Spirit wants to work mightily in your life. We are thinking about the blessed fact that the day Jesus rose from the dead a great change took place. In the body of every Christian, the sweet Spirit of God lives.

Look at I Corinthians, chapter 6, verses 19 and 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? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

O spread the tidings 'round, wherever man is found, Wherever human hearts and human woes abound; Let ev'ry Christian tongue proclaim the joyful sound: The Comforter has come! The Comforter has come, the Comforter has come! The Holy Ghost from Heav'n, the Father's promise giv'n; O spread the tidings 'round, wherever man is found - The Comforter has come!

Now the Spirit of God lives in the body of every Christian. No one need pray, "Holy Spirit, come and make Your home in my body." He does already. That is a part of salvation.

Now when the Holy Spirit of God convicts a sinner and when he, with penitent heart, turns to trust in Jesus, the Holy Spirit works in him a miracle of regeneration. One who trusts in Christ is born of the Spirit, the Scripture says in John, chapter 3. Now the blessed Holy Spirit said, "I am going to bring in My suitcase, move in and hang up My clothes. I am going to live here now." And into the body of a Christian the Spirit comes to stay. The body is His headquarters on earth. The body is a temple.

Romans, chapter 8, verse 9, says, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." After Christ has risen

from the dead, anyone who does not have the Holy Spirit living within him is not saved. I am not talking about having a certain attitude, some indefinite attitude of mind of quality of your own heart. I mean the Holy Spirit - a Person - lives in the body of every Christian.

Somebody said, "If I do so-and-so, the Holy Spirit won't be with me." Oh, yes He will. He is with you, going where you go. He may shut Himself into some secret shelf of your heart so that He doesn't talk to you, doesn't smile upon you when you sin and grieve Him. You read the Bible and it isn't sweet to your heart. But He is there. Always the Spirit of God is with you, if you have been converted. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Every Christian has Christ in him through the Holy Spirit and that is his hope of glory.

4. Now the Christian's Body, God's Temple, Should Be Kept Holy

No wonder Romans 12 says:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

How wonderfully made is this body! I don't wonder that the Psalmist David said, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

We thought them really smart who made moving picture cameras. God has colored moving picture cameras in the two eyes He put in our heads. They are coordinated and self-adjusted for distance and for light. Yes, and the microphones in our ears with which we hear, and all the other wonderful things God put in the body.

But more than that. This body now is the habitation of God through the Spirit. This body is now the home of God.

Years ago in Dallas, Texas, there was a great meeting of Christian men of a certain group. I went to the church where the meeting was held and was shocked to find many cigarette butts lying around outside. Each one would take a drag on his cigarette before going inside, then throw his cigarette down. I thought that was shocking. But the simple truth is, that church house was not as important as those bodies they defiled.

Your body is the temple of God. Sometimes in a church building they will have the words marked in Gothic structure, "The Lord is in His Holy Temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him." But the temple of God is now the human body. Christ lives in you. Then, how important it is that your body be kept holy. It belongs to God.

In some wonderful sense the relationship of a husband and wife is a symbol and picture of our relationship to Christ. "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." A wife saves herself for her husband, and a Christian should say, "The Devil cannot have my body. I am not a servant of sin. I am not going to defile this, the sweet temple of God. He lives here." We ought to remember that our bodies are the temples of God, and should keep them holy for Him.

It is a wonderful thing to be a Christian, to have Christ living in you, to have peace in your heart all the time and have the comforts of the Spirit.

Dear friends, set out today to be conscious of the wonderful truth that the Spirit of God is within you. I would say, "I am going to be happy. God is with me. He never leaves me. God loves me. The sweet Spirit of God looks after me." He looks after you and when the body lies buried, that sweet Spirit will either hover over or come again to raise that body at the resurrection, even as He raised the body of Jesus. So rejoice in the Spirit of God.

II. The Holy Spirit's Comfort, Guidance and Help

In John, chapter 14, verses 15 to 17, Jesus said:

"If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 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."

Up until the resurrection of Christ, the Spirit of God was with Christians. Since He met with the disciples in the Upper Room in John, chapter 20, and came and breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," the Spirit of God moved into the bodies of Christians.

That was foretold in John 7, verses 37-39:

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"

Now Jesus has risen from the dead. Now the Holy Spirit has moved into the bodies of Christians. Now He dwells not only with Christians, but within Christians.

And Romans 8:9 says, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Every saved person has the Spirit of God living in him.

First Corinthians 6:19 and 20 says,

"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? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

The sweet Spirit of God lives within you. Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Scripture says the body should be presented a living sacrifice, and kept holy for the Lord.

Now let us come back to this sweet Scripture in John. What about the Holy Spirit within us? John 14:16 says:

"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter."

Another? Yes. They are saying, "Jesus, are You going away? Jesus, will You leave us like poor sheep without a Shepherd?" "No," said Jesus, "I am going to leave another Comforter."

Jesus is saying, "The Spirit of God will be better for you than Me." If Jesus was on earth now, I would go across the seas, I would go anywhere in the world, to see Him. But if I could get there, there would be great crowds of people, and I might not be able to see Him. Oh, it may be that one time I could kiss His hand or His feet, but I wouldn't get to be with Him much.

Oh, but the sweet Spirit of God comes - another One like Jesus. He now becomes within us - Christ's personal Representative. In fact, Jesus said in the Great Commission, "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" - meaning through the Spirit of God.

Again, the Scripture says:

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

Thank God, He never leaves us! The Spirit of God is Christ in you, the hope of glory. "Another Comforter" - isn't that sweet?

1. The Holy Spirit Is Our Comforter

Now the Holy Spirit is in us. Christians ought to rejoice in that blessed truth. He is within us. What is He? A Comforter! And how we do need comfort!

I saw in a comic strip where a little boy got hurt. He was crying and looking for his daddy but couldn't find him. He hushed crying until he finally opened the door and found where his daddy was, then he went on with his crying.

We too need Someone to comfort us in the sorrows of this world. Jesus said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." And "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble," says Job. That is right; trouble everywhere. Paul went back and preached to the young converts saved in his meetings that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

The Psalmist David said, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord... . Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down" (Ps. 37:23,24). Trouble is natural in this poor old, wicked world. We ourselves are sinful, frail and weak. But here is comfort; we are not like the lost world - we have a Comforter.

Dr. George W. Truett tells about an unsaved man and a lovely Christian woman who had a little child whom they loved so much. But the child got sick and died. The father said to Dr. Truett, "My wife is so frail and weak, I don't think she can live through it." But they found that this good Christian woman had comfort in her heart, and she said to the lost husband, "Daddy, I am so sorry for you. You don't have the comfort I have."

A Christian can have comfort in every sorrow, light in all darkness, an answer to all his questions, strength in every temptation. The sweet Comforter of God, the Holy Spirit of God, has come to be our Comforter.

The Bible calls Him that several times and we would be wrong to make light of it. I read you where He said, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." And "he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance." And in John 15:26, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. Then again in John 16:7,8, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

We had better think of it like God does. Another Comforter. The Comforter is come. He is from God and will guide you into truth. This Comforter will convict the world. The Comforter - a wonderful name for a wonderful Person!

In Fort Worth, Texas, years ago, I went to see a woman. I dreaded to go. It was a time of great depression. The father could not find work. The father thought, "I will get out somewhere, even if I starve so they can get welfare." So he left.

That frail woman went to work. She worked and worked hard, until she took T.B. and was bedfast. They had two children - a little girl 15 and a boy 14.

And the girl died, I am going to preach the funeral of that little girl. I must face that woman who has lost her husband and was a victim of T.B., now her little girl has died. We must take the mother in our arms and carry her to look into the casket and say good-bye to her girl! I must say words of comfort at that funeral. What will I say?

I did not need to fret about it. I went into that sickroom and she took my hand in both of hers and said, "Brother Rice, the Lord Jesus said, 'I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you.'" She smiled, along with the tears, and said, "Brother Rice, He came! He came, Brother Rice!"

Oh, the Comforter!

I so many, many times, in the midst of a world of trouble, have found comfort in Jesus. I don't wonder that the Psalms speak about songs in the night. Yes, in the nighttime, the sweet Comforter can be your Comforter. Whatever trouble may come, we can have His comfort.

Never lonely, if the Saviour Walk beside me all the way; Never feeling lost, unwanted, Darkest night or drearest day. Never stumbling, tho' my pathway Oft is stony, oft is rough. But His angels' arms around me, Underneath me, hold me up.

A Christian can have comfort. Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit can be with us all the time.

He is the Comforter, but that is not all.

2. He is the Guide

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). How wonderful that has been to me through these years! I work hard. I have six or seven thousand books in my library, but I don't have much time to read. I preach much of the time twice a day, often three times a day, edit THE SWORD, run a business with some ninety employees, am in conferences everywhere, answer heavy

mail, have a broadcast. So I can't do the studying that some men can do. But, thank God, the Bible has become more and more an open Book. There is a light from Heaven on the page of this holy Book when I come relying on the Spirit. I ask and He guides me into truth.

I have written comments on every chapter in the Bible and on every principal verse. The sweet Spirit of God has somehow helped me understand spiritual truths.

You can have a Guide. Not only a guide in doctrine, not only a guide in the truth, but a guide about what to do. The Spirit can show us what to do. In Acts, chapter 16, Paul said, "I want to preach in Bithynia," but the Spirit suffered him not. He said, "Well, maybe in this little province Asia, in Asia Minor we can preach. But the Spirit refused. So they waited and prayed and in the night there came a vision of a man from Macedonia, holding out his empty arms saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." They assuredly gathered that the Spirit of God was calling, so they went. You can have guidance day by day.

Philip was in a great revival in Samaria and the Spirit of the Lord caught him away to go down to talk to that Ethiopian eunuch. You can have leadership from God. He is the Guide to all truth.

Not only that, but He can bring to your remembrance "whatsoever things I have said unto you." The Holy Spirit has an affinity for the Bible. If you learn the Bible, the Spirit of God brings it to mind when you need it. You have to study it, you have to hide it in your heart, but the sweet Spirit of God will bring to your remembrance what Jesus said, and you can have help.

3. The Spirit of God Is Our Prayer Helper

But there is more than that. Romans, chapter 8, verses 26,27 says:

"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 what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

Oh, when you go to pray, say, "Sweet Spirit of God, teach me how to pray aright." Pray in the Spirit. Ephesians 6:18 commands, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."

I preached in a little church down in Kansas, staying in the humble home of the pastor, who had a very sweet Christian family. At bedtime the family was gathered together for worship. The pastor read the Scriptures, then we prayed. Everybody knelt to pray. The father prayed, the mother prayed, the young people prayed, the older children prayed, and I prayed. Then the pastor said to the little five-year-old boy, "All right, Clyde, are you ready?" Clyde knelt right against his father's knee. Daddy said, "Now, Clyde, you pray." The daddy would say the words and Clyde, five years old, would repeat the words of Daddy's prayer.

I thought that was wonderful. The little fellow could pray for the family and pray that God would help him do right and thank God for blessing. He was praying right because a wise, Spirit-filled father put the words in his mouth.

I, too, can pray and the sweet spirit of God can come to help me pray aright, because the Holy Spirit knows what to pray for. The Holy Spirit knows what I need and what will please God.

Ah, blessed work of the Spirit!

O spread the tidings 'round, wherever man is found, Wherever human hearts and human woes abound;
Let ev'ry Christian tongue proclaim the joyful sound: The Comforter has come!

Our Guide, our blessed Prayer Helper, the Representative of Jesus Christ living in the body of the Christian!

III. Spirit-Fullness for Soul-Winning Power

Today I ask you a question, "Have you been filled with the Spirit?" There is a plain command of God in Ephesians 5:18, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."

Acts, chapter 19, tells us that Paul came to Ephesus. There were some men there who had been converted; Apollos had preached there and they had been converted and baptized. Paul said unto them, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?"

They said, "We don't know about the Holy Spirit." They had been converted but had not been taught on that. And they needed to be filled with the Spirit. So Paul said, "When you were baptized, did you understand this to be the death of the old man, and that you now set out to live a new life in the power of God?"

They did not understand that. So they were baptized again and were filled with the Spirit of God. And I am sure they set out to witness for Him.

1. Normal New Testament Christians Were Spirit-Filled

Now I ask you the question: "Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?" If it was right for Paul to ask it, it is right for me to ask it, also. In New Testament times, it was a normal thing for Christians to be filled with the Spirit. In the first chapter of Luke, we find that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb.

Elisabeth, the wife of Zacharias, who was to be the mother of John the Baptist, was filled with the Spirit and witnessed for Christ.

After John was born, the father, Zacharias, was filled with the Spirit.

Jesus, before He began His ministry, came to be baptized of John in the Jordan River and was baptized, and praying, the heavens were opened and the Holy Ghost came upon Him in form like a dove and He began His ministry (Luke 3:21,22). He had never before preached a sermon, never worked a miracle, never won a soul. He lived a perfect, sinless life; but now He was filled with the Spirit.

We find that as they come before Pentecost, Jesus told the disciples, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

In Acts 1:4,5,8, we read:

"And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with

water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. (They said, 'You are talking about the second coming? Jesus said, 'No.')

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Now there is just one Holy Spirit but there are many ministries of the Spirit. To convict is one of His works. Then when the sinner repents, is born again, that is the regeneration work of the Spirit. Then the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in the Christian. He is called the Comforter. He can guide us into truth. He is a Prayer-Helper. We know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit prays for us in groanings which cannot be uttered. The blessed Holy Spirit has many, many ministries, now living in the body of a Christian.

But there is one additional ministry, the greatest of all after salvation, and that is that now a Christian can be filled with the Spirit for Holy Spirit power, witnessing power.

I have already discussed the matter of the Holy Spirit as a Person who now dwells in the body of every Christian, since the day Jesus rose from the dead. I told you that His wonderful work in the Christian means that He is the Comforter, He is a Guide, He is a Reminder of the will of God. He helps us to pray, He gives certain gifts of the Spirit to all Christians in some measure or other. Yet there is one additional matter: He comes to fill us with Holy Spirit power. Here is a direct command from God: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."

2. An Enduement of Power for Soul Winner

Now what does this fullness of the Spirit mean? It means to be endued with power from on high. That is what Jesus said in Luke 24:46-49. Listen carefully.

"... And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, 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."

A Christian ought to have the power of the Holy Spirit, and can have it, to witness for Jesus. We are not talking about some joy, nor about some sign, nor about various gifts of the Spirit. We are talking about the Spirit Himself who comes in fullness, and it is called "endued with power from on high." That is exactly what the Lord said again in Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Now where? What is to come? You are to receive power for witnessing. Notice that, power for witnessing. The Lord didn't say, "Stay until God starts the church." He didn't say, "Tarry here until you get to talking in tongues." He didn't say, "Stay here until you are sanctified." He said, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." A Christian needs an enduement of power to witness for Jesus.

As Mr. D. L. Moody said so well, "It is foolish to try to do God's work without God's power." It is foolish to try to work miraculous, wonderful works of God without the power of God. So a Christian needs an enduement of power from on High.

You may say that wasn't the way you heard it. Then you had better come back to the Bible, because God is going to hold you accountable as to whether you obey the command, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."

3. Various Bible Terms For This Enduement

Now there are a number of names or terms for this enduement of power. There are also a good number of names for salvation. You can say "saved", "redeemed", "forgiven", "born again", "made a child of God", or "justified" when you get saved. And Jesus Himself has many names. He is the Christ, Messiah, our Lord, Jesus, the Son of God, the Son of Adam, Son of Abraham, Bright and Morning Star, Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, Great Shepherd of the Sheep. He is the Prince of Peace, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father. Oh, there are many names for Jesus. They are not different Jesuses - this is just one Man, one Person, one God-man, Jesus, with many names.

So there are many terms that God uses to make clear this enduement of power from on High. And that is what He said it is - "to be endued with power from on high." Now it is sometimes called "receiving" the Holy Spirit. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Now the Holy Spirit was already within these as far as a dwelling place is concerned. For on the day of the resurrection Jesus had breathed on the disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The Holy spirit's indwelling is already a settled fact for every Christian. But now the Holy Spirit wants to come upon them. "Tarry ... until ye be endued with power." And when the Holy spirit comes upon you, you "will receive power ... and ye shall be witnesses unto me." So endued would mean the Holy Spirit's coming upon you, a baptism. In Acts 1, Jesus commanded them not to "depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

Now don't water that down. Baptized? Yes. What does that mean? It means to be overwhelmed, to be covered, to be submerged, to be buried in the power of God. It is a figure of speech and it is true. A literal baptism is immersion of the believer in water. But the term is used a number of times in a figurative sense. Buried in suffering, Jesus said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"

It is a picture of a Christian when he is put into the body of Christ, that body that will be called out at the rapture. So it is called 'baptized in one body' (I Cor. 12:13).

But here it is 'baptized with the Holy Spirit.' One may be overwhelmed, covered and completely surrounded by the sweet Spirit of God.

Now look at Acts 2:4. There the Lord said to tarry until the Holy Spirit comes upon you. "Tarry ... Until ye be endued with power." He said, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." He says, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come ... And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Filled. How could they be filled? That is a different terminology but it is to be completely covered, surrounded, overwhelmed, empowered, endued with power - the Holy Spirit filling a Christian.

I use the term "filled with the Spirit" more often because it is more often used in the Bible and it is not as much misunderstood, not as often misused, as the term "baptized with the Spirit." But the Lord said they are the same thing and He was talking about the same great event. They were to receive power from on High. They were to be endued with power to witness. That is called baptism, it is called a filling, it is called

pouring out of the Holy Ghost, enduement with power from on High. It is called the gift of the Spirit, and receiving the Spirit. Also, it is called the anointing.

So a Christian can have a special enduement of power. Back in the Old Testament a king or a high priest was anointed with oil upon his head, which was a symbol that the Spirit of God should come upon him. So now a Christian can have the Holy Ghost poured upon him for power.

4. Remember, Always the Purpose Is Soul-Winning Power

Now, what will it be for? Always for soul winning. It is not talking about getting sanctified, nor about talking in tongues. That is an incidental thing at Pentecost, along with the tongues like fire and the sound of rushing, mighty winds, and so on. It had a use at that time, but we are now talking about endued with power from on High.

In Luke 1:15, what will happen about John the Baptist? "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God." What will happen? He will get many people saved. At Pentecost what happened? They were all filled with the Holy Ghost. The Scripture continues to tell us, "And the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Imagine that! Three thousand people got saved, because these were filled with the Spirit and were witnessing in the power of God.

Again, there is Paul's example in Acts 9. Paul was on his way to Damascus when Jesus met him on the road. Paul fell to his face, for the light was brighter than the noon-day sun, and he saw a vision of Jesus. "And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

Paul said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And he was saved.

But wait! Paul now goes to pray, and the Lord says to Ananias over in Damascus, "Ananias, I have a man for you to go and see."

"Where is he, Lord?"

"He is on a street called Straight, at the house of Judas. Go over there and talk to this fellow Paul. Now I have a message."

"But I am afraid of Paul. He came to kill Christians."

"No, he is praying."

Ananias went over and found Saul already saved and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost."

And so now he had been crying and praying and fasting three days, and he was filled with the Spirit. And what? He was baptized. "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." Spirit-filled Paul witnessing for Jesus!

There is Barnabas, another example of Spirit-fullness. In Acts 11:24, The Lord said about Barnabas, "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: And much people was added unto the Lord." That is what it is for. The Lord is talking about the Great Commission. If you are NOT interested in the

Great Commission, then you are NOT a candidate for the power of God. The Lord is not talking about something that will make you feel good, or burn out all sin, or make you feel light as a feather, and let you go around bragging, "I have it and you haven't." What is the Lord talking about? About receiving power. "Tarry ... until ye be endued with power."

5. How to Be Filled With the Spirit

Now, how can I be filled with the Spirit? Do like they did. Jesus commanded, "Tarry ... until ye be endued with power from on high." And in Acts 1:14 we find they did: "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." They continued in prayer - that is asking. And supplication - that is begging. They "continued ... in prayer and supplication." They continued until the power of God came upon them, and they had three thousand people saved.

Is that the way? Oh, yes! That is why Paul was fasting and praying three days before he was filled with the Spirit. That is why in Acts 4:31, again they were threatened, and they needed God's blessings again anew, with power. So the Scripture said, "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." Then the Scripture later says that the number of men who were saved, the number of converts, were about five thousand.

Filled with the Spirit means soul-winning power. Oh, dear friends, don't get on a sidetrack and beg God for some show or something to make you boast, or some denominational fetish. Now, you should say, "I want power of God to win souls." That is what D. L. Moody had and taught. That is what Spurgeon and Wesley and Scarborough and Billy Sunday and Gipsy Smith and Bob Jones, Sr., and so many other great men had and taught. They had a special enduement of power from God to win souls. You can have it, too, and you ought to have it.

Let me ask you the question again, as Paul asked to the men at Ephesus in Acts 19, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" You already have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit if you are saved, if you have believed on Christ, but have you received Him in a personal sense of receiving His power, His enduement to win souls?

These at Ephesus didn't know about that. So Paul prayed for them and laid his hands upon them and they received the Holy Ghost. And they were baptized again. I want you to see here then God's plan is that a Christian can have enduement of power from on High. God knows I am poor and weak. Oh, I have prayed for power more than anything else in the world. To the glory of God, in citywide revivals in Buffalo, Cleveland, Seattle, Miami, Winston-Salem, Durham and Oakland, California, San Pedro and many other cities, thank God I have seen the thousands turn to Christ. I have letters from over 16,500 people who wrote to say they were saved through my printed sermons. I am a poor, sorry kind of a Christian, but I do know this: I have sought and I have had an enduement of power to win souls. Every Christian ought to have it.

IV. Sins Against the Holy Spirit

One can sin against God, you could sin against Christ, you could sin against the Holy Spirit. It is true that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are all three in the Family of God. All are three

persons in One. And the Holy Spirit is a person. He is the One who loves.

Paul speaks in Romans 15:30 about "the love of the Spirit." he is One who can be grieved. And we are commanded, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God" (Eph. 4:30). He is One who can be discouraged. We are commanded to not quench the Spirit. He is One who can be insulted. And sinners are warned about doing despite to the Spirit whereby we are called. He can be so blasphemed that He will turn away to leave a man condemned, unwarned, and unconvicted - to go to Hell with no chance of pardon. The Holy Spirit is a Person. I want to talk to you about these sins against the Holy Spirit which the Bible mentions.

1. Christians May Grieve the Indwelling Spirit

First, there are sins which a Christian may commit against the Holy Spirit. I read about them in Ephesians, chapter 4, beginning with verse 24: "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Every Christian has two persons. He is still the old man he was before he was saved, and then he has a new man inside - a born-again nature inside.) "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: For we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Notice that command is right in the middle of a detailed discussion of things a Christian may fall into - those fruits, those lusts of the flesh that are tempting to us. He said, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Get this settled. The Holy Spirit lives within your body if you are saved. He never leaves you. His home is there. Your body is His temple. I don't wonder that we have that warning in I Corinthians 3:16,17, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

Oh, don't grieve the Spirit of God. We learn this: He is always with you.

I am thinking about a noble, Christian woman, who was active in the Lord's work. She loved the Lord, she read the Bible, she won souls, she played the piano beautifully at church, but she had a wicked, godless husband, lewd and dirty and a drunkard. She wouldn't leave him. She prayed about it. One time she told me, her pastor very sadly, "Oh, I don't want to be mean about it. But I sometimes say, 'O God, how long! How long until this ends!'"

And so the Spirit of God lives in you, and may He not grieve over your sin? Could He not be grieved living in the same body with you, as that woman was grieved living with a wicked man? And the Spirit of God living in the same body can be grieved, God says here. You are to be careful not to grieve the Spirit of God whereby you are sealed.

You are sealed. You have the firstfruits, the evidence of salvation, living in your body. Don't grieve Him. Oh, have a tender concern that He won't be displeased about anything.

As a Christian you should be so careful not to grieve, not to offend that sweet Spirit of God who lives in you and loves you and wants His way and comforts you and wants to be your Helper and Guide everyday. Oh, we ought not grieve that Spirit!

How would you grieve Him? How could you grieve Him? Well, you could grieve Him if you were a thief, if you stole, if you lied, if you were to bear false witness, if you have corrupt communications come out of your mouth and filthy language. If you have malice in your heart and hatred toward Christians, then the Spirit of God will be grieved about that. You see, the Holy Spirit is holy, and the Lord has commanded us in Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." It already belongs to God; He has bought it. The Spirit of God lives in your body. Oh, what a sin to grieve the Spirit, as Christians do day by day!

2. Do Not "Quench the Spirit"

What other sins are there in which a Christian can grieve the Holy Spirit? In I Thessalonians 5:19 there is a strange word: "Quench not the Spirit." It means that you can discourage the Spirit. It means the Spirit can call and you pay Him no mind. And after awhile He gets tired of calling, calling. It means He can remind you of some sin. You go on until your conscience does not answer any more. The Spirit of God can be quenched. I am not talking about His leaving. But a Christian in whom the Spirit of God dwells, sealed with the Spirit, is commanded, "Quench not the Spirit."

I am thinking now about when as a boy in college, I worked my way through. My roommate and I worked hard. When it came time to study, we didn't have any extra time. By the time we got through milking the cows and doing the janitorial work and such things, we did not have much time to spare.

One boy who lived on our floor in the dormitory at the Decatur College would wander around and during the study hours would talk and talk and take our time. We decided to discourage him, so we got a ten-quart bucket of ice water and we opened the door of our room about six or eight inches and set that bucket of ice water on top of it. Sure enough, our friend, our talkative genius, came bursting into the room. When he pushed the door opened, that bucket of ice water came down over his head! That quenched his zeal to talk! That is what I am talking about when I say you ought not do that to the Holy Spirit. You ought not pour cold water on anything the Spirit plans for you. You ought not resist when He tells you what to do. Oh, don't discourage the Spirit. Don't fight off the Spirit's pleading and warning and instruction.

In the revival services in a little town in West Texas, Mrs. Bessie Wadsworth came to me and said, "I don't think I am saved."

But her father-in-law said, "Brother Rice, Bessie is the best Christian I ever saw. I know she is saved."

Her husband said, "Bessie is a good Christian. I have lived with her all these years. I know she is a Christian."

"No," she said, "I don't think I am saved. I don't feel like I am saved."

I preached one day on what would happen to a Christian if he lost his joy and would not listen to God so that after awhile the Spirit quit talking. "I will talk to somebody else, then."

She saw the light, and weeping, she said, "I know what is wrong. I am a country woman and we moved into this little town, and I found how snobbish people can be in a small town." Then she told me how out there in the country she had done personal work and had won many souls. But she moved into town and she said, "Now I am a country woman. I don't use very good grammar and people will laugh at me." When the Spirit of God said, "Go talk to that person," she said, "Lord, they will laugh at me. I couldn't do that."

She resisted until after awhile the Spirit of God didn't say anything - He didn't call her anymore. She went for weeks and months without any leading of the Spirit, no joy in soul winning, and now she said, "I know what is wrong. The Lord just got tired of my saying no and He quit working with me. But now I will listen to Him. I won't quench Him anymore."

You see, quenching the Spirit is bad business.

3. A Lost Sinner Can Insult the Holy Spirit

What are the sins of a lost person towards the Holy Spirit? There are at least two. Hebrews tells us this strange thing. People were stoned to death for certain sins. Hebrews 10:29,

"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

You Jews, go on with your ceremonies. You won't listen to the Spirit of God. The Lord Jesus died for you, but you tread under your feet His blood and you insult the Holy Spirit who warns you and calls you. That is, you do despite to Him and you fight Him off. Ah, there is terrible punishment for that.

Can a lost sinner insult the Holy Spirit? Yes, you can insult the Holy Spirit by taking it lightly. You have plenty of time. You are not in a hurry. You cannot be scared. After awhile the Spirit of God says, "I don't like that." You say, "I am tired of people bothering me." Just wait until God's Spirit gets tired of bothering you and you don't answer. Oh, lost sinners may do despite to the Spirit of grace and insult Him.

4. The Holy Spirit May Cease to Call the Sinner Who Will Not Hear

There is another Scripture in Matthew 12. There the Lord says,

"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

He is talking about what you say to the Holy Spirit, not what your lips say. Here are these wicked Pharisees who said, "Oh, Jesus casts out devils by the prince of devils." Now they didn't believe that. They saw miracles done but they couldn't believe it. They said, "We don't care. We hate Him anyway. We are not going to love and trust Him." So they lied to God. Their word to the Holy Spirit was, "No, No, we won't do it! We are not going to trust Him. We are not going to love Him."

So sometimes one, often called but refusing the call, often pleaded with but not heeding - then after awhile, your attitude is so definite, so positive, is an insult to God and is blasphemy toward the Spirit of God Himself. It is not curse words that you say out loud to others; it is not murder; it is not adultery; it is not

as some people foolishly think, ascribing the works of the Holy Spirit to the Devil. But a lost person can turn away the Spirit and so insult Him until after awhile He says, "All right. Let him go."

Does that mean you cannot be saved? If you want to be, you can. You see, the unpardonable sin doesn't change God. If you should want to be saved, He still says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). It doesn't change the promise, "For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:13). But if you get to where you don't want to be saved, and you are not interested, and you won't listen to the call of God, that is too bad. You will pass outside the realm of forgiveness and have a hardened heart. You make your choice. Eventually it sticks so that you cannot change it. You don't want to change it. And you don't do it. It is a terrible thing to go so long in sin.

What is it? It is turning down Christ and turning down Christ until one day your heart is settled and you don't change it. Oh, the unpardonable sin!

Somebody said, "I am afraid I have committed the unpardonable sin." You talk silly. If you are afraid about it, that is a sign you have not. Anybody who wants to be saved can be saved. But if you don't care, and if you say, "I am not bothered about it," you may have committed the unpardonable sin. I am just saying that the one who wants to be saved, can be; but there is only one sensible thing to do about it and that is to turn to Christ and be saved today.

Christian people, will you remember this? Don't grieve the Spirit of God. And take care that you live holy lives. You are bought with a price. You belong to God.

And if the Spirit of God leads you, listen carefully to His leading and follow it. How sweet it is to have His leading, to have Him tell you where to go, to give you the words to say, and then have Him bring the results. Don't quench the Spirit.

And to lost sinners, I beg you, since He loves you, do not insult the Holy Spirit that comes to knock at your heart's door, and do not push Him away. Do not lie to Him with excuses. But do turn to Christ and be saved today.

You can be saved today if your heart will call on Jesus. Why don't you? You can be saved today.

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