

SEEING GOD'S VISION

AND YIELDING IN SUBMISSION

BOB STENSON

God is leading us by the Spirit. We're learning to hear His voice, see His vision, and yield in submission.

In a sense, we're on a long journey. We're on the way, and this way is Jesus Christ. We could compare our progress on this way to a turning wheel. A single turn of the wheel seems insignificant. However, it's not insignificant since each turn of the wheel brings us closer to our goal of the kingdom.

Everything begins with God leading. He leads, teaches, and corrects us in every part of our lives. We can choose to listen or fail to respond to Him. He leads through Scripture and through every means mentioned in Scripture. He speaks to us directly through a still small voice, word of knowledge, word of wisdom, dream, or vision. He leads through every member as we minister one to another, and He leads through those He sets in offices of authority in the church (1 Corinthians 12:2-3).

When God speaks, we hear, but He also gives a vision of reality. In each moment, God reveals Himself as if we're looking into a

mirror (James 1:23-25). We look into this perfect law of liberty, and since this is a spiritual mirror, we don't see the natural. Each of us has a fleshly nature, but we don't see this flesh in ourselves or in our brothers and sisters. We only see Christ. He shows us who we are in Christ, how we fit into the body of Christ, what is and isn't part of the body of Christ, and what He wants us to do right now. Our part is to hear and yield our wills to Him.

"Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared (phaneroo), as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears (phaneroo), we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is" (1 John 3:2, NASB). The Greek word "phaneroo" means "becomes visible," and Christ is becoming visible to us. We see Him as we discern the body of Christ. Some theologies put this Scripture off to the future, but it's for us right now. When He becomes visible, we shall be like Him for we see Him as He is. "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the glory of the Lord, are being transformed (transfigured) into His image with intensifying glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18, BSB).

When we discern the body of Christ, we see Christ in each other. We see gifts of the Spirit, ministries, offices, and orders. When we recognize and submit to the authority of gifts, ministries, offices, and orders, we recognize and submit to Christ. We carry the authority of the body everywhere as a member of this body. The books, “The Nine Gifts of the Spirit,” “Government,” and “The Church” cover many details of how this works. And as we discern this body, submitting to the authority of this body, the Holy Spirit transforms us.

God made Jesus Christ our wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30). In this article, we’re going to look into righteousness, holiness, and redemption since the original language suggests wisdom includes these three.

Righteousness is Jesus Christ manifesting Himself in us as His righteousness springs forth by grace through faith (Isaiah 61:11). If we listen to God in all the ways He speaks to us, God’s faith comes. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word (rhema) of God (Romans 10:17). The Greek word, “rhema,” translated “word,” means “utterance.” Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the utterance of God. That means when God leads if we have ears to hear, faith comes. This faith isn’t pretending. Faith is substance (reality as opposed to concept), and evidence (absolutely certain proof) (Hebrews 11:1). We don’t manufacture this faith. We can’t. Jesus Christ begins and completes our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

Faith gives us access into God’s grace (Romans 5:2). And God’s grace does God’s works of righteousness through us (1 Corinthians 15:10). When we try to do our own works, we become self-righteous and frustrate the grace of God (Galatians 2:21). But when God works through us, we do His righteousness and fulfill the entire law. We can only do righteousness by grace, and we can only access grace through faith. Whatever isn’t of faith is sin (Romans 14:23). This righteousness that grace does through us is God’s gift of righteousness (Romans 5:17). Our part is to yield the members of our bodies to His righteousness (Romans 6:13).

Righteousness leads to holiness (Romans 6:19). Holiness is purification, but what is God purifying? He is purifying us through Christ in us (1 Peter 3:15).

Redemption refers to setting a slave free. God is setting us free from our carnal, fleshly natures.

When we yield to the Holy Spirit in righteousness, the Holy Spirit changes us in two ways. He builds up Christ in us, and He removes part of our fleshly nature. Christ in us is our holiness, the only holiness we’ll ever have. However, the Holy Spirit also purifies us. When we obey the Holy Spirit and deny our fleshly natures, our fleshly natures die as His fire purifies and sets us free. We’re redeemed as a slave set free. The Holy Spirit builds up Christ in us as our flesh dies.

Righteousness is God working through us. Holiness is Christ formed in us and the fleshly nature gone.

God leads and we yield to His leading, which transfigures us and

produces holiness. Each time we yield to God it’s like one turn of the wheel on our journey. Each moment, God has a leading for our lives, and we either listen and obey or we resist Him.

How does this look? You may be driving when an angry man cuts you off in traffic. Your flesh reacts automatically to match his anger, but the Holy Spirit speaks peace. You listen to the Spirit and feel a calm return to your body. On Sunday, in the church meeting, the Holy Spirit urges you to let go and enter into the song, but your mind is churning. Finally, you focus on the Holy Spirit, ignore your own mind, close your eyes, and sing fully yielded to the Spirit. Another time, after a terrible argument, the Holy Spirit speaks in a still small voice,


“Apologize.” Your flesh justifies every word you said, but you listen to the Holy Spirit and apologize. Then the peace of God lets you know you’re in God’s will. On a busy day, you think you don’t have time to read the Bible as a family, but the Holy Spirit speaks quietly, encouraging you, and you listen and obey. Another time you have to make a major decision but you don’t see a clear answer, so you meet with the local elders to discuss the matter. One says this and another says that as you supply your insight. Then the answer becomes clear to everyone by the Holy Spirit. God is practical. He’s concerned with every part of our lives.

However, we can understand this concept and still fail to move forward. *“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone”* (James 2:17 KJV). However, we must submit to the point of obedience. The Holy Spirit won’t force this maturity on us, but He matures us as we yield to the Holy Spirit in obedience. We may say, “I’ll just yield to the Holy Spirit. I don’t need to yield to my elders.” But 1 John 4:20, KJV says, *“for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”* We must yield our spirits, minds, and bodies since His love expresses itself in obedience and respect (John 14:21).

This proverbial wheel can turn backwards if we fail to listen to God’s direction. We then see a vision out of our own hearts and pretend our own vision is true. It opens the door for us to do works of the flesh. These works might even look good, but they’re just self-righteousness. We then become like a man who looked at his natural face in a mirror and immediately forgot what he saw. He forgot who he was in Christ and how he fits into the body of Christ. He didn’t discern the body of Christ, and he didn’t allow God to do His righteousness through him.

“But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.” (James 1:23, NIV) If we do this, we turn the wheel in the right direction. We stay on the way, directed by Christ. The Holy Spirit builds the spiritual man (Christ) and demolishes the carnal man. We’re more mature in Christ, better able to tell the difference between good (God) and evil (the fallen human mind) (Hebrews 5:14).

“Since we live by the Spirit, let us walk in step with the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25, BSB). ✚



BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

SAJITH MATTHEWS

The Lord has laid on my heart a very important topic that I believe is critical to the body of Christ, which is of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We are called not just to be saints who are saved and baptized in water but also to be baptized of the Spirit. There are so many blessings that come from the Spirit and His infilling. I would like to highlight a few.

When Revelation Becomes Indwelling Truth

In Acts 1:8, Jesus said to tarry “until you receive power from on high.” Until then, they were just disciples who had been with Jesus and had heard His teachings, but upon receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they became apostles empowered by God to go forth with the gospel of the kingdom. There are so many things that God has revealed to us over the years and there is a great desire for us to walk in all of them. However, if we do not have the power of the Holy Spirit, revelation remains as just teachings, rather than actualized truths that have become part of us.

On the day of Pentecost, about 3000 people were catapulted into the kingdom by the power that fell in the upper room and descended upon the disciples as cloven tongues of fire. Just in a moment, they were transformed and the revelation became a realized truth. Today the church must seek God for a fresh fire; a fresh anointing from above. If we are to have these truths of the kingdom of God to come alive, we must have an outpouring of the Spirit of God into our lives. *“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no heart has imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed it to us by the Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God”* (1 Corinthians 2:10, NIV).

The Empowerment of the Gifts of the Spirit

Many of us have gifts that have been imparted to us by the laying on of hands. However, Paul instructs Timothy to *“fan into flames the gifts that have been imparted to you by the laying on of hands”* (2 Timothy 1:6). He is clearly speaking here about the fire of the Holy Spirit that activates the gifts that have been given to us by God. Many of us have gifts of the Spirit that are of much need to the church. However, if there is no anointing and no fire they remain dormant gifts. The fresh fire from the Holy Spirit takes these gifts from latency into an active, living ministry that will shape the course of our lives.

The word of God clearly teaches us to *“quench not the Spirit”* (1 Thessalonians 5:19). What that implies is that the fire that He has given to us must be continually fanned so that we are ever empowered to perform our ministry.

In Acts 19, we read of Paul speaking to the Ephesians and he explains to them that here was the baptism of repentance that was preached by John the Baptist. This baptism would give way to the message of Jesus, upon whom they must believe and be baptized. But it did not end there. “When he laid hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied” (verse 6). We follow the one who would baptize us in the “Holy Ghost and fire.” Dear saints of God, if we have not received this baptism of the Holy Spirit, let us earnestly seek Him until we have received His Spirit in its completeness, even unto the overflowing.

If as a church, we are desiring to come alive into a fresh surge in our ministry collectively, let us seek Him for a fresh baptism and a fresh anointing. Brothers and sisters, we need a passion to do the work of

God. That is not just speaking of emotions, which are so temporary, but a passion which comes by the Spirit of God - a passion that is undying. It is a passion that leads us into doing things that we wouldn't do in the natural. It is a passion that infuses us with courage and boldness - a much-needed platform to minister effectively in the body of Christ.

Manifestations Under the Anointing

There are visible manifestations of the infilling of the Holy Spirit. The best example is found in the book of Acts. In almost every instance, the members of the body of Christ who were filled with the Spirit were found to prophesy and to speak in tongues. I would say it is not so much of the phenomenon of tongues or prophecy that we should seek as much as the power of Spirit that comes with infilling. Somehow from that overflowing Spirit, we can't help but speak in tongues and to prophesy.

It is not just these two gifts, but all the other gifts that are in us also seem to come flowing out with a rich anointing. God is calling us to have a rich anointing of the Holy Spirit. That which we do under the anointing has monumentally more power than what we would do in the natural. We need to walk in the anointing at all times. It is this anointing oil that David wrote about in the Psalms that flows down from the head and down to Aaron's beard (Psalms 133:2). The anointing of our ministry gives us a special authority that we wouldn't have otherwise. This was the anointing that Peter had when he boldly spoke before the people assembled on the day of Pentecost. It was this anointing that David had when he boldly went down to the valley of Elah to face Goliath. The examples of people doing extraordinary things for God under the anointing are innumerable.

The Growth of an Individual and of the Church

The power of the Holy Spirit also helps us in growing. It enables us to grow both individually and corporately. When the Spirit fell upon the church on the day of Pentecost, there was a surge of power that it received, and God *“added to their number daily”* (Acts 5:14). When the Spirit's power is within us, we are able to minister the message of salvation unashamedly and speak with a clear conviction that draws unbelievers to Christ. On an individual basis, it is the seed of the Spirit that grows within us and takes over our entire being and continues to bear fruit. It is the yeast that transforms the entire dough (Matthew 13:33). When the Spirit is alive, there is growth both unto maturity as a person and as a many-membered body.

The Freedom to Walk Away from Sin

The empowerment of the Holy Spirit also keeps us from settling into the trappings that come in the flesh. We need power to be able to choose that which the Spirit wants us to do and turn away from what the flesh may want us to do. If we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). How are we to walk in the Spirit, except we be filled with the Spirit and overflowing with the power that comes from Him. Hallelujah! Let us not grow cold with time, but instead, let us begin to seek the Lord in the Spirit and begin to fan the flames that He has placed within us. God has an enormous plan that He is seeking to fulfill through this body of Christ, but we need power to do it. He wants us to seek Him for this power. He wants us to seek His heart. Every manner of inertia and complacency is broken up the moment the power of the Spirit infuses our being. We seem to be charged to do what our hearts desire to do for the Lord. He is with us and He will surge us forward from glory unto glory by His Spirit. May God richly bless you. ✝

CHILDREN'S CORNER

GRACE DALE

Prayer

What is prayer? It is just talking to God. Tell Him you love Him. Thank Him for the things He has done for you, things like giving you your food (daily bread), watching over you and keeping you safe, healing you when you are sick, giving you good friends and many other things you want to mention in your prayers. Sometimes you may ask Him for special needs that you have or the needs of those you know.

Read Daniel 6:6-28. Daniel was a very capable man. He did his work well. He believed in God and prayed to God three times a day. The other presidents and governors were jealous of Daniel because the king honored him. So they proposed a law to King Darius. They bragged the King up. They told him how good he was and that a law should be passed stating that everyone should pray through King Darius and honor him first or be thrown into a den of lions. But, did this bother Daniel? No way! He loved God and he went three times a day as usual to the open window and prayed to God. He praised Him, gave thanks, and asked favors of His God. The governors immediately ran to the King. "Daniel isn't obeying the law," they tattled. "He must be thrown into the lions' den."

The King was angry with himself. He wanted to spare Daniel, but he had made the law. So Daniel was arrested.

"May your God that you worship, daily, deliver you." And they threw him in the den.

The next morning the King ran to the den and called out, "O Daniel was your God able to deliver you?"

"O your Majesty, My God answered my prayer and sent an angel and closed the mouths of the lions. I am innocent before God, nor have I done wrong against you."

Daniel and the King rejoiced and praised and thanked God for answered prayer.

In Proverbs 15:8, it tells us that, "*God delights in the prayers of His people.*"

In Matthew 6: 9-13, God gave us the "Lord's Prayer" as an example of how to pray. Jesus prayed to His Father as well. Read Matthew 26:36-41. He prayed that God would spare Him from death, but only if it was God's will, not His own. This is another good example for us.

May we be faithful and pray daily as Daniel did. May we pray that the Holy Spirit will guide and direct us to walk in His ways. Ephesians 6:18 says, "*Pray all the time.*"

Daniel prayed three times a day, worshiping, praising and thanking God. God honored his prayers and, when he was thrown into the lion's den, God sent an angel to close the lions' mouths. Daniel prayed again and thanked God for answered prayers.

"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is acceptable to him" (Proverbs 15:8, ESV). ✚

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