

# THE MIRACULOUS INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

DAVID LUFF – PART TWO

*Continued from the April 2023 issue.*

What does the term "law" mean to us today? It is not just the Mosaic Law given to Moses by God on Mt. Sinai. To summarize, it includes all behavior consistent with the character of God and condemns all behavior that is inconsistent with the character of God. It can also include extra demands of conduct that we place upon ourselves or that others may place on us. Just like the law of Moses, these things are good and righteous. Paul said in Romans 7:12, "Therefore the law is holy and the commandment holy, and just and good" (NKJV), and again, in Romans 7:22, "For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man" (NKJV). However, even as saved believers with the best of intentions, trying to conform to these righteous expectations is living under the law, not under the grace and power of Christ. The Apostle even goes so far as to say that

the law invigorates sinful tendencies, "But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead" (Romans 7:8, NKJV). In Romans 8:3, Paul says that the "law is weak through the flesh." In other words, the law is good in itself, but the only vehicle or resource the natural man has to work through in overcoming the sinful nature is the strength of the sinful nature itself. The only powers it can call upon are those which are already in rebellion to the Spirit. The reason that the law was powerless to bring about righteousness is because it was totally hindered by the hold that sin had on the flesh (the old Adamic nature). The death of Christ broke that hold. It was made to cease in us as believers through the **participation of the believer in the death of Christ**. "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death" (Romans 6:3, NKJV)?

*"That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Romans 8:4, NKJV). I think this verse has been misinterpreted by many. They think that the righteousness spoken of here is again the righteousness that is imputed to us when we were justified by faith in Christ. But I think this is not totally accurate. Paul is saying that if we are led by the Spirit, Christ will, little by little, impart His righteousness into our very lives. In other words, by the power of the Spirit, we can actually become righteous.*

Let me insert at this point an important clarification. We have all heard some Christians say when confronted about some obvious non-Christian behavior that they are not under the law but under grace. This is a perversion of the truth. Those people have forgotten that the law is holy, just and good and the importance of the law in our lives as stated in Galatians 3:19 and 24, *"What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith"* (NKJV). No law has the power to change us. However, it serves to show us what sin is and then directs us to the One Who can save us.

So what does it really mean to walk after the Spirit? What does the word "walk" mean in the Bible? It means our daily life, moment-by-moment, even hour-by-hour. The word "flesh" in the Bible refers to the old human nature we inherited from Adam. The Scripture reinforces this principle of walking or living by the Spirit over and over. *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith'"* (Romans 1:16-18, NKJV). *"For we walk by faith, not by sight"* (2 Corinthians 5:7, NKJV). *"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh"* (Galatians 5:16, NKJV). *"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit"* (Galatians 5:25, NKJV).

The fact that Paul says, if we walk by the Spirit we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Galatians 5:16, NKJV), implies that it is possible for a Christian to walk by the influence of the old Adamic nature. Paul reminds

us in Romans 6:14, *"For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace"* (NKJV). The usurper (enemy) is no longer on the throne, but he still hangs around carrying out guerilla warfare, using outside stimuli to appeal to the residue of the sinful nature that still has not been fully eradicated and still resides in us. Our sanctification is a process, so we are not totally immune to temptation. Notice that the scripture says that if we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. It does not say that we will not feel the lust of the flesh.

So now we come to the main point of this article. The Apostle Paul uncovered the mystery which is this *"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). It is this truth that the apostle held to, and preached doggedly, during his entire ministry. He resisted the Judaizers in Antioch who taught that circumcision was required in addition to belief in Christ. He challenged Peter to his face regarding his hypocrisy over his change in behavior when he was with the Jews versus the Gentle believers over this principle. He chastised the Galatian believers over it as recorded in Galatians 3:1-3, *"O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed [b]among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh"* (NKJV)? *"Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith (Galatians 3:5, NKJV)?"*

Trying to attain unto righteousness by well-meaning self-determination is to fall into the same trap that Eve did when tempted by the Serpent deceiving her to believe that she could be good without God's help. "It is like a discrowned king who tries to conquer his rebellious subjects using the only resources which are at his disposal which are the rebellious forces themselves. The debate between Paul and his opponents comes down to this; if a field is covered with filth, is it better to set to work on it with wheelbarrows and shovels or to turn a river on it which will bear away all the foulness" (Alexander MacLaren Expositions)?

Many a Christian has succumbed to desperation and discouragement unwittingly being deceived by the enemy of their souls tempting them to believe that they can overcome the lusts of the flesh by making endless determinations, making lists, and counting the days since their last failure, only to find that failure comes and discouragement and the guilt and shame of failure sends them into despair. Eventually, many give up and come to the conclusion that the Christian life is, in theory good, but practically unobtainable.

Saints of God, let that not be our testimony. God never intended for us, as created, “to be good.” He intends to be good for us. As I have pondered this glorious truth in my own life, I tried to imagine the joy that the Apostle felt when the mystery hidden for ages, finally was revealed to him. *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me”* (Galatians 2:20, NKJV). It is not a reformed life that God is after; it is an exchanged life, our old sinful life for His pure and sinless life. I would like to share this quote with you from the article, “Sin Rebuked from Within” from Building God’s House by Bro. Allen Hinchliff, “I have often thought it would be a good thing if after the law has brought us to Christ, we could erase it from our minds so that we could no longer lean upon it. We would then have to lean upon the leadership of the Spirit. What a far more glorious thing to be led by the Spirit of God than to have to be told by a law what we should or should not do.” I believe this is exactly what God had in mind when He placed the Tree of Life in the midst of the garden. He wanted man to partake of eternal life, the life of Christ, and become dependent upon Christ to guide their lives through all eternity.

It is not by focusing on our sinful behavior that we will gain victory over it. Romans 7:5-6 says, *“While we were ‘in the flesh’ the Law stimulated our sinful passions and so worked in our nature that we became productive—for death! But now that we stand clear of the Law, the claims which existed are dissolved by our ‘death’, and we are free to serve God not in the old obedience to the letter of the Law, but in a new way, in the spirit”* (PHILLIPS).

I quote again from the article by Bro. Allen Hinchliff, “As Paul says, here, the law stimulates our sinful

passions. I don’t know why it is, but the more you try to bring your sinful nature under the law, the stronger your sinful nature becomes. A law will bring it to life, and things you never had trouble with before cause you great trouble when brought to your attention by the law. Human nature has a strong desire for that which is forbidden.” Therefore, put away the wheelbarrows and shovels and let the rivers of the holy Spirit flood your soul and wash away the filth through the power of an endless life.

Much of what I have been trying to say is stated in the following scripture, *“Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech—unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. **But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord”*** (2 Corinthians 3:12-19, NKJV). As we behold the Lord Christ, we are transformed little by little, from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord. How He does it, I do not know or understand, but I believe it through faith in Him, and it will change one’s life.

Jesus said, *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light”* (Matthew 11:28-30, NKJV). Think about these words of Jesus in the context of what we have been talking about. If you are the Christian who has been laboring under the heavy burden of trying with all your heart, soul, and body to fulfill the good, just, and righteous requirements of the law with failure after failure, Jesus says “Come unto Me. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me.” Jesus invites us to yoke ourselves, link up with, clasp hands with, embrace, behold Him, walk your daily walk with faith in Him. Set your mind on Him, not on your failures. He says he is meek and gentle. He will not scold you or remind you of your failures. Instead,

He will give rest from your work of trying to please God through willpower.

It has been God's plan from the very beginning that the Lord Jesus would be man's very life, and He made it possible, through faith, for that Life to indwell us by the Holy Spirit who will reproduce Christ in us. I will close with a few practical things we can do to experience victory over the old nature:

1. It begins exclusively with faith in and surrender to the power of the indwelling presence of the Lord Jesus Christ by His Holy Spirit. *"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith"* (1 John 5:4, NKJV). We must nourish and cultivate this new life in us, all the while remembering that we are no longer under condemnation. We are justified forever before God. Our sins and failures past, present, and future are forgiven through repentance. No one can overcome sin while under condemnation.
2. Know that the new life within us speaks to us through the Word of God. We must flood our minds with this Word which is the sword of the Spirit. *"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind"* (Romans 12:2). Replace your self-determination to avoid past failures and instead bear the fruit of righteousness, with the exercise of peaceful communion with Christ, pressing into Him, and especially close to Him when temptation comes.
3. Maintain constant communion with our inward guide. It must be intimate, honest, and continual. *"But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother"* (Proverbs 18:24b, NKJV). This is what it means to remain in Christ (ref. John 15). The Holy Spirit will warn us of spiritual danger in plenty of time for us to avoid it. It is much easier to keep the enemy out than it is to expel him after he has gotten in. Refuse any and everything that would tend to excite or invigorate the old nature. The Holy Spirit will let you know when the old nature is being excited and what is doing it. Quickly refuse it. This is the best way to "mortify the deeds of the body."
4. Have faith that if nourished and cared for, the new, divine life implanted in your soul will gradually increase and your old nature will gradually decrease. The divine Person who indwells you will drive out the evils from your heart and write His laws on your heart. ✝

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