

Place: Lurgan Baptist 16:10:2001

Reading: John 16:1-14

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND YOU

4. SPIRIT BORN

Physical examinations are no fun. Bill was certainly not looking forward to his annual check up. But it helped a little that Dr. Carter was a personal friend. Dr. Carter had often given Bill words of encouragement when minor problems had become major in Bill's mind. But on this occasion, Bill's doctor friend was not his comforter. He was his convincer. After the examinations were all done, and the test results were back, Bill learned that he had cancer. It was serious but operable. Surgery was scheduled immediately. Bill readily complied. After successful surgery, Bill thanked Dr. Carter for not only being a friend who comforted him in his fears, but also a competent physician who convinced him of serious danger. Now the Holy Spirit not only has a relationship to a Christian as the Comforter, but He also confronts the world of all mankind as the Convicter. In this role, the Holy Spirit plays a crucial part in bringing a person to know God in what the Bible presents as being SPIRIT- BORN !

You might think that the Holy Spirit of God is present only in the lives of believers. But the Holy Spirit is present and active in our world in general. The Holy is IN believers, therefore He is also present wherever believers go. This ever present Spirit is busy and active. Do you recall what Isaiah says, " When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." (Is 59:19) The Holy Spirit restrains evil in the world. You're probably thinking, " If that is true what is the Holy Spirit doing, because I see evil everywhere every day." My the Bible predicts a time when the restraining work of the Holy Spirit will be withdrawn from this world. Paul makes a fascinating prediction about this in (2 Thes 2:6) He says, " And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed."

This clearly teaches us that when the Restrainer, the Holy Spirit, is taken out of the way, then the Man of Sin shall be revealed. Just as the Holy Spirit was injected into human history in a special way on the day of Pentecost, so there will come a time in the future when God's Holy Spirit so far as His current activity is concerned, will be drawn out of the world. My do you think there is evil in the world right now ? You ain't seen nothing yet. Wait until the Restrainer, the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way. It is the Holy Spirit who dominates this age. He it is who imparts divine life to a dead soul. He it is who holds back the floodtides of human wickedness, and who from time to time brings in tremendous revivals.

His restraining work keeps the world from plunging into total depravity, but what will it be when the Restrainer, the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way ? In (Jn 16) the Lord Jesus introduced the work of the Holy

Spirit in relation to an individual. Here, the Spirit of God functions much like Dr. Carter did with Bill. He is called the Comforter, the Friend who has been called alongside, but He is also the Convictor, the one who tells us the truth about our condition. The Lord Jesus said, "When He is come He will reprove the world of sin" (16:8) The first work of the Holy Spirit in an individuals soul is that of conviction. His initial ministry is:

(1) HIS REPROVING MINISTRY

Did you notice (16:8) This is a legal word that means, " to bring to the light, to expose, to refute, to convict and convince." The Spirit of God is much like the crown prosecutor. He brings an unsaved person face to face with Jesus Christ. My no person will ever receive Christ as Saviour unless he or she has first been convicted by the Holy Spirit ! No other power, no other person in the universe can do this. I can't convict anyone of their need for Christ. It is the Holy Spirit who is the Agent of Conviction ! Do you recall that after the Resurrection, the disciples sought to convince Thomas that Christ was alive. Thomas was not present when Christ appeared to them the first time. They failed to convince Thomas. He insisted, " I will not believe." (Jn 20:25) Ten disciples could not convince one. Just a few days later, Peter preached on the day of Pentecost. The people were " cut to the heart," (Acts 2:37) and three thousand were saved. What made the difference ? The Convictor had come, and on that day, one disciple convinced thousands. You see, the Holy Spirit convicts:

(a) OF THE NATURE OF SIN:

Look at (16:8) The Holy Spirit makes the human heart aware, " You are a sinner." There is not much consciousness of sin in contemporary society. The existence of sin is often denied. Multitudes are unconscious of the reality of sin. However, the tragedy of sin's consequences continue. These results are apparent in broken homes, scarred lives, and shattered relationships everywhere we look. Christians are aware that sin is a reality. Sin is it to blame for it all. But only the Holy Spirit can convict people of their sin ! Now did you notice that Christ did not say that the Holy Spirit will convict a person of sins (plural) but sin (singular) ? The Holy Spirit convicts the world of one particular sin, the sin of unbelief. The law of God and the conscience of man will convict the sinner of his sins (plural) specifically, but it is the work of the Spirit through the witness of the church, to expose the unbelief of a lost world. My is it not unbelief (failure to believe in the Lord Jesus) that condemns the lost sinner ? (Jn 3:19 A man could " clean up his life," and quit his bad habits and still be lost and go to hell. (a)

(b) OF THE NEED OF RIGHTEOUSNESS:

" Of righteousness " (16:8) Whose righteousness ?

The righteousness of Jesus Christ, the perfect Lamb of God. When the Holy Spirit makes the Lord Jesus real to the heart, showing the Lord's perfect righteousness and beauty, it is then, and only then, that a person is aware of the fact that Christ is righteous, while he is unrighteous. Christ is holy, I am unholy. My when the Holy Spirit shows us ourselves compared to the Lord Jesus, there is no comparison. (a) (b)

evil fangs on the Saviour's heel at Calvary, he felt that foot begin to crush his head. (Gen 3:14-15) Now when a lost sinner is truly under conviction, he will see the folly of unbelief, he will confess that he does not measure up to the righteousness of Christ, and he will realise that he is under conviction because he belongs to the world and the devil. (Eph 2:1-3) Adolph Hitler almost brought the world to its knees. It seemed Hitler's diabolical scheme would succeed. He decided to conquer the world.

By his mesmerising words, he actually inflamed the prejudices and pride of a nation. Millions of people were deceived by an insane man. The masses followed him into the Second World War. But Hitler did not succeed. As the end of war approached, Hitler retreated like a mole into a bunker, where he committed suicide. Before he ended it all on 30th April, 1945 Hitler sent a wire instructing that Marshal Goring, his second in command, was to be replaced by General Admiral Doenitz. Doenitz wired back these words, " My Fuhrer My loyalty to you will be unconditional." The fool didn't even know that Hitler was already dead and defeated. Doenitz had chosen to follow a loser, and he didn't even know it. My the prince of this world is judged. The battle is over. Its only a matter of time, before Satan is cast into the lake of fire, along with those who reject Christ (Rev 20:11-15) Thankfully, the Holy Spirit convicts an unsaved person, that he is on the wrong side and that he needs to choose the victory side.

Now how does the Holy Spirit do this ? How does he convict ? Do you recall what the word " convict," means ? It means " to convince, or " to reprove," " or to bring to the light." How does the Holy Spirit convict ? He turns on the light ! You see, the Holy Spirit does not minister in a vacuum. Just as the Son of God had to have a body in order to do His work on earth, so the Spirit of God needs a body to accomplish His ministries, and that body is the church. Our bodies are His tools and temples, and He wants to use us to glorify Christ and to witness to a lost world. Do you realise that witnessing is not only a great privilege, but a serious responsibility ? It is a matter of life or death !

How we need to depend on the Holy Spirit to guide us to the right persons, give us the right words and enable us to glorify the Lord Jesus.
(1)

(2) HIS REGENERATING MINISTRY

Now don't be put off by the word " regeneration," it simply means, " new birth, renewal, or restoration." It is only used twice in our AV of the Bible. (Titus 3:5 Matt 19:28) Regeneration is the more theological term. The simpler term is " born again." The new birth is that act of God by which new life is imparted to the person who trusts Christ as his Saviour. This is the term the Lord Jesus used in one of the greatest sermons ever preached. Do you recall what He said to Nicodemus ?
" Ye must be born again." (3:7)

(a) THE NEW BIRTH IS A MUST:

" Ye must (3:7) Its an imperative. The only answer to spiritual death is spiritual life, and the only way to have spiritual life is through a spiritual birth !

(b) THE NEW BIRTH IS A MIRACLE:

For Christ says, " That which is born of the flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (3:6) He is simply say that like produces like. (Gen 1) That which is born of man is human, that which is born of God is divine. That which is born of man is sinful, that which is born of God is spiritual. When I was born the first time I received from my parents their sinful nature, when I was born again I received from God Is nature. (2 Pet 1:4) The Lord Jesus said, " Except a man be born of the water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (3:3) Just as there are two parents for physical birth, so there are two parents for spiritual birth, the Spirit of God and the Word of God.

(James 1:18 1 Pet 1:23-25) The Spirit of God takes the Word of God and reveals the Son of God and when you trust Christ as your Saviour a miracle takes places in your heart you are born again.

" As soon my all I venture,
On the atoning blood,
The Holy Spirit enters,
And I am born of God."

(c) THE NEW BIRTH IS A MYSTERY:

Did you recall Christ's words ? (Jn 3:8) My

1. The Wind is IRRESPONSIBLE:

That is sovereign in its action. It neither consults mans pleasure, nor can it be regulated it by man's device. It blows where it pleases, when it pleases, and as it pleases. So it is with the Holy Spirit.

2. The Wind is IRREGULAR:

Sometimes the wind moves so softly that it scarcely rustles a leaf, at other times it blows severely its roar is heard miles away. So it is with the Holy Spirit !

3. The Wind is INVISIBLE:

My you can see the rain, snow, flash of lightening, nut not the wind, the person of the Holy Spirit is unseen.

4. The Wind is INDISPENSABLE:

You see, if a dead calm were to continue all vegetation would die. How quickly we wilt when there is no wind at all. So it is with the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit of God there could be no spiritual life at all.

5. The Wind is IRRESISTIBLE:

For in the fullness of its power it sweeps all before it.

My when the Holy Spirit moves in the fullness of His power, He breaks down mans prejudices and subdues his rebellious will. " The wind bloweth," There is THE FACT: " And thou hearest the sound thereof," There is the EVIDENCE of the Fact: " But canst not tell " There is the MYSTERY behind the fact ! My is this not what should be praying for

in relation to sinners ? That the Spirit of God would move through this place Sovereignly: Mysteriously: Irrestibly: Powerfully, that sinners would be smitten with conviction and cry out, " Men and brethren what shall we do ?" (Acts 2:37) Is this not what we should be praying for in relation to saints ? For when the Holy Spirit moves saints are melted: consciences are stirred: bitterness is expelled: wrongs are righted: prayer is real: zeal is fervent: service is willing: holiness is seen, and God is glorified.

(3) HIS RESIDING MINISTRY

Do you recall the words of the Lord Jesus ? " And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you forever for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you." (Jn 14:17) Not only " with you," but " in you." The promise of our Lord was that from Pentecost onward the Holy Spirit should permanently dwell in believing hearts. Now there are three distinct phases of the Spirit's work in connection with the walk and witness of the believer to be found in John's gospel. Notice:

(a) HIS INCOMING:

" Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit "
(Jn 3:5) Contrary to much wrong teaching current in some circles today, the Scriptures indicate clearly that the Holy Spirit is given to all believers, immediately and unconditionally ! Paul says, " Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by hearing of faith ?"
(Gal 3:2) " Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." (Rom 8:9) " What ? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God." (1 Cor 6:19) Could language be more explicit that faith brings the Spirit of God into the life as the beginning of the work of grace. My there can be no such thing as a Christian devoid of the Spirit, there are no empty temples in this age of grace. Once the gate of the Human Spirit is open, the Holy Spirit enters once and for all ! What did the Lord Jesus say ? " That He may abide with you for ever." (14:16)

Is it necessary to stress that ? Yes ! For there are some hymns on the " Holy Spirit," not true to Scripture ! Never take your theology from hymns. Thank God, for multitudes of them, but there are some that are not altogether true to what we have in the Word of God.

For example do you know this verse of a hymn ?

" Return O Holy Dove return,
Sweet messenger of rest
I hate the sins that made thee mourn
And drove Thee from my breast."

Now that is impossible. I may grieve Him, as alas I do regularly, but I can never grieve Him out of my heart.

When He enters, He enters to Remain ! So Augustine was right when he said, " the Holy Spirit is our perpetual Comforter, and our eternal Inhabitant."

(b) HIS UPRISING:

Do you recall the Saviours words to the woman at the well ? " But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up ..." (4:14) Here we have the Holy Spirit related to our sanctification. This is the daily, constant increase of spiritually, as the Holy Spirit is allowed to rise, and permeate the entire life of the one regenerated by His power ! Perhaps we are now ready to understand what Paul had in mind when he wrote, " Be ye filled with the Spirit." (Eph 5:18) I have the Holy Spirit but does He have me ? I possess the Spirit, does He possess me ? Does He permeate and control the totality of my life ?
His Incoming Salvation: His Uprising Sanctification ! But notice:

(c) HIS OUTFLOWING:

Thats to do with our service ! " 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." (7:38) This great classic passage indicates the further and fuller progress of the Spirit's ministry as He is allowed to have His way in the life of the believer ! Entering the life the Holy Spirit strives to fill it with His fullness and then like Ezeziels river He flows on and on and out and out and everything lives where the river flows. So in (Jn ch 3) the Spirit is related to our salvation: in (Jn ch 4) He is related to our sanctification: in (Jn ch 7) He is related to our service. In (Jn ch 3) the Spirit of God Regenerates: in (Jn ch 4) He Permeates: in (Jn ch 7) He Irrigates: In (Jn ch 3) the Holy Spirit Flows IN: in (ch 4) He Flows THROUGH: in (ch 7) He Flows OUT:

Here's the question: are you a receptacle Christian or are you a channel Christian ? A jug is a receptacle. It retains what it receives. Are you like that ? A pipe is a channel, and as long as its clean, life-giving water can be pumped through it ! Are you a channel Christian ?

" Channels only, blessed Master,
But with all Thy wondrous power
Flowing through us, Thou canst use us
Every day and every hour."

Are you beginning to see now what it means to be
" Spirit born ?" It involves (1) (2) (3) and now:

(4) HIS REINFORCING MINISTRY

Many spiritual realities take place when a person is Spirit-born. That believer is Baptised by the Spirit:
(1 Cor 12:13) Filled with the Spirit: (Rom 8:9) and
Adopted into the family of God. (Rom 8:15) In addition to this, two other spiritual realities are available to the new believer. These show us how the Holy Spirit provides security and stability for the new born Christian. The first of these realities is:

(a) THE SEAL:

The Seal is mentioned three times in the Scriptures. Lets look at (Eph 1:13) " After that ye believed ye were sealed," so reads the AV but that could imply that the sealing was something following later, upon

believing, which is not the case. Another translation puts it like this, " Having believed ye were sealed." We are sealed when, not after we believe ! We are sealed at the moment of our salvation ! Now what is a seal ? The word " seal," means different things to different groups. Most children think of an animal that bounces a ball on its nose. Women think of something that you do with a jam jar. Men think of something that belongs in the engine of a car. But in the New Testament the word " seal," includes the idea of " ownership." To put a seal on something means that it is yours. Some ranchers or farmers put a brand on their cattle. Each has his distinctive brand, his seal on the animal indicating that it belongs to that ranch owner !

Now when we are " born again," the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts, and the Spirit's presence is God's seal which says, " That one belongs to me, I own that one. He is valuable to me." Do you recall the children's hymn

" Jesus is our Shepherd
For the sheep He bled
Every lamb is sprinkled
With the blood He shed
Then on each He settled
His own secret sign
They that have My Spirit,
These saith He are mine."

How long are we sealed ? " Ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph 4:30) We are sealed " with a view to redemption." Paul is saying that our being sealed with the Spirit is the guarantee that we shall enjoy the redemption at the coming of the Saviour !

Do you think that you're going to be lost again now ?

How could you be lost ? God has sealed you with His Spirit, " and while God and I shall be, I am His and He is mine." That's the Seal, but look at:

(b) THE EARNEST:

Back to (Eph 1:13-14) Our old English word earnest goes back to an old Scottish word " arles." Now earnest and arles mean exactly the same thing. It meant an instalment or a small part of something given in sure pledge of future full possession. Let me illustrate.

Many years ago, I'm not sure whether this happens now, but years ago when a farmer was selling his land, he would bring the buyer to his farm, where they dug up a spadeful of the best soil, and that was given to the purchaser, or maybe they plucked a few heads of the best corn. Whatever the buyer would never come away without something home with him and that was regarded as " the earnest of the inheritance." Have you ever shopped for a car ? Maybe you've gone to the salesman and you really want the car so you say, " I'm going to give you £500-00 as a deposit." Do you what that means ? That you're serious enough to put down partial payment to guarantee full payment later. That's what a deposit is a downpayment. The earnest money is a promise that the full amount is on the way.

Its kind of like an engagement ring. Mortimer gives Millie an engagement ring. That diamond is his way of saying, " I love you, I want you. I'm going to take you to live with me."

My the Holy Spirit is our earnest. It is God's promise to us, " I love you. I want you. And one of these days I'm going to take you to live with Me in glory." Do you know something ? When you by faith receive the Saviour, God slips on the ring, the Holy Spirit in your heart. This is His promise and pledge that He will care for us until He comes again for us. A man heard a knock on his door one day. He opened his door, and a man, said, " Sir, I'm here to tell you that you have received an unbelievable inheritance, a hugh sum of money. It will be a while before you receive it all. I have been instructed to present you with a check." He gave the man a check for fifty million dollars. As the man left he said, " I want you to know there's far more than this."

Every blessing you and I receive, every sweet touch of God in our lives, every evidence of the Holy Spirit in our lives as believers right now is just a drop in the bucket compared to what God has waiting for us in the future. Are you not glad that you are " Spirit born ?"
Are you not glad that you can sing,

" Blessed assurance Jesus is mine
Oh what a foretaste of glory mine
Heir of salvation, purchase of God
Born of His Spirit, washed in His Blood."