

The Fullness of the Holy Spirit for Life and Work - 10

"Spirit of truth...bear witness of me...glorify Me...receive of mine...declare it to you"

Jn.15.26,16.13-16

Review:

Session 1: On the inside, each of us has become a dwelling place of the Spirit.

Session 2: Distinguishing the functioning difference of body, soul and spirit

Session 3: Led by the Spirit: knowing the character and tone of voice and activity of the Spirit

Session 4: The Temple of the Holy Spirit

Session 5: The 'newness' of the Spirit [as against the 'oldness' of the letter]

Session 6: The Spirit given to the obedient

Session 7: Praying in the Spirit...

Session 8: "Be filled with the Spirit"...speaking, singing, chanting, giving thanks, being subject on to another

Session 9: "my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit" Romans 9.1

1. A preparation up till now for a change of focus.

We have been investigating some practical aspects of the Holy Spirit in relation to how our own life is impacted by Him, and how we must needs think about our persons and the new covenant situation in which we have been landed by the finished work of Jesus.

In considering these matters we have noticed how the experience of the intimacy of union comes to be established in our own, internal experience. We have had to take this route because of the deep misunderstandings abroad today concerning the knowledge of humanity and how the inner workings of the human person needed to be established from Scripture. Otherwise we cannot distinguish things that differ within our own experience or that of others.

2. The real substance of the life in the Spirit is Christ.

But now we want to focus our minds upon the Person who is the true content and meaning of the fullness of the Holy Spirit; we must now come to investigate the life of the Spirit within us in such a way that we begin to concentrate upon our living relationship with Christ. For we must never forget that we have received "another" Comforter/Advocate/Paraclete etc who is their in lieu of the One who came first to us and accomplished a redemption that returns us to who we were always meant to be. I say "in lieu", but we need to remember that this means forever - He will never leave us - for that is the promise of Jesus concerning the Spirit..

But of that is the case we are landed right into the centre of the Trinitarian Life, for to have "another" who is, not only the conveyor of those things of the Lord to us in the present time, but also He whose coming to us means that we will have an experience of the Father and the Son. In this way, at the present time, each of us has become a "dwelling place" of God.

3. The Groom and the bride.

If, as we saw last session, the very first experience of salvation that a human has concerns a re-adjustment of his conscience in a way that makes each person aware of the coming of the Lord, the Spirit, to them; it is not very long before the movement of being baptised in water, by others who are now our brothers and sisters, makes us aware that we have entered into the same baptism of Jesus; we are now, by the Spirit, in lock-step with his Life and will live to be conformed to the proper image of God we were always meant to be - we are to be conformed to the image of God's only Son.

We have found ourselves, collectively speaking, to be the bride of the Groom. We have begun to turn our life to living in preparation for marriage and the consummation and life together with the One who is to be our Husband. We are now betrothed [2 Cor.11.2] - we cannot go back. We are looking forward to being caught up into the shared Life of our husband.

This is the time in history where we find ourselves - we are spoken for, we have a forward-looking hope, we are busy learning to conform to Him as a betrothed woman looks to enter a life which she can never have of herself, but only with Another and in the special relation of a consummated marriage.

And we see this against the tapestry of the Old Testament revelation that itself prepares us to understand it - she leaves her old family ties, she looks forward to an exclusive and holy relation with her husband to be, and she prepares to enter his Life as the place where her own is to be found now.

4. John the baptist - the friend of the Bridegroom.

It was given to John to be the friend of the bridegroom who attended his friend as He prepares

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for the business of establishing the circumstances under which He shall come to even have a bride and receive her to himself. He was the facilitator to point Israel - and included in and with Israel will be others - to consider her coming Bridegroom.

He bore witness of Jesus, in such a way that he showed the bride what to do to make her hard and accepting heart ready for the reception of a person who comes to redeem her - to restore her to what she was always meant to be. John's role was to make her ready to consider the man. John yielded to his Cousin's word to fulfill all righteousness - he baptised Jesus in the Jordan as Jesus took his stand with sinners. The Father opened the heavens and spoke of his delight in his obedient Son, the Spirit descended in gentleness upon the Son of God and He, in obedience to the Spirit followed his leading and drew from the Spirit the power for his ministry.

5. The Spirit of the Bridegroom who prepares the waiting betrothed for her Bride.

[1] Prepares her to live off the life already established.

As the holy Spirit came upon the Lord Jesus, so through the power of that Spirit He lived out his life for us and in our place [where a substitute was required] and in our stead [where a representative work must be done for us] so that we could enter into it later.

As the new covenant in Christ's blood was established at great cost for the Groom, so the conditions became available for a betrothal to take place. A redeemed bride was now redeemed from the wrath of God, washed from her guilt and defilement in the blood of the Groom, rescued by Him from the bondage to Satan and provided with a wedding garment - a righteousness not of her own. He had accomplished this for all, and as the bride began to emerge as called, we see that, after resurrecting from the dead and opening life to all men and women, He had left to receive a kingdom and promised to return.

[2] The waiting bride needs to know her Bridegroom's history

The Spirit of Christ comes as a down payment of all that awaits the bride now. He prepares the bride during this interim - the time between betrothal and consummation. He, in coming to dwell in the many human resting places which make up the bride, He begins to take the things of the Bridegroom and convey them to the bride; information about his prior life as the eternal Son of God; He teaches her and empowers her to enter into the work of her Groom for her.

[3] Instructs how to please the Bridegroom

He instructs and empowers how she is to put off her old garments and in exchange, put on Christ's righteousness, and to set about conforming herself to the living after the pattern, to the fullness of the stature, of her royal Man, so as to be ready for Him when He returns. The bride is a waiting bride, fully betrothed and has her eyes turned towards her Man. The Spirit in all his fullness is the conveyor of the experience of Christ - for He is Christ's Spirit, the spirit of truth, and is able by his own origin and person to lead us into all the truth; into all of the fullness of Christ.

[4] Learns how to be obedient and effective in the Bridegroom's life of serving of others

He teaches how each is a member of the body of Christ. He helps the bride to consider herself as a body instructed by her Head, who is Christ, so as to carry out the ministry which the whole body is set to do upon the earth right now; even while, at the same time it grows into the likeness of the Groom.

[5] Learns how to suffer

He stands by the parting words of Groom, that, just as He was hated without a cause, so the bride will now discover that his enemies are her enemies. As she looks to the glory that will be hers at the coming marriage and the life shared thereafter, so she also knows that she must share in the suffering life that her Groom has already laid down. She is a sharer in his sufferings - and she begins in this as the bride who is waiting.

As these enemies harass, arrest and draw the bride before kings and courts for the sake of her Groom's name, so the Spirit of Christ gives them words to answer right at that time - He Advocates for her, and so comforts her in her need. He enables her to sustain this bold witness even to the loss of life. She looks to her go'el, her kinsman redeemer, who has rescued her to become the bride, to also avenge her blood upon those who take her life as she stands for her Groom.