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The Work of the Holy Spirit Today

JESUS WOULD SEND HIM

"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", said Jesus, John 16:7. Again he speaks, John 16:13, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come". He further states in John 14:26, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you".

THE WORK HE WOULD DO

After promising to send the Holy Spirit to reveal all of God's word to man, Jesus then states his work, "And when he is come, he will reprove (convict RV, GVP) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged", John 16:8-11.

WHEN AND HOW DID HE BEGIN THIS WORK?

Jesus promised the apostles that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5), and they were to wait in Jerusalem until this promise was fulfilled, verse 4. This they did, and when the Holy Spirit came on the apostles only, Acts 1:26-2:1-4, the work of the Holy Spirit began and will continue in the same manner until the end of the world! If you will notice there were three things which Jesus said he would do; convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, in this order!

1-SIN

When the Holy Spirit began his work in Acts 2, there were men present from all over the Roman Empire. The law of Moses was no longer void, but these men did not believe in Christ. This, Christ said, was their sin! So the first work was to convince these men that Jesus was the

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First Fruits and Leftovers

"Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures." (James 1:18) In Israel the giving of the first fruits constituted an acknowledgement that the land and all its fruits were a gift of God. The concept involved nothing less than an acknowledgement of God's control of the universe and of one's life. To give the first fruits to something else was considered an affirmation of the existence of another God.

First fruits included the first born of man and beast (oxen, sheep, sons—Exodus 13:2; 22:29f), the first fruits of the land (grain, wine, oil, fleece—Deuteronomy 18:4), and the products of labor (flour and bread—Leviticus 23:16-20). The Israelite offered the first fruits of the grain when it was harvested, the first fruits of the flour when it was ground, and the first fruits of bread when it was made. He was a God-made man in a God-made world and he acknowledged that fact every step of the way.

The first fruits were considered to be non-redeemable, holy to Jehovah. Although the first born of unclean beasts could be redeemed with money, the first born of clean beasts could not be redeemed. (Numbers 18:12-20). Ezekiel 48:14 warns, "And they shall sell none of it, nor exchange it, nor shall the first fruits of the land be alienated; for it is holy unto Jehovah." Never could one substitute the less costly or the more convenient for the first fruits.

Under Christ, we are the first fruits—we belong to God. (James 1:18) Not simply what we have, but our total life belongs to God. To give the first fruits of time, money, energy, or intellect to something else is to acknowledge the existence of another God. That fact suggests these conclusions:

1. THERE IS NO RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FIRST FRUITS AND LEFTOVERS. Our attitude is incredibly casual when we offer the leftovers of time or money to the Lord and juggle our budget or schedule as though it were a water bill or a car payment. There is an unbridgeable gap between first fruits and leftovers. No amount of leftovers will take the place of first fruits.

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The Price of Salvation

We often hear the expression that salvation is free, which, in a sense, is true. But what is meant by the word "free"? The land of Canaan was free to the Israelites but many did not possess it. In fact more than six-hundred-thousand men who were more than twenty years of age at the time they left Egypt, died while waiting to occupy this FREE land. WHY? Was it NOT free? Oh yes, it was FREE! But though God gave them the land they must occupy it. The blessings of God were placed in the land of "milk and honey". If the Israelites wanted this "milk and honey" they must go into the promised land. God would not and did not bring the blessings OUT OF the land and the Israelites lacked the faith to occupy said land. They were denied these blessings for forty years because the people would not go where the blessings were. Though there was plenty for ALL, only those who went into the land enjoyed the blessings.

The salvation from the flood was also FREE, but NOT all the people were saved! Noah was a preacher of righteousness and he was saved, but NOT those to whom he preached. Salvation was in the ark. ONLY those who were WILLING to go INTO the ark where salvation was, were saved. ONLY EIGHT PEOPLE IN ALL THE WORLD! WHY! Because the people of Noah's day were like the people of today. They did NOT believe it was necessary to GO where God said salvation was.

Today the "Grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men", Titus 2:11. In the days of Noah and Moses the grace of God also appeared to MANY men but only a FEW were saved and enjoyed his blessings. In the days of Moses and Noah the grace of God appeared TELLING men to DO something. IF they DID it they received the PROMISED BLESSING; IF NOT, there was NO blessing. The same is true TODAY!

NOTICE! This grace of God which TODAY is appearing to ALL MEN, is TELLING all men to DO SOMETHING! WHAT? "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world: Looking for the blessed

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The Fulton County Gospel News

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What About John, Lord

Before His ascension, Jesus told Peter to "feed my sheep", and "follow me." (Jn. 21:15-19). Peter looked at John and asked, "What shall this man do?" The Lord replied, in essence: "Peter, it doesn't matter what my plans are for John... you just concern yourself with Peter... you follow me!"

Too often we are overly concerned with what others are doing, or not doing. It is so easy to be distracted from one's own responsibility by being preoccupied with "John". Seeing a "John" failing to be actively involved in the Lord's work, there is a danger for me to think sub-consciously, "Why should I work so hard? Look at old John... he's not doing anything."

I can remember well in my early years of preaching the reaction I felt over what "John" did or didn't do. In one place, an elder (the Diotrephes type) in the church was one of the richest men in the county. He had land, and oil, and cattle in abundance. He saw to it that everyone in the congregation knew what he gave, and while it was more in actual dollars than most of the rest were able to give, proportionately it was a mere pittance... scant crumbs that fell from his table. At the time, it was a tremendous struggle for us to make ends meet from week to week, and yet we were giving almost as many dollars a Sunday as he. Satan tempted me sorely to "cut down" our giving in view of what "John" was doing. I learned right then that I couldn't be what the Lord wanted me to be and be overly concerned with "John". I've had to relearn the lesson on many occasions in many different aspects of the Christian life.

I pray to God that when Satan tempts me to ask, "What about John, Lord?", that the Lord's reply to Peter will come through loud and clear: "DON'T WORRY ABOUT OLD JOHN. YOU FOLLOW ME!"

—Maxie B. Boren

**Overcoming Fear
In Soul Winning**

Have you ever said, "I would like to teach the gospel to others, but when I start to mention religion to anybody, I get nervous and nothing will come out?" Fear is the greatest factor prohibiting many from leading souls to Christ.

Attempts have been made to make us feel ashamed of this fear. Unfortunately, the only result is usually frustration rather than release from the fear. Nervousness and fear of encounter is a natural human reaction. For even the most experienced soul winners there is always a certain element of fear present in any new encounter. Yet while fear is natural, we must not let it stymie our efforts to bring others to the Savior.

At least two things will help to overcome that fear: prayer and love for lost souls. When Peter and John had just been released from an imprisonment for preaching the gospel (Acts 4) they gathered with some other disciples and prayed. They had been ordered by the courts to cease their preaching. Yet they knew that their allegiance must be to God rather than to men. Thus they prayed.

As they prayed, their prayer was not for their enemies to be eliminated or for any of their hindrances to be removed, but that they might have boldness. They didn't ask for danger to be taken away, but for courage in the face of danger. God heard that prayer and gave a direct answer. Luke says that the place where they were gathered was shaken and that being filled with the Holy Spirit, they began to speak the word of God with boldness.

We are dealing with the same God, to whom the disciples prayed. He will grant to us also boldness in times that normally produce fear. Jesus himself prayed before He went before Pilate to make that good confession which He knew would lead Him to the cross. If the thought of soul winning makes you fearful, then pray.

The second element in overcoming fear is love for lost souls. John says that "perfect love cast out fear" (John 4:18). John is speaking more directly from the context of our relationship to God. But the principle of love casting out fear of encounter will be overcome. Our love for the souls of men will conquer our fear of reaction. When we are fearful in teaching about Jesus, pray about it. In that prayer ask for more of the grace of God in order that you may be bolder and might have deeper love for the lost. This should make it easier for you to speak up for the master.

—Lynn Rhode

Jesus Would Send Him (Con't.)

Christ and they had sinned in killing him. This was done through the words which the Holy Spirit spoke through the tongues of the apostles, Acts 2:22-23. They had "crucified and slain" the son of God. This part of his work was done. They were convicted, Acts 2:37. 2-RIGHTEOUSNESS

These men thought they were righteous and Jesus was imposter! They killed him because he claimed to be the Son of God and were still looking for the Saviour of whom the prophets told. They were righteous and Jesus was a sinner! But the work of the Holy Spirit was to prove them sinners and that Jesus was righteous. That Jesus was on the right hand of God and if they ever joined him in heaven it would be through the quality of righteousness which he possessed! This work the Holy Spirit accomplished in Acts 2:25-36. They were convinced!

3-JUDGMENT

He was going to convict the world of judgment because the prince of this world (this is Satan Eph. 2:2) is judged. Jesus was the first one to die and be resurrected who never died again. Others had been raised from the death, but death claimed them again. Until Jesus was resurrected, the Devil seemed to have omnipotence over the dead. But Jesus showed that he was the omnipotent one, Acts 2:25, 31; there the Devil was judged and found wanting. The Holy Spirit did his work through the oral word and continues to do his work through the written word today!

Glynn V. Purdy

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Speaking In Tongues!

A clinical psychologist, Dr. John P. Kildahl, has authored a book just published by Harper and Row, entitled *The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues*. The book is the result of two major research projects and ten years of independent research by the author. His information was gathered from coast to coast and tongue-speakers from every educational level. They tape recorded and interviewed dozens of tongue-speakers who also filled out detailed questionnaires.

In order to make valid comparison, their investigation also included non-speaking prayer groups which otherwise were equivalent in every possible way to those who were tongue-speakers. Extensive psychological testing was done with both groups, using standardized tests.

Some very interesting conclusions came from this study. Significantly, more than 85% of the tongue-speakers had experienced personal crises preceding their "gift of tongues. Anxieties, caused by marriage problems, loneliness, illness, financial pressures, and guilt figures

prominently in these crises. In the non-tongue speaking groups, only 30% experienced similar concerns, "We believe," says Kildahl, "anxiety is a prerequisite for developing the ability to speak in tongues."

The researchers also observed great differences between the interpretations given to the tongue-speaking, when tapes submitted to those claiming interpretation yielded widely differing interpretations. When confronted with this, tongue-speakers sincerely defended the varying interpretations as having equal validity. One man who was raised in Africa (the son of a missionary) attended a tongue-speaking meeting at which he arose and spoke the Lord's prayer in an African dialect. It was immediately interpreted as a message about the "imminent second coming of Christ."

This study, and many others like it, should lead us to see tongue-speaking for what it really is, a psychological abnormality which has no kinship with the Holy Spirit.

Joe Schubert

Fresh Fruits and Leftovers (Con't.)

2. GOD'S OWNERSHIP OF OUR LIVES IS A NON-NEGOTIABLE MATTER.

3. THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF FREE WILL GIVING IS PICTURED IN GOD GIVING HIS SON. It has no kinship with those who want to use it as a haven to keep more for themselves or to use Sundays for self-centered indulgence.

4. OUR COMMITMENT TO GOD MUST BE THE FINEST WE HAVE. We cannot give the blind, the sick, the lame. No comfortable twenty dollar gift when we ought to be managing a challenging fifty dollar gift. No convenient thirty Sundays a year when we ought to be worshiping with the saints fifty-two Sundays a year.

5. THERE IS NOT THE REMOTEST POSSIBILITY OF RECONCILING INDIVIDUAL PROSPERITY AND CORPORATE POVERTY. If you are committed to Jesus Christ, if you are a member of the body of Christ, you cannot separate your well being and the church's well being. It is spiritually unethical to live as though prosperous and give as though poor.

6. COMMITMENTS MADE TO GOD INVOLVE THE SACREDNESS OF LIFE ITSELF-GOD'S OWNERSHIP. They are to be met first. A casual or manipulative attitude toward them is unjustifiable and intolerable.

May all of us who are in the covenant relationship of his church resolve that from this day forward the first fruits are God's. They will not be used in any other way. We will have no other Gods before Jehovah.

-Wesley Reagan

Conclusion Jumping

Some time ago, there was a faithful dog, who was a constant companion of a small child. One day, both dog and child disappeared. A diligent search by parties, friends, and neighbors proved to be fruitless. The child could not be found.

After several hours the dog returned home, but was covered with blood. Naturally, the father jumped to the conclusion that the dog had become vicious and killed the child. The dog must be destroyed, so he got his gun and killed the dog.

A little later, the child was found in the woods unharmed. Nearby was the body of a panther that the dog had killed in his struggle to protect the child.

So often we are guilty of conclusion jumping. We take action or at least express our opinion before considering all the facts. The result is usually unpleasant and at times irreparable damage is done.

So be careful about what you say, think and do. You might be guilty of shooting a dog that ought to be praised. Or worse still, you might cause unhappiness in the lives of others where there should be happiness. Or cause a soul to be lost, that Jesus thought enough of to give his life.

I have heard it said that the only exercise some people get is by jumping to conclusion.

The Mortal Street Bulletin.

The Price of Salvation (Cont'd.)

hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our saviour Jesus Christ," Titus 2:12-12.

Today salvation is IN JESUS CHRIST! As God's blessings and salvation were in the ark in the days of Noah, and in the land of Canaan in the days of Moses, so today salvation and God's blessings are in Jesus, Eph. 1:3; II Cor. 5:17. If we die IN CHRIST we are saved, Rev. 14:13. Is it enough to JUST believe this? NO! Faith without WORKS is DEAD, James 2:24. We MUST OBEY CHRIST, Heb. 5:9. We MUST OBEY GOD, Matt. 7:21. Is salvation free? Yes, in a sense. But it is IN CHRIST, which is the church (Eph. 1:22-23 & Col. 1:18), so one MUST ENTER Christ as one had to enter the ark and the land of Canaan. We are saved by the blood of Christ, I Pet. 1:18-19. The blood was shed in His death. We may be baptized into His death, Rom. 6:3-4.

Why did God place salvation in the ark in the days of Noah? I do not know. Why did God place salvation in the land of Canaan in the days of Moses? I do not know. But He DID, and ONLY those who went where salvation was were saved. Today we may want to know why God placed salvation in Christ, or the church, but we do not know. Many do not see any sense in it as many did not think the ark necessary in the days of Noah, BUT IT WAS, and they learned it TOO LATE.

Now you may read your Bible from cover to cover and the ONLY way God teaches you to enter Christ, where salvation is, is THROUGH baptism, Rom. 6:3-5, & Gal. 3:26-27. Now if you do not wish to GO where God has placed salvation, then God will NOT bring it to you. The blood OF CHRIST provided free salvation, but God put it in the church and if you do NOT have enough faith to Go where the salvation is then you do NOT have enough faith to be saved, James 2:24. The blood of Christ can save ALL Men but ALL will not LET him save them, Matt. 7:13-14.

Glynn V. Purdy

If you say, behold, we did not know this, does not HE who weighs the heart perceive and consider it? And HE who guards your life, does HE not know it? And shall not HE render to EVERY MAN according to his works?

A person who doubts himself is like a man who would enlist in the ranks of his enemies and bear arms against himself. He makes the failure certain by himself being the first person to be convinced of it.

God Provides

A new christian commented "Man, it's not easy to be a christian." God has never said it would be. The WAY OF THE CROSS leads home. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him DENY HIMSELF, and TAKE UP HIS CROSS, and FOLLOW ME . . . What shall a man give in exchange for his soul." (Matthew 16:24-26). God provides PEACE that passes all understanding, JOY unspeakable and full of glory, ABUNDANT everlasting life, but not without cost. Jesus warns: "Count the cost" for "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." He challenges: "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell."

GOD PROVIDES POWER through Jesus Christ to overcome sin. Sin is our enemy. It is contagious, destructive and will cause one to suffer the eternal, second death, for which Christ died to save us. Major surgery is painful, but it saves lives. Sin shuts off the power source whereby we quickly become weak, ineffective, doubtful, fearful, empty, powerless and fragile vessels. Too many Christian friends are in this unhappy state, castaway by their own choice, adrift without that ONE connection that gives meaning to life. They have forfeited that fellowship with the Spirit. They lose hope. Joy is gone. Life is a drag and they become weaker and sadder. GOD PROVIDES through spiritual surgery for these needs. When His truth, kindness and goodness fails to challenge his children to faithfulness, He instructs: Drive out the wicked person from among you. "If anyone who bears the name of BROTHER is guilty of immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber—do not even eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders, is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge. God judges those outside.

Jesus' instruction in Matthew 7:1-2 "Do not judge others, so that God will not judge you—" is often misunderstood and confusing and has led to a weakening of the moral force of the Christian community. The resulting permissiveness creates "Milquetoast Christians" who are too timid to raise their voices against Satan's evil forces for fear of offending or judging. Judgement begins with the house of God, not with others. Our Lord says,

A Strait Betwixt Two

Thus did Paul describe Himself in Phil. 1:23. Among other things, Paul gives us an insight into his concept of death. To him, it was a great blessing, a thing to be coveted. There not many people who have found their work in the world, who loved and loving, who have such a desire. In the majority of cases, death is still regarded as a calamity, a time of unrelieved gloom, and it is to be feared that we have lost the conception of death which prevailed among the early Christians, and very often, concerning those who have departed from us, we weep even as do others who have no hope.

The happy conception of death which Paul cherished is to be traced to his conception of that which lay behind. There are two considerations which make death unwelcome to us. One is the enjoyments we have here. The other is the uncertainty of what the future contains. We dread the mysterious and people the unknown land of terrors. There was nothing negative about Paul's conception: it was not be out of the rush of life, away from sorrow, disappointment, strife and care. What appeared entirely clear to Paul was that death was going to be with Christ. It was not a matter of speculation, but of revelation, and that revelation told him that death was not a departure, but an arrival.

It is clear, then, that if departure means an arrival—being with Christ—all Christian life should be a preparation for it, a progress towards Christ, a discipline to fit us to be with Christ. We have to learn to walk with Him, to be like Him, to be made fit to dwell with Him, to learn the habits of His life.

The prospect of departing in God's good time, a time unknown to us, should be a great and bright hope set before us, the refuge of our hearts in trouble, the retreat into which we go when we would soothe and cheer our souls, a great element of the cheerfulness and patience of our lives, while we assure ourselves that the best of all we find here is by and by to give place to that which is far better.

Jess Hall, Jr.

What Do You Think?

A young man working for a large department store, was told by his employer that he would be required to work on Sunday. It so happened that the hours assigned him would have prevented his attending the worship services. The young man informed his employer that he would not be able to work under these circumstances, and his employer told him he would have to let him go.

A few days later the young man answered an ad in the paper which advertised for a bank teller. In checking the young man's previous employers, the bank president contacted the department store's head for a recommendation. The store manager replied, "Why yes, I'll be glad to recommend him. He will make you a good man. I just fired him a few days ago." The bank president exclaimed, "I don't understand. Why would you recommend a man whom you most recently dismissed from your service?" The store manager explained the circumstances under which the boy was released and remarked, "I know he will make a good man for your bank because if he won't steal from the Lord's time, he won't steal your money."

How much of the Lord's time have you stolen? Are we not stealing from the Lord when we miss the services of the church for any reason we can help? Are we not guilty of this when we stay at home to entertain our relatives, go to ballgames, attend the movies, or just stay at home because we are tired?

—Holmes Read Bulletin

Put yourselves to the test and judge yourselves . . . (I Cor. 13:5) Keep what is good, and avoid every kind of evil. (I Thess. 5:22). "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him." (Luke 17:3). Speaking the TRUTH in LOVE, we are to grow in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.

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