

THE MIRACULOUS INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

DAVID LUFF – PART ONE

The reality of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the inner being of a regenerated person is the essence of Christian life. Jesus testified of it in John 14:16-17, *"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and **will be in you**"* (NKJV). And again in verse 20, *"At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and **I in you**"* (NKJV). The apostle Peter testified of it in his second epistle, *"as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these **you may be partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust"* (2 Peter 1:3-4, NKJV). The apostle Paul testified of it in his epistle to the Church at Colosse, *"To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**"* (Colossians 1:27, NKJV).

"Watchman Nee, the great Chinese Christian teacher was adamant about the importance of living what he simply called the 'normal Christian life.' Missionary to China, Hudson Taylor's term was the 'exchanged life' wherein the believer's life of defeat is exchanged for the victorious life of Christ. Others have referred to it as the 'Christ-life.' Hannah Whitehall Smith referred to it as 'the Christian's secret of a happy life'" Harrison, N. (1998). *His Victorious Indwelling* (p. 8). Zondervan.

As we ponder the wonder of what Paul calls "this mystery," words fail us, however, his passage in Ephesians, Chapter 3, verses 14-19 summarizes it well, *"For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with **might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith**; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of*

*Christ which passes knowledge; **that you may be filled with all the fullness of God***" (NKJV).

One of the basic tenets of this present move of the Spirit, is the criticality of being led by the Spirit or saying it in another way, living and walking in the Spirit. For us, "*upon whom the ends of the ages have come*" (1 Corinthians 10:11, NKJV), this mystery of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit has now been revealed in His holy Word. However, we can now look back to the beginning of creation and see that God had this in His mind all along. When God created man, he breathed into him the breath of life and man became a living soul. His breath gave him human life or natural life but not that eternal life which was the essence of Himself. However, He placed man in the Garden of Eden in the midst of which He had placed two special trees, the tree of knowledge and the tree of life. God never intended that man would live his life independently of Him. He didn't design him to do so. God wanted to lead Adam and Eve in their lives. He gave them only one requirement for their lives in the garden and that was to not partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He did not demand that they never be late for their cool-of-the-evening meetings. He did not threaten punishment if they were late feeding the animals. He just said for them not to eat the fruit of that one tree. However, the tree of life was also in a prominent place in the garden. I believe that tree was Christ and the fruit of that tree was the unending, eternal life that the Godhead shared. "*Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and **live forever**'*" (Genesis 3:22, NKJV).

The problem for Adam and Eve became the problem for all mankind, even to this day. The voices of self-reliance are many and deceptive. They began in the garden as the serpent told Eve she did not need God because she could be like God, or, in other words, she could be her own god. "*Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it (tree of knowledge) your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God**, knowing good and evil'*" (Genesis 3:4-5, NKJV). And so, sin entered the world. One way of thinking about sin is self-reliance, independence of the need for God, and an anti-God way of living.

Even in God's giving of the law to Israel through the mediator, Moses, it was given in preparation for the coming of Christ, the true Mediator of the new covenant between God and man, the Seed promised to Abraham. "*Why, then, was the law given? It was given alongside the promise **to show people their sins**. But*

the law was designed to last only until the coming of the child who was promised. God gave his law through angels to Moses, who was the mediator between God and the people" (Galatians 3:19, NLT). God knew that Israel would never be able to keep the law. That's why He instituted the practice of animal sacrifices which also pointed ahead to the sacrifice of Jesus which would bring an end to that practice. "*Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, **for by the law is the knowledge of sin***" (Romans 3:19-20, NKJV).

About 1500 years after the law was given, Jesus, the Seed of promise, came to the earth. "*Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons*" (Galatians 4:3-5, NKJV). The things that Jesus has accomplished for us through His life on earth, His death on the cross, His resurrection from the dead, and His return to the Father have made it possible for us to, as it were, enter the garden again and have another opportunity to partake of the Tree of Life. "*...As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, **that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*" (2 Peter 1:3-4, NKJV).

In His life on earth, Jesus showed us who the Father is and what He is like. "*Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father''*" (John 14:9, NKJV). "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*" (John 1:1, NKJV). In His death on the cross and the shedding of His pure, precious, and sinless blood, He redeemed us from our sins (plural). "*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him*" (Romans 5:8-9, NKJV). When we first came to Christ for the forgiveness of sins, we received our justification and our judicial righteous standing before God based on the work of Christ on our behalf. However, the wonderful, matchless grace of Jesus accomplished so much more for us. In the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, because He has life again, we

too may have life, His life within us. *“For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life”* (Romans 5:10, NKJV).

I feel it is critically important that we explore at some depth what Christ has accomplished and is in the very process of accomplishing for us and in us as a result of His resurrection and ascension to heaven and return to the Father. Romans 5:10 says that having been reconciled to Christ through His death, Paul uses the words “much more” to say “we shall be saved by His life.” You see, we were saved from the penalty for our “sins” through the work of Christ on the cross, but much more we will be saved from the rule of the “sin nature” by His life. The efficacy of the grace and mercy of Jesus is sufficient for the salvation of the whole man, spirit, soul, and body.

Here, we must say a word about the absolute importance of the principle of “identification.” After we come to Christ, God sees us in a totally different way than He did before. He sees us as identified with Christ in both His death and His resurrection. The realization of this may take some time for us to fully grasp, but it is an irrefutable fact in God’s mind. The Apostle Paul grasped it and recorded it in Romans 6:3-6, NKJV, *“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.”* This truth of being identified with Christ continues in the Scripture in the expression, “in Christ.” *“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus”* (Ephesians 2:4-6, NKJV). *“But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption”* (1 Corinthians 1:30, NKJV).

In order for God to complete His work in us, we must know that our faith in Christ for salvation has given us a secure position “in Christ.” God loves us with as much everlasting love on the worst day of our lives as He does on the best. *“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor*

height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39, NKJV). Oh, the wonderful, matchless grace of Jesus!

When Jesus returned to heaven and took His place at the right hand of the Father, He sent the Holy Spirit to take His place not only among us but also within our very hearts. *“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you”* (John 14:16-17, NKJV). Christ is **in believers by His Spirit**, and **believers are in Christ by faith in the all-sufficient work of Christ**.

What is the primary work of the Holy Spirit? Jesus told us in John 16:12-14, NKJV, *“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”* There is no doubt that God’s purpose is that we be conformed to the image of His Son. *“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren”* (Romans 8:29, NKJV). It is also apparent that this is accomplished as we live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit and are led by the Spirit. *“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”* (Galatians 5:25, NKJV). *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God”* (Romans 8:14, NKJV).

What does it truly mean to live, walk, and be led by the Holy Spirit? This may seem, to many, to be a moot question. However, if we are not careful we can, through misunderstanding, miss some very important truths. In order to grasp the truth of how to be conformed to the image of Christ, we must again come to an even more clear understanding of the wonderful, matchless grace of Jesus. With this in mind, let us walk carefully through the process, for it is indeed a process. Our initial salvation is immediate upon our acceptance of Christ as our Savior. Our identification with Christ in His death and resurrection is also immediate. Our position “in Christ” is immediate. However, our conformance to the image of Christ is a life-long process and not for the faint of heart.

The process of our being conformed to the image of Christ begins with our knowledge and acceptance of the fact that we are no longer under any condemnation,

and that is because we are “in Christ.” *“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”* Condemnation comes as the direct result of sin. After conversion, God’s saved believers, those who are **in Christ** and **in whom Christ dwells by His Spirit**, still have the sin nature in them because their sanctification is not yet complete. However, none of the residue of the sin nature in them and the sins that occasionally result from it, negates their justification before God. Christ has procured the pardon of all of it by His blood, He has abolished all by His sacrifice, He justifies us from all of it by His righteousness, and saves us from all our sins, past, present, and future as we confess our sins and repent of them. *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:8-9, NKJV).* The knowledge of this security that the believer now has in Christ is critical to his/her progress in growing in the Spirit. Without this security, the enemy can harass the believer with the remembrance of his falterings and bring about disabling discouragement in his walk. However, the saved believer now has a new Guide and no longer has to live under the daily direction of the carnal nature.

The next pitfall that many new believers, and old as well, fall into, is believing that after receiving salvation and justification by faith in the grace of God, they must now fulfill the righteous requirements of the law by their own will-power. This can happen very subtly. We can conclude that the leading of the Holy Spirit amounts to the Holy Spirit pointing out what God requires and it is now up to us, the regenerated man or woman, to obey it.

This then becomes a walk under law and not under grace. Even though our efforts may be well-meaning, sooner or later we become discouraged due to our frequent failures to overcome the lusts of the fleshly nature. Our fruitless efforts degenerate into unproductive labor, and we become heavy laden. Paul describes his own experience in trying to keep the righteous requirements of the law in this way. *“For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members (Romans 7:22-23, NKJV).* However, Paul found the answer to his failure problem. *“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:2, NKJV).* What is this law of sin and death that Paul speaks of? It is a law that he found in his members which referred to the part of him that carried out the sinful actions motivated by his sinful nature. It was a law that actually invigorated sinful desires in his sinful nature. Paul found a new law that superseded the law of sin and death. It was the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Paul is telling us that because of our conversion, Jesus has come to live in us by His Holy Spirit. We now have the source of life Himself implanted into our innermost being. And it is by the power of this endless life that we can overcome the “law of sin in our members.” *“For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3, NKJV).”* ✚

To be continued in the May 2023 issue.

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