

Bethany Bible Church; AM Bible Study; January 17, 2018  
The Holy Spirit—Our Helper; Lesson 13; His Indwelling

# 'THAT HE MAY ABIDE WITH YOU FOREVER'

Theme: The Holy Spirit will never abandon the believer, but will abide in the believer for all eternity.

We've been considering a very wonderful subject—the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Two lessons ago, we considered the blessedness of His indwelling ministry; and in our last lesson, we considered the persons in whom He graciously indwells. And now, in this lesson, we take up the subject of the permanency of His indwelling.

This is an extremely important theological truth to grasp and to allow to sink into our hearts. A failure to understand the permanency and eternity of His indwelling so can result in serious problems and struggles in the Christian life. Dr. Rene Pache has asked, "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?"<sup>1</sup> The assurance of our salvation for eternity, and the progress of our personal growth in Christ in the present, depends on the correct answer to that question. And praise God!—the answer is no! The Bible plainly teaches us that the Holy Spirit graciously regenerates, calls, baptizes and seals the believer—all of which are wonderful truths; and after doing all this for us, He will never then abandon that believer to his or her own care. Rather, He makes the believer His dwelling-place—not just for a time, but for eternity!

We have this on the greatest possible authority ...

## **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, our Lord 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).<sup>2</sup>*

We can see two positive statements in this passage from our Lord that assure us that the Spirit will never cease to indwell the genuine believer. First, we see the Lord's affirmation that the purpose of the giving of the Spirit is "that" He may abide in His followers "forever". And second, we see the Lord's promise that He Himself will not 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. He told the Father,

*“I do not pray for these alone [that is, the apostles], 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 at the end of his second letter to the Corinthians, “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). If the grace of Jesus to us is eternal, and the love of the Father for us is also eternal, then the communion of the Holy Spirit that binds us to the grace of Jesus and the love of the Father must also be eternal.

- 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 to her of the Spirit as “living water”. He held the cup of water from the well that she had given Him 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” 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 Him. And this permanent satisfaction requires a permanent indwelling.

Now; to truly solidify this in our hearts, we need to go on further to affirm that ...

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

- A. There are some Old Testament passages that speak of the Holy Spirit departing from some people. 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.” Or consider King David. While confessing to God his terrible sin with Bathsheba and his murder of her husband, David prayed, “Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me” (Psalm 51:11). How then do we understand these passages in the light of our Lord's promise about the eternal indwelling of the Holy Spirit?
- B. We should remember when our Lord made the promises that we read a short while ago, those promises were made just before His sacrifice on the cross was completed, and before He ascended to the right hand of the Father. After He ascended to the right hand of the Father, He would then send the Holy Spirit for us; and as you remember from Acts 2, the Holy Spirit came from the Lord to His followers on the Day of Pentecost.

Our Lord's promises in the above passages, then, highlighted 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"—and that was describing a pre-Pentecost relationship. But then He goes on to say, "and will be in you"—and in saying this, He was describing a post-Pentecost relationship.

- C. It would be wrong to assume that the Holy Spirit works in exactly the same way toward people in every dispensation of God's redemptive history.<sup>3</sup> In fact, we would have to assume that the tremendous difference that Jesus made for us through His atoning sacrifice on the cross would also mean a tremendous difference in how the Holy Spirit relates to people afterward. He is, after all, the 'Holy' Spirit; and if people are now made completely holy in God's sight through faith in Christ in a permanent way, then this would mean that the Holy Spirit can now also reside in them permanently. As Dr. Charles Ryrie has written,

*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.<sup>4</sup>*

We know this for certain because of the promises of our Lord.

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The permanence of the Holy Spirit's indwelling is a very precious, comforting, encouraging, and motivating doctrine; and we should let it sink deeply into our hearts. What's more, it's necessary. It's essential to the assurance of our salvation and to our perseverance in the faith. Just think of Paul's words in Romans 8:15-17 in the light of it! He wrote,

*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" (Romans 8:15-17).*

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!

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

<sup>2</sup>All Scripture readings are taken from *The Holy Bible, New King James Version*; copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

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

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