

Introduction

—

His Person

—

His Works

—

His Indwelling

3

His Baptizing

—

His Sealing

—

His Filling

—

His Gifting

—

His Helping

—

The Holy Spirit—Our Helper

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, September 11, 2011

“That He May Abide With You Forever”

The Spirit of God graciously regenerates, calls, baptizes and seals the believer. But after doing all this, He'll never then abandon the believer to his or her own care. He makes the believer His dwelling-place--not just for a time, but for eternity!

We've been considering a very wonderful subject--the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. So far, we've considered the blessedness of His indwelling ministry, and the persons in whom He graciously indwells. This morning, we take up the subject of the permanency of His indwelling.

This is an extremely important subject. Dr. Rene Pache wrote, “Many Christians are prepared to believe that the Spirit was given them and came to dwell in their hearts at the time of conversion; but they also believe that after certain falls the Spirit withdrew and abandoned them. Is this the teaching of Scripture?”¹ The assurance of our salvation for eternity, and the progress of our personal growth in Christ in the present, depends on the answer to that question.

I. THE LORD JESUS PROMISED THAT THE SPIRIT'S INDWELLING OF HIS REDEEMED FOLLOWERS WOULD BE PERMANENT.

- A. In teaching His disciples about the ministry of the Holy Spirit, He told them, “If you love Me, keep My commandments. 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. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:15-18).² Two positive statements in this passage assure us that the Spirit will never cease to indwell the genuine believer: (1) the Lord's affirmation that the purpose of the giving of the Spirit is that He may abide in His followers “forever”; and (2) the Lord's promise that He Himself will never leave His followers as “orphans”.
- B. Another way that Jesus has promised us the permanency of the Holy Spirit's indwelling is by how He described our eternal relationship with the other members of the Trinity. In His great “high priestly prayer” in John 17, He prayed not only for His apostles, but also for us; and said, “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me” (John 17:21-23). Because of the inseparable unity of love that exists between all three members of the Trinity, the deep and glorious unity we will enjoy with the Father and the Son also ensures to us the eternal indwelling of the Spirit. Thus, as Paul could say, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen” (2 Corinthians 13:14).
- C. A third way that Jesus has assured us of the Spirit's permanence is through His conversation with the woman at the well; and His presentation of the Spirit as “living water”. He held a cup of water from the well and said, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the

water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:13-14). To “never thirst” again after drinking of the Spirit, and to have the Spirit become in us “a fountain of living water springing up into everlasting life” speaks wonderfully of the permanent satisfaction we will enjoy because of His indwelling.

II. THE PASSAGES THAT APPEAR TO SUGGEST A TEMPORARY INDWELLING DO NOT NEGATE THE LORD’S PROMISE.

- A. There are Old Testament passages that speak of the Holy Spirit departing from some. In 1 Samuel 16:14, for example, we’re told, “But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him.” King David, while confessing his sin, prayed, “Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me” (Psalm 51:11).
- B. But the Lord’s promises highlight the differences between the Spirit’s pre-Pentecost ministry and His post-Pentecost ministry. Before Pentecost, Jesus told the disciples that the Spirit “dwells with you”--a pre-Pentecost relationship; “and will be in you”--a post-Pentecost relationship. It would be a false assumption to believe that the Holy Spirit works in the same way in every dispensation.³ As Dr. Charles Ryrie wrote, “Therefore, even if the Spirit was removed from the lives of some people before Pentecost, the fact that this happened before Pentecost does not show that such experience necessarily carry over into the post-Pentecost era. And we know for certain that they do not.”⁴ We know this because of the promises of our Lord.

* * * * *

The permanence of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling is a precious doctrine. Just think of Paul’s words in Romans 8:15-17 in the light of it! “For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”

Throughout eternity, the Spirit of adoption will indwell us--constantly assuring us of our relationship with the Father! How wonderful that He even does so now!

¹Rene Pache, J.D. Emerson, trans., *The Person and Work of The Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1954), p. 101

²All Scripture readings are taken from the Holy Bible, New King James Version; copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

³John F. Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1969), p. 152.

⁴Charles C. Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997), p. 100.