

The Good Spirit of the Lord (Neh. ix: 20)

by Seth Rees

The sermon highlights the indispensable role of the Holy Spirit in achieving victory and guidance in the lives of believers.

Scripture: Nehemiah 9:20, Zechariah 4:6, John 14:26, Acts 1:8, Romans 8:11, 1 Corinthians 2:10, Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 5:18, 1 Thessalonians 5:19, 2 Timothy 1:7

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Guidance"

Description

Seth Rees preaches about the importance of having the Holy Spirit in our lives, emphasizing that all victories and achievements in the lives of great men of the past were due to God's 'good Spirit' instructing and empowering them. He highlights the examples of Joseph, Moses, and Joshua, showing how their triumphs were a result of the Spirit of the Lord working through them. Rees urges believers to embrace the Holy Spirit in every aspect of their lives, trusting in His guidance, wisdom, and power to lead them to victory and overcome challenges.

Transcript

"Thou gavest, also, thy good Spirit to instruct them, and withheld not Thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst." Neh. 9: 20.

"Thou gavest also Thy good Spirit to instruct them." This is a statement of the fact that the Lord gave His Spirit to the patriarchs and prophets and leaders of these centuries before Christ. That those men who were always looked upon as so illustrious, so extraordinary, so miraculous in their lives, won their triumphs through grace, and their victories were due to the fact the Lord gave His "good Spirit" to instruct them. All their victories and achievements are traceable to this secret. It was the Spirit of the Lord who gave them their success. There are comparatively few today who are willing to give honor where honor is due. We hear much said of the triumph of human character and of human wisdom and of human genius, but none of these can truthfully be said to have figured in the lives of the greatest men of the greatest times of the past. All they were and all that they did was due to the fact that God gave them His "good Spirit."

Take for instance the life of Joseph, the most faultless, and one of the most famous of Old Testament characters. All of his victories were owing to the fact that the Lord put His Spirit within Him. Hated by his brethren; sold from his home; reduced to the lowest place on earth; I see him with the wisdom that comes from God by the Spirit of God out of Heaven, and he leaps from Potiphar's kitchen to the throne of the mightiest empire of the past, simply because the Lord gave Him "good Spirit." Look at him sitting in the

dingy old cell; first hated and then forgotten, his heart true to God and righteousness, never breaking in his fidelity or integrity. See his face shedding alight that had never fallen upon those dingy old walls before. See him when misunderstood and misrepresented, down where nobody could touch him but God, and then hear the old king, himself, say to his servants, "Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is!" Certainly He gave His good Spirit to instruct him. Joseph's triumph was not caused by what he was or what he did; it was because God was in him, working through him, and making him more than conqueror. It was because of the Divine, supernatural, energizing power of the "good Spirit."

Beloved, I wish we knew, as we may know, that everything hinges upon having the Holy Ghost. Everything depends upon the "good Spirit" of God. If we may have the hand of the Lord with us, that is enough. We may lose our friends, our homes, everything, but if the hand of the Lord is with us we can sit in a dingy old prison and He will make the stones in the walls shine like diamonds, and our songs of victory will ring through the corridors until the angels will join in the chorus.

When the Spirit of the Lord was upon Stephen, we are distinctly told that they were notable to resist the wisdom with which he spake. He was altogether unqualified until God touched him, but He sent him out against the pride and wisdom of the synagogues, and He stopped the mouths of counselors and they were not able to resist the spirit and wisdom with which he spake.

Look at Moses. I see his little crude crib among the rushes on the bosom of the Nile with nobody to rock the cradle but the hand of God. I see his mother stoop over him and tuck him in his little crib and plant a kiss upon his cheek and push him out upon the waves. There he is divorced from all human dependencies. Nobody left to look after him but God. No mother to tuck him up and kiss him that night, but the Lord came down and hovered over that little crib and put His almighty hand between him and evil, and the next time the curtain lifts I see him in Pharaoh's court, receiving royal attention, administered to by his mother and being trained for the mightiest work of those centuries, because the "good Spirit" of the Lord was with him. Beloved, there is no place so dark, no circumstances so forbidding, no situation so strained, but that when the Spirit of the Lord is upon us and with us victory is assured.

Joshua was a good, godly man. He was Moses' servant for forty years, and the man who has learned to serve and obey is most likely to be called to lead, so when Joshua received his second blessing, when the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire fell upon him, he went forth to lead one of the grandest exploits in all military history, and all his victories were only because the Spirit of the Lord was upon and within him. He was nothing but a servant trotting along by the side of Moses, but when Moses laid his hand upon him and the Spirit of God came upon him, he went forth to lead that army in a campaign of victories that never closed until thirty-one headless kings were at his feet, and thirty-one mighty cities in his grasp. Why? Only because the "good Spirit" of the Lord was in him. It was not his human wisdom, or human strength; it was not the triumph of any human power or magnetism, but the mighty triumph of the mighty God; and if you and I ever get to see God as He is, everything else will sink into insignificance, and more than that, we will never want anybody else but God to lead us, to hold us and give us victory. O glory to His name! He who fought for Joshua in thirty-one mighty conflicts, and who gave him victory on every occasion will also fight for us and sepulcher all our foes. When the "good Spirit" of the Lord is upon you and in you, you will never know defeat. You will clean up everything you come to. It is an awful thing to shirk responsibility, or to ask God to excuse us; or to share the responsibility God lays upon us with anybody else.

God called Moses and promised him, that He would be unto him, mouth and wisdom, tongue and utterance, and would go before him and give him victory. People sometimes suppose that when Moses'

request for a partnership was granted, and Aaron was taken in, that it was a great blessing, but this is very questionable, for while we find that Moses leaned upon Aaron as a prop, the prop broke at a most critical time, and while Moses was up in the mountain talking to God, Aaron made a golden calf, and the people bowed down to it; and it was Aaron's conduct that pierced Moses' heart through and through with awful sorrow. Again he said, "This is too much for me, I am not able to bear it;" and he asked for a council of seventy to share the responsibility. God took him at his word and the seventy were appointed, but God took of His Spirit that was upon Moses, and put it upon the seventy. But did that help Moses any? It is true that the Spirit of the Lord rested upon seventy-one then instead of one, but there was no more power upon the seventy-one than there had been upon one before. God's plan was to have stood Moses up before the people, empower him with condensed lightning, and condensed wisdom and power, until he could have done the work of seventy-one men. The glory and honor was divided until Moses' share was only one of seventy-one. The council never proved a blessing. That was the start of the very Sanhedrim that crucified our Lord.

Beloved, let us not shrink from responsibility. Let us not draw back when God wants to send us to the front. Let us shoulder without hesitation every single thing that God puts upon us. It is an easy thing for us to lose our crown. We are warned faithfully, "Let no man take thy crown." If we want to be at our very best we must go forth unhesitatingly; grasping every opportunity; cherishing the cross, and leaning upon God every step of the way. Beloved, if we can get the Holy Ghost to come into our hearts and take charge of everything, He will solve every difficult problem; He will untangle every tangled skein; and will make every intricate and difficult matter as plain as high noon. He will enter into the most minute details of life, and help us through them all. The "good Spirit" of the Lord may be with you just as much in swinging a pick as sitting on a throne. He may just as really help you at the kitchen sink, or at the wash tub, as in the drawing room, or on the platform.

The Man of Nazareth, who spent years of His life swinging a hammer, pushing a plane, or driving a saw, will never forget you, no difference how humble your work in life. No difference how mean our calling, we need and may have our Pentecost. There can be no real, constant victory until the Holy Ghost comes to abide. The "good Spirit" of the Lord will insure victory through the most protracted tests He will never leave nor forsake you. When people turn from you, trials multiply, and sorrows seem to crush you, in the midst of sickness and distress, when all from a human standpoint looks dark, then the Lord is with His truly sanctified children and whispers, "when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee." It is at least intimated in this text that we shall go through the fire and the water; but when we do, thank God, we will not drown or burn. There will be something in us that will stand the storm. Away down in the basement of our souls, there will be a framework built of steel ribs and girders, and we will be upheld by the hand of Omnipotence. So strong and firm will He build us that no storms of hell will be able to break down the structure. Glory to God!

A sea worthy vessel may be tossed and rolled and tumbled, swinging over the tops of the billows and down through the trough of an awful sea. She resists and throws off wave after wave, and rides serenely on without damage from the storm. This is one of the grandest pictures, to my mind, of a life that is permeated through and through with the "good Spirit" of God. The billows of the most agitated seas may sweep across your deck, and you may sometimes seem to be out of sight; the world may have forgotten you; in the small hours of the morning you may be slipping noiselessly about, watching the sick bed, in great suspense as to what the consequences are to be. All human voices and human sympathy are as

silent as death; you look out upon the stars of the night; you are weary. Satan would tempt you that even your own friends have no feelings for you, but, thank God, the "good Spirit" of the Lord is there and rejoices over the victories that nobody knows but the King Himself. This "Spirit," spoken of in the twentieth verse of the ninth chapter of Nehemiah, is the mighty Spirit of the mighty God.

O, beloved, I wish we knew Him. I wish that you would not only receive Him, but that people who have received Him, would cultivate His acquaintance. I wish you would court His favor; study His likes and dislikes. He is very sensitive; is most refined in His tastes. O, if we only knew how to please Him; how Divine the fellowship. Thank God, we may, and when we come to know Him, and get through with everything else and just step out in the power of His might, depending alone upon Him, He always gives glorious victory.

The "good Spirit" is gentle. He is not only symbolized by fire, but also by the dove. There are many striking symbols of the Holy Ghost. Sometimes He comes as a mighty rushing wind; sometimes as a cooing dove; sometimes He comes as a flame of fire; sometimes as a still, small voice. It is just as sweet to know Him in the one as in the other. After your heart is open to receive Him, if you love Him and know Him, it does not matter under what symbol He comes to you. You will understand it. All this confusion which we find around, all asking questions, all this wondering, comes from a lack of settled conviction. When we get a settled conviction and come to know Him as God, He may come as a storm and we will stand upon our feet. He may come like the morning air and we will welcome Him, and when He comes we will cherish Him; we will embrace Him and will seek to know Him better.

Beloved, to know the Holy Ghost is not only to swing a meat ax in preaching. This may sometimes be necessary, but to know Him, means to weep and weep, like the red eyed Jeremiah until the proud and impenitent may reject us for our very tears. There is such a tenderness, and such a gentleness springing up when the Holy Spirit comes in. He not only transforms us but it seems as if the glory of God is setting upon every blade of grass; as if the trees were clapping their hands for joy. It sometimes seems that every cricket and insect that makes a noise is singing and rejoicing over this salvation. I am fond of demonstration when it is in the Spirit of the Lord. It is very refreshing to my soul, but what can be more refreshing than to see someone stand with streaming eyes and laughing, radiant countenance, weeping out the joy which the Holy Ghost has put in.

I have recently witnessed a camp meeting well nigh swept off of their feet by the tearful, laughing of a little woman who was saying "farewell" to friends, home and native land. She was headed for the sandy stretches of India, but her eyes were so full of tears, and her soul so full of laughter that she was unable to speak to the people. A more eloquent message I have never heard. It was truly uplifting.

Manifestations of the Spirit are many; they are various; they may come this way or that. We dare not lay down any rules for God. He will not follow rules or human regulations; but with all our demonstration let us never suppose that the deepest spirituality is in demonstration. Let us understand that the deepest spirituality is in letting God absolutely have His way with us. As willing to be still and be misunderstood when God puts a hush on our soul as to be misunderstood when He puts the shouts and demonstration upon us. If you shout, there will be somebody who will criticize you. If you do not shout there will be somebody else who will think you have not got the victory. The thing we want is to be possessed with the "good Spirit" of the Lord.

O, beloved, I am looking for something more than I have seen manifested in this world yet. I am seeing something of it these days. Sometimes God comes down, takes hold of people and shakes them over hell. It is more of this mighty, gripping conviction we want to see. Just at this time we are confronting a phase of fanaticism which rarely appears in the religious world. I refer to excessive demonstration, and to a spirit that would censure and denounce all who are not physically demonstrative. Sweet and refreshing as real Holy Ghost demonstration is, it is important that we shall not lay too much stress upon it. The devil can take advantage of human feelings, but what we want is something thousand fathoms deeper than shouts or gymnastic exercises. But the Holy Ghost can settle you down so that when the people attack you all you will do is say; "Hallelujah!" We can not defend ourselves if we are dead; we must be good corpses; we must stay dead. A person can talk about a good corpse all day and there is no reply, no answer, no retaliation.

Now, beloved, the point I want to bring before you is, that what God gave to comparatively few men in the Old dispensation, He wants to pour out on all flesh today. Under the Old dispensation the multitudes stood outside the temple or tabernacle. They heard the jingle of bells and caught a glimpse of the pomegranates on the garment of the priest as he entered the holy place alone, but the masses did not come in touch with God.

He put His Spirit upon Moses, Elisha, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Hezekiah and others; all along down through the ages there have been some who have had His "good Spirit." But God promised that the time should come when He should pour His Spirit upon all flesh. What Moses found on Horeb, and Elijah found at Carmel, you may have today if you will meet the conditions. The coming of the "good Spirit" of the Lord will destroy all sin in the heart and fill you with perfect love. We "receive not the spirit of fear but of love and power and of a sound mind." We stand before the world entirely sane for the first time in our lives when we are sanctified wholly. All who are not sanctified wholly are more or less insane. A sanctified man, full of the Holy Ghost, stands out before the world, yes, before three worlds, as God's representative, as a sample of God's goods, and he stands ready for inspection. If we are not ready to stand off somewhere and let all the sharpshooters of hell do their worst on us, we have not got the thing I am talking about. If somebody comes along and says, "You have not got it," that does not affect matters a particle. You have not time to defend. The real thing does not need any defense, but I feel sure this is Greek to most people. I am speaking to some now who are comparative strangers to these things, but it is coming. Before our Lord comes back to earth again, I believe there will be a real revival. I do not mean fanaticism; I do not mean mere noise; I mean that the gifts and graces of the Spirit will reappear as in the apostolic church and will be recognized by the real saints, and will be exercised to the blessing of thousands. Many have received the Holy Ghost but have refused to receive His gifts. There seems to be a special aversion to the gift of healing among many who call themselves Holiness people. This is one of the gifts in the Pauline catalogue.

Beloved, I am preaching and praying and weeping and looking for a people who will swallow the whole Bible and go through with God. Beloved, let us not be afraid. If somebody has gone into fanaticism we must not draw back into the cold twilight of spiritual things. Let us not make a mistake here. He is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those that seek than we are to give good gifts to our children. He wants to come and He will come and He will not tarry. He will come suddenly to His temple. He might come now; 'most any time. Look out! Glory to God! I believe He is coming! He comes when everything is ready. Some have received Him while washing dishes. Some while walking along the street. Some while lying in their beds, and have jumped out as if the bed was on fire. O let Him come! If He does not come, there is a

reason for it. He will never withhold His manna or the fruits of Canaan or the best things He has from us. He fed three million people in a barren wilderness where there was absolutely nothing in sight, to settle it forever that we do not have to depend on what we can see. If we know Him He will take care of us. He causes the lilies to grow and they are beautiful. The Lord has promised to make us like wrought gold. "The King's daughter shall be all glorious within."

Have you received Him? Do you believe He wants to come? Suppose He does come, will you consult Him? Will you court His favor? Will you study to please Him in every way? Many have questioned Him and He has left them. If the Lord tells me to go and do a thing, I would not question Him for the world. I would not ask Him one question for the price of my soul. I should fear that He would leave me. In all the severest sorrows and trials through which I have been called to pass, I have not asked Him one question. O glory to God! He wants to control us absolutely without questions. Shall we let Him? Beloved, receive Him just now, for Jesus' sake and for your own soul's sake. Praise the Lord!

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