

Showers of Blessing

by A.B. Simpson

The Holy Spirit is waiting to come upon the hardest, deadest, and most discouraging fields, bringing transformation, satisfaction, and cleansing, and leading souls to Christ, uniting them with the people of God, and giving them a covenanted life and higher spiritual blessing.

Scripture: Isaiah 44:3, John 7:37

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Revival"

Description

A.B. Simpson emphasizes the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in his sermon 'Showers of Blessing,' drawing from Isaiah 44:3. He illustrates how the Spirit is ready to pour out blessings on those who are spiritually thirsty and on communities that seem barren and hopeless. Simpson shares personal experiences of revival, highlighting the necessity of deep desire for spiritual fulfillment and the resulting fruit of individual conversions and a vibrant church community. He encourages believers to expect greater outpourings of the Spirit, especially as they seek a deeper relationship with God.

Transcript

"I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground." (Is. 44:3.)

The Holy Spirit is falling upon His people. An organized religious movement of great power is sweeping over Great Britain and centering at the present time in its metropolis. A still more remarkable spontaneous revival is rolling over the valleys of Wales, and already has brought tens of thousands to God and changed the face of society in scores of communities. In our own land, the Holy Spirit is working with great power in many places. Such tokens give blessed emphasis to the promise of our text and encourage us to expect yet greater things through the outpouring of the Spirit from on high. This text gives us a three-fold picture.

I. The field.

The prophet repeats himself in the familiar form of a Hebrew parallelism, and yet the verses are not exactly parallel when he speaks of "him that is thirsty" and the "dry ground."

1. "The dry ground." This means that the Holy Spirit is waiting to come, in answer to the prayers of God's people, upon the hardest, the deadest and the most discouraging fields. It reminds one of the soil of some tropical country after months of drought when the ground is baked like stone and great fissures sink deep into the soil and clouds of dust sweep over the land with every passing breeze, while the very air seems

like liquid fire and no green or living thing remains in forest or field until the monsoons pour down and "the desert blossoms as the rose."

Such is the transformation that the Holy Spirit brings to a wretched heathen community; to the besotted drunkard's home; to the heart that has been steeped in sin and hardened with years of daring wickedness, and to the church which has become like a cemetery in its cold formalism while God has been saying to it, "You have a name that you live and are dead." It is upon just such people and communities that the power of a great revival tells, and God is waiting to work these wonders of His grace and power in answer to our believing prayers.

2. "Him that is thirsty." This is the promise for the individual Christian. It describes that on which the coming of the Holy Spirit to the individual heart depends. In the natural world a vacuum always brings a current of air to fill, and in the spiritual realm it is just as true that a condition of conscious need never fails to bring supply of God's presence and Holy Spirit. The writer never can forget his visit to the Telegu mission in India and the extraordinary way in which this promise was fulfilled in the experience of one of the native teachers at Rampatam.

Our little party had just come late on Saturday night and on Sabbath morning we went to the native church with the good pastor. After his sermon, he announced that in the evening two strangers would give an address on the Holy Spirit. It seems that at the time a great spiritual awakening was coming over this wonderful mission. A few years before tens of thousands had been converted, but now they were seeking the deeper blessing, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the announcement of a meeting for that purpose evidently awakened the deepest interest, and a look of expectancy brightened their countenances.

On returning from the service to the pastor's house, one of the native teachers, a physician, was waiting, and approaching the pastor he said with great earnestness, that he had come to hear about this blessing, for he greatly needed it and could not be satisfied to wait until evening. As we looked at that earnest face, we felt that the Spirit had already fallen upon him and he was indeed thirsty. We all knelt down and began to repeat special promises and this was the first that came to our mind, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground." It seemed to take hold of him and after a few other promises had been successively repeated, he began to pray in his native Telegu. It was one of the most touching prayers we have ever heard. We could not follow the words and yet we could follow the spirit of it every moment. With cries of heart agony, he called upon God, told Him how he longed for this blessing. After a while his tone changed and a look of trust began to overspread his countenance. As he still prayed on, the tone of hope and joy increased and in a little while his face was shining with holy gladness and he was pouring out his thanksgivings for the blessing that had come to him. When at length he was able to stop this torrent of prayer, he turned to us and began to embrace us one by one, and such a look of unutterable joy I have seldom seen upon a human countenance.

The Holy Spirit is just as ready to meet our cry and satisfy our thirst. It would seem as if a condition of intense desire were necessary as a preparation for the blessing. Just as hunger prepares us to assimilate food, so the deep desires of the heart for the divine blessing prepares it to receive that blessing according to a great spiritual law of the fitness of things. Are we thirsting for this priceless blessing? Have we found the fountains of earthly pleasure disappointing? Have the waters of time turned to bitterness? Do we long to rise to the highest things and be used of God in blessing to others? Let us send up our cry:

"While on others Thou art calling.

Let some blessing fall on me."

II. The flood.

The Holy Spirit is compared to water frequently in the Scriptures. The stream that flowed from the smitten rock in Horeb was God's peculiar type of the coming of the Spirit through the atoning death of Jesus Christ. The subsequent history of that stream, that flowed through the desert and could be tapped and opened at any time and made to give forth from its subterranean depths the fulness of supply for themselves, their children and their cattle, is a still more complete type of the deeper fulness of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and lives of the children of God. Like water, the Holy Spirit satisfies, cleanses and fertilizes. Nothing else can fill the void of the human heart. Nothing else can take away the power of sin. Nothing else can make the desert to bloom as the rose. Two forms of the Spirit's operations are here set forth, the ordinary and the extraordinary. Even the ordinary work of the Spirit is expressed by the stronger figure, "I will pour water," but His extraordinary ministry is described by a more emphatic figure, "I will pour floods upon the dry ground." These floods represent the occasional outpouring of the Spirit of God in seasons of great revival which the church is witnessing now in many places and which earnest Christian hearts are longing to see everywhere.

Such seasons of mighty blessing are powerful witnesses for God, awakening the attention of a careless world and compelling even the most skeptical and indifferent to recognize the reality and power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Such seasons, for a time at least, lift up a standard against the enemy and check the prevalence and power of evil as no mere human words or authorities ever can. God becomes His own witness and the scoffer and the sinner are awed and humbled before the majesty of the Lord. Let us pray for such a mighty outpouring of the Holy Ghost in our day. We are warranted to expect such manifestations of divine power especially as the coming of our Lord draws near. These are to be the very signs that will herald His return, "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh," He says, "and I will show signs and wonders before the coming of that great and notable day of the Lord."

III. The fruit.

"They shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses." One thing about the grass is the multitudinousness of it. Even the little lawn that fronts your cottage has myriads of blades of grass in it, and each one is different from its fellow. When the Holy Ghost comes in power, He will touch myriads of hearts and multitudes will respond to His call and thousands and tens of thousands of souls will flock to the Savior.

Another thing about the grass is its commonness. It represents those things of the Holy Spirit that touch our ordinary life and make its most secular and simple duties to shine with the grace and glory of the Lord.

Then there is nothing more beautiful than the grass; so fresh, so green and so unfading in its verdure. The flowers may come and go, but the grass is perennial. And so the Holy Spirit brings the blessing that is abiding and covers the life of a Christian, the home, the church, with a beauty and a glory that never can fade.

Another fine illustration of the fruit of the Spirit is the willow by the water courses. The most remarkable thing about the willow is that it cannot live apart from the water courses, and so the Christian cannot live without the Holy Ghost. Indeed, it is absolutely true that the more fully we are surrendered to God, the more utterly are we dependent upon Him, so that we cannot take one step or breathe a single breath apart

from Him. The willow follows the water, and when the fountains are abundant, its leaves are green and its beauty unfading. I have heard of a gardener who tried for a year to change the shape of a willow which insisted upon growing all to one side. In vain he pruned and slashed at the lopsided branches: they still persisted in growing that way. One day he took a spade and dug down below the roots of the tree and then he found that a subterranean stream was running on the side to which the willow leaned. It simply followed the fountain that fed its life. He put away his pruning knife and he dug a little channel for the river around the other side of the tree, and lo, next year it grew toward the river and became symmetrical and beautiful without a touch of violence.

Beloved, that is what we need to change the deformities of our lives; not more trying, not more suffering, not more scolding, not more condemning of ourselves, but more life, more help, more love, more of the precious grace of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost. Then our lives will grow to Him by whom they are sustained, and it will be true of us, "Of Him and for Him are all things, to whom be glory forever and ever." Amen.

The prophet next describes the individual blessing that will follow these gracious outpourings.

1. Individual conversion. "One will say, I am the Lord's." (Is. 44: 5.) The Holy Spirit will lead souls, one by one, to Christ. How beautiful it is to read in the account of the Welsh revival of people springing up all over the meeting spontaneously and confessing the Savior they had just found. It was not through preaching, but through personal dealing with the Holy Spirit who was present pleading with souls all over the place, and they yielded and confessed Him one by one just as they settled the great transaction. Any one can be saved the moment he is ready to confess Christ as his Savior: "If you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." This is a personal confession directly to God and He accepts it and records the name of the confessor in the Lamb's book of life.

2. Uniting with the people of God. "Another will call himself by the name of Jacob." (Is. 44:5.) This undoubtedly represents the identifying of the individual with the Lord's people. When the Holy Spirit truly leads souls to Christ, they always want to belong to His people. How quickly all censorious criticism about churches and church members disappears and the true and humble spirit turns to the children of God for fellowship, sympathy and help. It is the duty of the young convert to attach himself to the fold of Christ, and although there may be many imperfections in the visible church, yet it is far safer to be inside than outside and all who truly love the Master will want to be identified with some branch of His cause.

3. The covenanted life. "Another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord." (Is. 44: 5.) This represents that closer covenant into which it is the privilege of the individual soul to enter with the Lord Jesus. Dr. Phillip Dodridge recommends to young Christians to write down their covenant and formally sign it and ratify it, and then preserve it, and he suggests a very solemn form in which the soul may give itself to the Lord and claim His covenant blessing.

There is no doubt that such personal covenants have brought great blessing to those that have faithfully kept them and as we look back upon the records of our own lives we shall find that even where we have failed "He abides faithful."

4. Higher spiritual blessing. The next clause, "and surname himself by the name of Israel" (Is. 44: 5), seems to express the highest spiritual experiences. Israel stands for much more than Jacob. It marks the second stage of the patriarch's spiritual life when the Supplanter became the Prince of God. When the

Holy Spirit comes, He leads the willing heart in the deeper and highest things of God. He shows the young convert that it is his privilege to be baptized with the Holy Ghost, to receive the Lord Jesus as an indwelling presence, to be delivered from the power of self and sin and to enter into a life of abiding victory, rest and power.

Indeed, these are among the richest fruits of every true revival, and no wise Christian worker will be satisfied until the souls committed to his care have been led into all the fulness of Christ. This is presented here as a voluntary act and as the privilege of all who are willing to rise to it. God does not force His best things upon us, but offers them to our holy ambition.

Shall we, as we realize this mighty promise, rise to it for ourselves and claim, even as we read these lines, these showers of blessing, these floods of power and these glorious fruits for our own individual Christian life and the cause and kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ?

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