

Revival - Part 10

by Doc Greenway

Doc Greenway emphasizes that true knowledge of God comes through revelation by the Holy Spirit, not human reasoning, and highlights the Spirit's role in revealing our spiritual inheritance.

Duration: 1:07:47

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of revelation by the spirit. He emphasizes that when the spirit reveals something, it is conclusive and instructive. The preacher also highlights the importance of focusing on the present and the near future, rather than being consumed by distant predictions. He encourages believers to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit for victory in their current lives. Additionally, the preacher emphasizes the promise of God's presence and fellowship with believers, reminding them that God will never leave or forsake them.

Transcript

God is never discovered along the pathway of human reasoning. God is not found in that line at all. But he is revealed to simple faith.

When the scripture says that no man by searching findeth out God, it is not some empty statement. It is a statement of fact. We may know about God by the exercise of our reason, but we cannot know God except by revelation.

And this we have to learn sooner or later in the pathway of life. If we are attempting to reason our way to God, we shall not find God. But if we come as little children expecting that he will reveal himself to us, then certainly we shall never be disappointed.

For many years I thought that the way to find God was by seeking him and searching after him, using my intelligence, my human reason. But it wasn't very long before I found out that this wasn't God's way at all. And that in the language of Jesus, he could say, I thank thee, Father, thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

This is God's way. And so when we think in terms of what awaits us, as we heard tonight in Gordon's prayer, when we think concerning our inheritance in Christ and what God has apportioned to us, we have to understand that neither by natural observation, nor human instruction, nor even by some personal

intuition, are these things to be known. Paul makes this clear when he writes in the first letter to the Corinthians, the second chapter, and the ninth verse, For I hath not seen, it's not by natural observation, nor ear heard, it's not by human instruction, neither hath it arisen up in the heart of man, it's not by personal intuition, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him are not discovered in this way at all.

And so on the unassisted level of human understanding, there is no real perception of spiritual things which belong to our heritage as those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. And I think Paul makes this quite clear in the same chapter, the second chapter of 1 Corinthians, in verse 14, when he says, But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Quite positively then, we are shown that where the natural man is concerned, there is no appropriation of spiritual things.

The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit. He can't lay hold upon them. He fails to appropriate them.

He is unable to make them his very own. The natural man is the unconverted man, the soulish man, the man who does not know regeneration. And so there's no appropriation of spiritual things where he is concerned.

And there is no appreciation of spiritual things. They are foolishness to him. They don't make sense.

They have no meaning. How foolish on our part then to attempt to impart to such people the spiritual riches which Christ has imparted to us, expecting them to see these things and to understand and comprehend them. This surely is not the case.

They are foolishness unto him. And there is no apprehension of spiritual things, neither can he know them, certainly not by experience and certainly not know them in the area of intellectual understanding. And I believe that this is an important point to remember, that the things of God are spiritually discerned, that we have to be taught of the Spirit and initiated by the Holy Spirit into an area of understanding which is above the human and beyond the natural altogether.

The trouble with us is that we want to understand things. But as we have often said, and I think on many occasions even in this room, faith is not called to understand, faith is called to stand, just to stand on the Word of God and on the promises of God. The things then that constitute our heritage as Christians are on a higher level than the human.

So God employs a special method of making them known to us, and this is his divine condescension. Seeing that they are spiritually discerned, God employs a method of imparting these things so that we can, as believers, as his children, lay hold upon them. In 1 Corinthians 2, verse 10, you read, But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

This then is God's special way of imparting knowledge to you and to me, concerning in particular our heritage in Christ, by revelation, apocalypses, apo, away from, and colopto, to cover. And so it is to remove the cover from something. Removing the cover so that our eyes, the eyes of faith and the eyes of our heart, can behold these things which no natural man can understand or perceive or comprehend or apprehend or anything else.

Now, the work of revealing is the function of the Holy Spirit himself. And as we are shown here, But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit. So the source of revelation is therefore the Holy Spirit.

And this is exactly what Jesus promised when he spoke of the coming comforter. Remember how in John 16 and verse 13, speaking to his disciples, he said to them, I have yet many things to say unto you, but he cannot bear them now. That is, he had to exercise divine reticence where they were concerned, because they were unable to receive what he could have given them.

They weren't able to carry the revelation which he was able to impart. And so this teaches us that revelation by the Spirit of God is progressive, and that God always accommodates himself to our finite minds, if you like, and to our human limitations, because he knows us better than we know ourselves. But then, you know, he continued to say, having told them that he had many things to say that they couldn't bear, that they couldn't receive just then, he went on to say, Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.

For he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he also speak. So he has a voice, and he will show you things to come. That's John 16 and verse 14.

Here Jesus teaches us four things about revelation by the Holy Spirit. First of all, he says it will be decisive. When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you.

He won't stand alongside you and say, This is the way, walk ye in it. But the word here used, hegeomai, means that he will go before you, and lead you in the way, and point out things to you as you go. If you like, it's like a guided tour.

You know very well that the guide can show you many things, either real or imaginary, which you would have missed had he not been with you. But where this guide is concerned, the Holy Spirit of truth, well, as we walk with him, and as we are taught by him, then what he gives us will be decisive, because he is the Spirit of truth. Now, you may have false enthusiasm, and there's quite a bit of it around, and I know that you may have false emotionalism, but you can't have false truth.

And so, because it is the Spirit of truth who is guiding us and leading us, then we can be sure that what we are given in revelation by the Spirit, not by imagination of our own understanding, but by revelation of the Spirit, will be decisive. We can depend upon it. The second thing that Jesus taught about revelation by the Spirit is that it will be comprehensive.

He will guide you into all truth. Now, this is possible to him because we read, The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. Therefore, what he leads us into is bound to be comprehensive.

The amazing thing is that the indwelling thoughts of God are more clearly known to the Spirit of God than the outflowing works of God are known to us. We are so constituted, we reason from the seen to the unseen, from the manifest to the mysterious, from the designed to the designer, and we do this from the outflowing works back to the thoughts of God. That is, the thoughts that gave rise to what we see.

But the Holy Spirit searches the deep things of God, the hidden recesses, if you like, the abysmal depths of God's designs are as clear to him as the works of God which we see with our natural vision. And this certainly opens up a tremendous area of truth upon which he can draw. But here is the amazing thing.

Although he has such a tremendous storehouse and has the ability to plumb the depths of all the riches contained in the hidden things of God, yet he kindly and graciously accommodates himself to our own finite limitations and sees to it that his revelation is progressive. Here a little and there a little, line upon line and precept upon precept, as we are able to bear it, as we are able to take it in. Never flashing light upon our eyes to blind us, but casting light upon our pathway to leaders.

My mother was a lovely person, and I'm saying that with all my heart. She taught me so many things in spiritual life, but there was one thing that bothered her. In the church which we belonged, some teaching had come about concerning sanctification as an experience, the blessing of a clean heart, and my mother couldn't see it.

She couldn't see it. She'd been a school teacher. She had an analytical mind, and I think perhaps I've inherited some of it from her, but she always wanted to see her way through things.

And I used to say to her sometimes, Mother, if only you could cut your head off, you know, you'd get on much better, really. But no, she couldn't see it. And then one day, by faith, she laid a hold of Christ as her sanctification, not positionally, but experientially.

And that day, God did something in my mother's life that transformed her, revolutionized her. And the amazing thing is that whereas before she couldn't see it, she couldn't see it, now she couldn't see anything else. And isn't it like this when we come to the question of being filled with the Spirit? I can't see that, brother.

I can't see this. I can't see the other thing. I can't see it at all.

I don't get that out of the word. No, you never will. It's there to stay.

You know how it goes. There's this sort of reasoning about it. Then suddenly, God comes and meets with you.

You are filled with the Spirit of God. You've entered into a glorious experience, and you can understand why people can't see it. How human we are, how natural we are that the Holy Spirit, understanding these limitations of ours, accommodates His revelation to our earth-born eyes, that we may take in that divine light as we are able to receive it.

It will be comprehensive, but in this sense of progressive revelation. And revelation by the Spirit, Jesus taught, will be conclusive. For He shall not speak of or as from Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He also speak.

This is conclusive because He does not act as an independent deity, but He moves in union, in perfect rhythm and purpose, with the Father and with the Son, in the unfolding economy of redemption, in making known the things that belong to our heritage. He does it in company with the Father and the Son. And therefore, you see, with a Trinity in action on your behalf and mine, in the area of revelation, what comes through the Spirit is bound to be conclusive.

And the fourth thing Jesus taught about revelation by the Spirit is that it will be instructive. And He will show you things to come, said Jesus. Now, here the things to come are not in the far distant future.

Things to come in the sense of prediction, but things pertaining to the near future, especially pertaining to our heritage as believers in Jesus Christ. He will show you things to come. These are the things which the Holy Spirit is longing to reveal.

Now, we understand that by the gift of prophecy there is certainly prediction which has to do with age-end events. And there are many people who are tremendously concerned about these things. And they are forever delving into what is going to happen in days to come and what is going to take place, you know, in the ensuing years.

And they have got it all tied up nicely and everything is arranged in order in their thinking. But I think that the important thing for us is to live one day at a time and to trust God one day at a time and to know that, as thy day, so shall thy strength be. And also that sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

This surely is God's purpose for you and for me. I know it's interesting and I know that it can be instructive to be taken up with things that belong to the far distant future. But what about now? We are living in a very real world now, and we need a living Saviour now.

We need the power of the Spirit of God to give us victory now. And after all, when the Lord does come, He won't find us as we were. He'll find us just as we are at the moment.

And so to get back to this idea, He shall show you things to come. The things to come in this particular context are the things that belong to our heritage as Christian believers, the things which I believe are very, very precious to us right here and now, not simply in the far distant, dim future. Now again, taking into account our human limitations, when God gives us revelation by the Spirit, He accommodates Himself in many ways to our finite understanding.

He does this so that we may comprehend something of the character of our inheritance, both as it relates to the present and to the future. And because it has to do with our inheritance as believers, I want tonight to consider with you the Holy Spirit as the earnest. The Holy Spirit as the earnest.

I mentioned this to some Christians recently, and they said they'd never even heard the term. So I thought it was high time somebody said something about it. The Holy Spirit as the earnest.

In general terms, the Spirit as the earnest assures believers of what is theirs in Christ and of what awaits them in Christ as their pledged heritage because of their relationship with Him. And so I want to ask one or two questions and attempt to answer them. And the first is this.

What is imparted when the earnest is given? And I think the answer is in Ephesians 1, 13 and 14, where you read, the promised Holy Spirit which is the earnest of our inheritance. So the earnest is the Holy Spirit Himself, not some separate ministry or act of the Holy Spirit. Some people seem to believe that this is so.

You are born again of the Spirit, brother? Yes. Have you had the earnest? And they act and talk as though this was something altogether different, a work or a ministry or a function or a revelation or a demonstration of the Spirit which is somehow different. The earnest is the Holy Spirit Himself.

This surely is taught, as I have mentioned, in Ephesians 1, 13 and 14. Now there are still others who believe that the earnest of the Spirit refers to the gifts of the Spirit, particularly the list that you have in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, and that these spiritual gifts, they themselves constitute the earnest of the Spirit. Well, there are many who argue in this way and reason concerning this.

But I personally can't see it at all, and I don't believe it. I don't believe that any one of the gifts of the Spirit constitutes an earnest in the sense of New Testament teaching. But I believe that the person of the Spirit Himself is the earnest, that when you are born again of the Holy Spirit, then you receive the Holy Spirit as the earnest of your inheritance, there and then.

There are still others who have a different theory. They maintain that the earnest of the Spirit means the graces or the fruits of the Spirit. Mentioned in Galatians 5 and 22.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance of self-control. Against such there is no law. Now, dare you have the earnest of the Spirit, they say.

Well, I grant you that these may be regarded as facets of the character of the Holy Spirit, but it is still the Holy Spirit Himself who is the earnest. And thus, when we speak of the character of the earnest in the present context, what we mean is the abiding presence of the Spirit of God as a living, indwelling person in every believer. We can, of course, describe Him quite fitly, taking into account the graces which are mentioned as a loving person.

For He is the Spirit of love, and how loving the Holy Spirit is. I mentioned when we were talking about the Holy Spirit as due, that the most beautiful thing to me about the Holy Spirit is the intensity of His love for Jesus Christ. And I like to think that the love of God which we enjoy as believers is shed abroad in our hearts by this same loving Holy Spirit.

And so it's quite fitting to describe Him as a loving person. Or you could speak of Him as a living person, because Romans 8 tells us that He is the Spirit of life. And surely with His incoming and His indwelling, life is imparted to the believer.

We can accept this. And what a very humble person He is. Is He not? Because, you know, He's always in the background, never putting Himself in the forefront of the picture at all, but keeping Himself out of sight, as it were.

Living a truly self-effacing life. So He is a humble person. And He is a dedicated person.

Because the sole objective that He has is to exalt and enthrone Jesus Christ in the life of every Christian. He has given Himself to this ministry. It is His own absorbing passion.

And it seems as though nothing else really interests Him except to exalt the Savior and see Him enthroned as Lord in the hearts and lives of God's people. Oh, He's a dedicated person. And I would say surely He's an intelligent person.

For He is the only administrator of the affairs of Christ in His church. Every single ministry, every bit of blessing we receive, every bit of light that we have, every single thing that adds to our stature as believers, it all comes to us. Because He is the controller, the one who is the administrator of the affairs of Christ in His church.

And no one else has a part in the picture at all. It's the Holy Spirit Himself who is in charge here. So He is an intelligent person.

And what a bountiful person He is. Since it is He who in the area of spiritual gifts divides these gifts severally as He will. And so bountiful.

When you think, for instance, of Corinth, what a cosmopolitan crowd they must have been. Not many mighty, not any, not many mighty, not many noble. But here they are, artisans, yes, but slaves as well.

And yet this bountiful Holy Spirit can impart a rich, deep gift of prophecy to the most abject slave in the assembly, and perhaps pass over the person who was mighty or noble when it comes to the distribution of spiritual gifts. And in my own experience as a man of God, as a servant of the Lord, I have seen Him do this kind of thing over and over again, imparting tremendous gifts to people, uneducated people. And when the Spirit of God would come upon them, and He who imparted and distributed the gift would exercise and use it, you listened in amazement to what came through those lips.

You knew that it must be God who was speaking through that person, for that person was incapable even of language such as was being used. Hallelujah! It's a marvelous thing, isn't it, to know that we are serving a bountiful Holy Spirit, and He is not limited to human intelligence merely. And Jesus promised that He would be an abiding person, for He said, He shall abide with you forever.

What an amazing promise this is. He is with you, said Jesus to His disciples, for as long as Christ was alongside them, then the Spirit was with them, para, alongside them. But He may abide with you, no longer para, alongside, but meta, identified with, par and parcel of, bound up with you.

And the Lord Himself expounds His own statement when He says, He is with you, He shall be in you. And so in a marvelous way, we have Him as an abiding person. Do you know the meaning of the word abide, meno? Someone has entered into my heart, has settled down there and made His home, and now is exercising His influence over every part of my being.

What a wonderful abiding person this Holy Spirit is. But you see, having said all this, we are simply attempting to define or describe the character of the earnest as a person, not as a ministry, not as a gift, not as a revelation even, but as a person, just as we are convinced that the character of the Holy Spirit here must be seen as the earnest in person. So we are taught in the Word of God something concerning the bestower of the earnest.

We are taught who is the giver of this precious gift. And there is no doubt about this, 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 5. Now He which hath wrought us for this selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

The context here will show that Paul has been speaking of what is to happen at the second advent of Christ, when God clothes the believer with a glorified resurrection body. And this is an earnest of the future heritage of the Christian, that the Father bestows the Spirit to every believer as the earnest of this particular heritage. But don't run away with the idea that this exhausts the inheritance, that the clothing upon of this poor mortality with immortality, that that is simply the whole of our inheritance and the only thing about which the Holy Spirit is concerned and of which He is the earnest.

Not at all. This is only part of our heritage in Christ. God is, as the Father is the bestower of the earnest, because it is He who especially is mentioned as the giver of the Holy Spirit.

Now first we'd better clear up something here. There are several references in Scripture which appear to show that there is a joint sending of Father and Son where the Holy Spirit is concerned. Acts 2 and 33, for

instance.

This seems to talk about a joint bestowment. You remember it occurs in Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, when they asked, what is this? And he tried to tell them that this is that. You remember that during this time of preaching to them, he said, therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, talking of Jesus, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.

And then there's another reference in John 14, 16, and another in John 14, 26. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever. But the comforter which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Now notice, when John quotes directly what Jesus said, it is always quite clear that the Lord regarded his Father especially as the bestower of the Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he says. You see this in John 15, 26. But when the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

See again, he is sent from the Father, he proceedeth from the Father, what the theologians call an eternal procession of the Spirit, always proceeding from the Father. And so, as the earnest is himself the Spirit of God, the bestower of the earnest is the Father. And this is quite clear from Scripture.

Now the second question I want to ask is this, what is indicated when the earnest is given? Well, it is described as the earnest of our inheritance. The earnest, he arabon, in the Greek, is a deposit on account, a guarantee of what awaits us as our inheritance. And so it is a kind of title deed, you may say.

It pledges the security of our heritage in Jesus Christ. What is the inheritance that we possess? Surely all that is given us through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, under the law, the nearest kinsman had the right to buy back, to purchase back again, an inheritance which through some circumstance or other had been forfeited.

That's Leviticus 25, 25. That's under law. Under grace, the Son of Man had both the authority and the glorious ability to purchase back again the inheritance we had lost through sin.

And as we have already indicated, the atoning death and triumphant resurrection of Jesus Christ is the one ground on which the Holy Spirit is given. He was delivered for our offenses. He was raised again for our justification.

And the extent of the inheritance is given specifically in Romans 8 and verse 17, where it reads, And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. So we have a share in whatever Christ is heir to. For we are joint heirs with Christ, and we are really heirs of God.

So it's no wonder that Peter, when he begins his first epistle, writes, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. So the Holy Spirit is the earnest, or the title deed, both of the security and the continuity of our inheritance. For it fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you and for me.

And it's a good thing to be sure of a heritage like this, isn't it? When I was in Adelaide in South Australia many years ago, at the end of one church service, an elderly gentleman beckoned to me. And I walked across him, and he said, looking around first to see if anybody was observing, Come with me, he said. He took me into the vestry.

Then stealthily he closed the door, came across where I was standing, wondering what was happening naturally. And he said quietly, so that no one else could hear, I'm going to leave you the sum of sixty thousand pounds. Well, about the only thing I could say was, if I'm dreaming, let me dream on.

Sixty thousand pounds. Wow. Then he said, you see, I have a share in an inheritance worth over five million.

Then I found out he had said this to every minister who had ever visited the church. And the millions existed only in his imagination. So my hopes were raised only to be lowered very quickly.

But when we come to our heritage in Christ, there is no doubt about this. There is no mistaking it. If we are joint heirs with Christ, think of all that belongs to his heritage.

Remember that you and I have a share in that. What a marvelous thing to contemplate. And the proof positive is that we have the title deed to that heritage in the earnest, already in our hearts, which is the Holy Spirit himself.

Then the Holy Spirit as the earnest is also a token gift. You see, the earnest pledge is not only the security and continuity of the heritage, but also the identity of the inheritance. As the grapes brought back by the spies were a sign and a token gift and an evidence of the fruit of the goodly land of Canaan, and as Eliezer, you remember, gave jewels to Rebekah, which were a token of Isaac's great wealth.

So it seems to me the Holy Spirit in the heart and life of the believer is God's token gift of much that we have not even yet seen, and of a great deal that is yet to come that we have not contemplated. But it is a token gift, the fact that we possess the Spirit of God, and that he possesses us. This is the earnest.

It signifies the identity of the inheritance. And since he is the Holy Spirit, then surely our heritage is spiritual. As we have often said, Israel is to be blessed with all material blessings in earthly places, but the church with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places.

So our heritage is spiritual, and the earnest is the token gift concerning this. There was a time, you know, in Australia when surveyors and engineers and miners and especially newspaper men all said there was gold to be found in Ballarat, Victoria, Australia. I've been there many times.

Didn't find any gold. And then a man arrived in Melbourne one day with a sample of the gold that he had found in Ballarat, and then the rush was on. And this is how it seems to me it is where the Holy Spirit is concerned.

You can have your head filled with theories and ideas and your mouth filled with arguments and reasons and all the rest of it, but when you become conscious of the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit in your life, then you have the answer that satisfies you. This is the token gift. Now, only as a pointer in the right direction, if the Spirit is the token gift and involves a personal relationship with God through Christ where we are concerned, then surely it is something we may enjoy now in a measure and not simply have to wait for the future to comprehend it, to lay hold upon it, to apprehend it by faith.

Not at all. And I think that, as I say, as a pointer in the right direction, think of the present experience of fellowship, even as we have it here tonight, and think of this as a token gift of something which is yet to be in a far grander and nobler way than we can imagine perhaps here tonight. In the first epistle of John, the first chapter and the third verse, you have the apostle writing like this, that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that he also may have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

This word fellowship is one of the great words of the New Testament, *koinonia*, sometimes translated communion, but the meaning of it of course is a mutual sharing in the common interests of life. I like that, a mutual sharing in the common interests of life. This is this word, *koinonia*, fellowship.

It was used in the marriage service in the days of the New Testament, and now the Holy Spirit takes it up, invests it with a deeper content of meaning, and then applies it to the members of the body of Christ. And in John's statement, there are three areas of fellowship mentioned, as you notice. Fellowship with one another, that he also may have fellowship with us, and the basis of this fellowship, notice it, the acceptance of the witness of the apostles to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This was the basis on which fellowship proceeded, that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that he also may have fellowship with us. The simple creed of the early church was simply this, Jesus Christ is Lord. From this, everything else of value stem, and this is the first essential.

Fellowship with one another is possible on the basis of personal belief in the supreme lordship of Jesus Christ. And I don't see any other basis that will stand the test. Unto this the Spirit himself bears witness, nor man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost we read.

The bond of this fellowship is the conscious recognition of the indwelling presence of Jesus Christ as Lord, made evident to us by the indwelling Holy Spirit. The conscious recognition of the indwelling presence of Jesus Christ as Lord, and this made evident by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Just as Jesus prayed for his own, I am them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.

This is the bond of fellowship. And it is this kind of fellowship with one another that the Spirit is the earnest of, because what we are experiencing here and now is simply a token gift of the of what is yet to be. And we can say in the language of the hymn, if here it is so blessed, what will it be of there? If here fellowship is a lovely thing, and it is, isn't it? Don't you look forward to these Tuesday nights for the sake of fellowship? Apart from many things I do.

I live from Tuesday to Tuesday, I'm finding now. Not simply because I want to come and I'm raring to go when it comes to ministry, but because of the fellowship of the people of God. Just to think, here we are from all kinds of denominations, I guess, with all sorts of backgrounds, all sorts of outlooks, all sorts of dispositions, and idiosyncrasies and funniosities, and here we are, all of us come together in fellowship.

Isn't it a marvelous thing? But it's only afforded. It is only the earnest of what is yet to come. And I believe that the Holy Spirit is given to us to enable us to see that if the basis and the bond of our fellowship is right, we can expect the blessing of God descend upon us.

And it is descending, bless his name. Then fellowship with the Father, that's the second area. And truly our fellowship is with the Father.

Why? Well, because an affinity has been established. You read in Galatians 4 and 6, because he our son, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, that's the Aramaic word for Father, it's a child's word, dear Father, crying, Abba, Father, my own dear Father. That's lovely, isn't it? There's something more than legal adoption here.

Here is the spirit of sanction in your heart and mine, enabling us to have an established fellowship with God, our Heavenly Father. There was a time in my life when God I knew was Almighty, but he was such a long way off. As a little boy, I can remember it so well, looking up into the sky and looking up into the moon and wondering how far beyond that moon God was.

And my mind, my little brain used to be almost spinning with trying to comprehend how far away he was. But when I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and he became my very own, that night, God was tremendously great, but he was also very near. My Father, don't you see this fellowship with the Father is ours because an affinity has been established.

There's nothing legalistic about this, there's nothing organizational about this, but there's something gloriously experiential about it, something living. We have fellowship with the Father because an access has been made. Ephesians 2, 18 teaches us, for through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Through whom? Through the Lord Jesus Christ. Lincoln had a son of whom he was very fond. Abraham's son, who had a peculiar name, his name was Tad.

He seemed to be able to get anything from his father. Some children are like that, they have winning ways. You're always the loser.

But he came on one occasion into a room where he saw a soldier sitting, and he went across to him and said, what are you doing here soldier? He said, I'm trying to see the president. But he said, no one will listen to me. He said, I've tried and tried and tried again, I've come day after day, but I can't get through to the president.

And he said, you come with me. So he just put his arm into the arm of the soldier, led him past all those that were standing in opposition, right up to where Abraham Lincoln sat. He said, Father, I want to introduce my friend.

Will you do for him what you would do for me? And right away the whole thing was solved. That's access. Someone whom you have as a friend who has influence with someone in authority, that's access.

Thank God tonight we have a friend like this. Someone, our friend in heaven, and he has influence with almighty God. And so you see our fellowship is with the Father because an access has been made.

But again, our fellowship is with the Father because an assurance has been given in Ephesians 1, 6, wherein he hath made us accepted, not acceptable, but accepted in the beloved. This word accepted is engraved, pursued by grace, overtaken by grace, enveloped by grace. Overwhelmed by grace.

This is his word accepted, and it shows us our position. How assured we may be that our fellowship is with the Father. And of this fellowship with the Father, the Holy Spirit as the earnest is the token guest, a portent of what is yet to be.

Don't think you have it all. Remember John Wesley's words, the best is yet to be. And then there is fellowship with the Savior, and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

In this fellowship we are made aware of his abiding nearness. And there are two things to notice here. There is his general promise, go ye into all the world and preach the gospel, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.

And again, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. This, you remember, is how the writer of the Hebrews takes up the promise of Jesus and interprets it. I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Two negatives and then three negatives. I will never leave thee. I will never let you down, nor forsake thee.

I will never leave you in the lurch. I will never, I will never let you down. I will never, I will never, I will never leave you in the lurch.

Is that good enough for you? It's good enough for me anyway. Now this is what Jesus is saying in a general way. But then there's a spiritual vision involved here too.

Henceforth the world seeth me no more, but ye see me. How marvelous. Peter takes this up too, and he says, Whom having not seen, he loves.

In whom though now he see him not, yet believing, he rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The Christian is the world's greatest mystery. He's in love with a person he's never seen.

It's hard to love some people you can't see. And what's more, he trusts the person he's never seen. And what is even still more, he has a joy which he can't express.

He's a mystery all right. And this because of the promise of Jesus. Henceforth the world seeth me no more, but ye see me.

We may have a perpetual vision of the living Christ, because he is ministered to us by the Holy Spirit. And if there is this sense of his abiding nearness, there is also his outflowing influence. Like the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, they felt this, didn't they? Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us by the way? Heartburn in a spiritual sense is a wonderful thing.

Their hearts burning because of his company. And you know in a very literal way, they took notice of them, we read about the disciples, they took notice of them that they had been with Jesus. And if this is true literally, may it not be true spiritually, may it not be true of us in the world today, that people will take notice of us that we have been with Jesus, because we bear something of his character before men.

The earnest, you remember, is given to us then, because it is part of our inheritance that we have fellowship with one another, and fellowship with the Father, and fellowship with the Savior, and praise God, fellowship with a comforter too. John doesn't mention this, but I'll mention it. Fellowship with a comforter.

His fellowship with us to begin with, entering into our position where he finds us, but not standing still there surely, to the end that we may enter into his position and have fellowship with him in his area of living, and moving, and working. Fellowship, as I say, is a marvelous part of our heritage, and the Holy Spirit as the earnest is the token gift of what this means. One more question.

What is intended when the earnest is given? But one thing for sure, it's not intended that we should be satisfied with what we have attained. Not intended that we should just settle down now, and say, well I'm saved, satisfied, settled. That's the end of it.

Not at all. I believe that the real intention is summed up in Colossians 3, 1 and 2. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.

Our attitude should always be, my utmost for his highest, if we are truly believers. Look at the implication in this exhortation. Risen with Christ, it takes us right back to our starting point, doesn't it? To our spiritual regeneration, a rebirth, promised so long ago by the prophet Ezekiel, when he said, a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.

Thank God that which was predicted has been provided. You know while we read, he came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.

You read on, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but born of God. What was predicted has been provided. And this starting point is a spiritual creation.

2 Corinthians 5 and 17. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Whole things are passed away.

Behold, all things are become new. This is the implication to me in this exhortation. And this is what is intended when the earnest has been given.

And it's a spiritual resurrection. You know that this is taught symbolically in Romans 6, 4. Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. And we are taught this experientially, Ephesians 2, And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and in sin.

So conversion is a spiritual resurrection. Then, if he therefore be risen with Christ, seek those things which are of us. That's the intention in this exhortation.

The things that pertain to our inheritance as believers, the things that are spiritually discerned, the things that belong to us, because we belong to Christ, seek these things. You know, this intention is very demanding. It challenges us to take action, doesn't it? It's a challenge to indifference.

In the days of Amos the prophet, a war was pronounced on the indifference. War to them that sit at ease in Zion, you read. In our own time, indifference to the things of God characterized the days in which we live.

For because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold, and it's doing so. To seek those things which are above is a challenge to independence. We saw something of this when we were talking about the Laodicean church, who said we are rich, increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and did not know that they were blind, and naked, and wretched, and poor, and miserable.

They didn't know this. Don't you see then, that this intention of seeking the things which are above is demanding. It challenges us to take action.

Thank God it's rewarding, isn't it? When you begin to seek for the above things, isn't it rewarding? What are some of these things which we are to seek from above, which you can't find in the world around me? I thought about this today, and indeed for several days. A deeper consecration, that's one of the things I'd love. A fuller love.

A clearer vision. A humbler spirit. A richer service.

A greater tolerance. A stronger prayer line. To sum it up, to lead the life of the Spirit.

Hudson Taylor, as a Christian, was defeated again and again, until one day someone showed him the way into what he described as the exchanged life. And he exchanged his poor, beaten, defeated life for the victorious life of Jesus Christ, by an act of faith. Seek those things which are above.

The direction in this exhortation, where should we seek? Well, we are told, where Christ sitteth, on the right hand of God. In the place of authority, that's the right hand, and in the place of sovereignty, on the right hand of God. Remember how Paul, writing to the Ephesians, sums it up.

Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things. What a tremendous thing this is. Raised him beyond death, set him beyond dominion, under him beyond dispute, gave him beyond displacement, to be the head of the church.

If he then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above. Where Christ sitteth, at the right hand of God, set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For the whole of what is in the earth, is summed up by the apostle John, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

And the world of time in which we are living, is at present reaping the harvest of the sowing of the ages, and is at present tasting the earnest of coming tribulation. For the day is surely coming, when the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, will be consummated. The lust of the flesh in the beast, the lust of the eyes in the lying prophet, will do wonders.

And the pride of life in the Antichrist. And just at present, there are two tremendous forces at work, in the world in which you and I live. There is the mystery of iniquity, which is seething, and moving, and working through the masses, preparing a body for the coming man of sin.

And there is the mystery of godliness, moving, and working, and brooding among the members of the body of Christ, preparing a body for the coming son of man. This is where we are. If we have the earnest of the spirit in our heart, we have the assurance, we have the token gift, we have the title deed, of something which this world can never give.

We were not made for the trifling things of time, we were made for eternity. And therefore it's so important that we lay hold of our heritage by faith, because the spirit of God longs through us to enable us to appropriate that for which we ourselves have been apprehended of God. The Holy Spirit, as the earnest, is the title deed and the gift of our inheritance.

And if we have seen what is imparted when the earnest is given, if we have seen something of what is indicated, and if we have glimpsed something of what is intended when the earnest is given, well, we may have caught a clearer vision of God's purpose in the gift of the Holy Spirit to you and to me. For there is a freedom involved in partnership with the earnest, freedom from the domination of the carnal mind, and

there is a freedom involved in this partnership, a complete submission to His control. And there is a wisdom involved in this partnership, a wisdom which is from above.

And this wisdom is seen in some very practical results as we enter deeper and deeper into partnership with the earnest in our hearts. What will it produce? Sure leading, that's one thing, full living, deep loving, high longing, quiet listening, sweet laboring, and rich learning. There we be led to know the Holy Spirit as the earnest of all this, so much that belongs to our heritage.

We have not even glimpsed, but so much thank God that we have tasted already. And if the taste is so wonderful, what will the heritage itself be in the days to come? May we honor God the Spirit, and may we try by the grace of God to show not only Him but everyone that we do appreciate what He has done in giving us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts until the Lord returns. We shall be forever with Him.

Let us pray. Eternal God, our hearts go out to Thee again this night in thankfulness, in praise, in adoration, in worship, because Thou hast done so very much for us, and we are not worthy of the least of Thy benefits. O God, we thank Thee for the living, loving, abiding Holy Spirit in our hearts, for the one who is so intelligent that He can conduct the affairs of Christ's church without making any mistakes at all, the one who is so powerful that He is able to give us strength to overcome.

We thank Thee and praise Thee that in our hearts Thou hast set abiding this blessed person. We pray that we may never grieve Him, nor quench Him, nor resist Him, nor tempt Him, nor lie to Him all the days of our life. For Jesus' sake.

Amen.

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