

Thralldom

by Doc Greenway

To enjoy freedom in the Christian life, we must know thralldom in the sense that God intends, which involves living in partnership with the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 1:14:10

Scripture: Daniel 10:17-19, Matthew 3:11, Luke 24:49, John 7:37-39, Acts 1:8, Romans 8:13, Galatians 5:16

Topics: "Bondage"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being born again in order to understand and enter the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in bringing about deliverance and freedom in the Christian experience. The speaker shares a story of a little boy who eagerly wanted to do something for his father and ended up bringing him a glass of water, despite spilling it and getting his thumb in it. This story illustrates the heart of wanting to serve and please God. The sermon also mentions the concept of being clothed with power from heaven through partnership with the Holy Spirit, as described in John 7:37-39.

Transcript

Last Thursday night, I reminded you that in this great theme, there are four things to remember. First of all, there is a kingdom involved in this partnership. For until a man is born again, he can neither see the kingdom of God nor enter upon it.

Until a man is born of the Spirit, the things of the Spirit make no sense to him at all. There is a kingdom involved in this partnership. And then last Thursday night, we saw there is a freedom involved in this partnership.

That as we live in communion with the Holy Spirit and allow him to work in our hearts, he brings about a deliverance from so many things in our Christian experience. Then we said there is a thralldom involved in this partnership. And it is at that point that we stand tonight.

A thralldom involved in our partnership with the Holy Spirit. It seems like a contradiction to talk last Thursday night about freedom, and to talk this Thursday night about thralldom. But it is not contradictory at all.

Absence of control is not necessarily freedom. Some people don't seem to understand that. You may have an absence of control and yet be in absolute bondage and in confusion.

Without discipline in the Christian life, freedom is meaningless. What was it that Madame Guillaume wrote? My freedom is thy grand control. And it is only under the control of the Holy Spirit that the Christian enjoys freedom in the sense in which God intended it.

We are as free as a bird on the wing because we are slaves of Jesus Christ. Contradictory? Not in experience. For we have proved by experience that this thing is absolutely true.

The partnership with the Holy Spirit then involves us in a thralldom to his dictates as the senior partner. There can be no clash of loyalties here. There can be no manifestation of self-will here.

You cannot have your own way and live in partnership with the Spirit of God. It is only when your will becomes his will and your way becomes his way that you experience the freedom in Christian life which he intended. What does the Bible say? You are not your own.

You are bought with a price. Well if that is true, you have got no right to yourself. You are living under a dictatorship of the right kind.

The Holy Spirit is an absolute dictator. He has the perfect right to control in every sphere and avenue of our life. No part is outside his control.

He is an absolute dictator. But an absolute dictator in the right sense of course. For those of us who know something about living in partnership with the Spirit, would not have it any other way.

It is a glorious thing to know that he has the right to dictate and we have the privilege to accept and obey. Where the Holy Spirit is resident in the Christian's life, there isn't a great deal of coercion. But where he is president, there is absolute control.

Partnership involves us in this then, a thralldom to the dictates of the Holy Spirit, absolute submissiveness under the hand of the Spirit of God. Make no mistake about this at the very outset. If you are going to enjoy freedom in the sense that God intends, you must know thralldom in the sense that he intends too.

This life in partnership with the Holy Spirit then, is a life obedient to his purpose. A life obedient to his purpose. Secondly, it is a life observant of his purity.

A life observant of his purity. And thirdly, it is a life dependent upon his power. There were other things I wanted to say to you, but those three for tonight anyway.

A life obedient to the purpose of the Holy Spirit. A life observant of the purity of the Holy Spirit. And a life dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit.

That is thralldom. That is living. And as we can see from the word of God, from our own experience, the more we bring ourselves under the control of the Holy Spirit, the more freedom and liberty we have in our spiritual life.

For once you bring yourself under his absolute control, the flesh has no more say in the mind. And once you are free from the dictates of the flesh, you're enjoying then the liberty of the Spirit. But you can't have it both ways.

A life obedient to his purpose. If your life is ever to become a channel of blessing, it must be open upward toward God, outward toward the world, and directed in his flow by the Spirit of God. He has not committed the direction of your life to you.

You may sometimes think that he has, but it isn't so. He must direct our lives and direct the blessing of our lives in the way that he chooses. This is the promise given to Ezekiel, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and he shall keep my judgments and do them.

Through the fact of his indwelling, the believer becomes conscious that there is a possibility of complete acquaintance with the purpose of God for his life. Now here is the wonderful thing. God who framed this mighty universe, God who set the stars in space, God who keeps the whole creation in the hollow of his mighty hand, is yet the God who deigns to reveal to you and me that he has a purpose for our lives individually.

How can we learn that purpose? Only as we are prepared to be obedient to the Spirit of God. This is not an automatic process. There's no such thing as automatic holiness.

Some people think there is, but there isn't. There's an obligation which is absolutely resting upon us. The Spirit of God will dwell in our hearts, but if he is to direct us, to lead us, to guide us, there must be on our part a willingness to obey, and follow his leading, and do just what he wants us to do.

The first thing we must be doing then is looking for his plan. Guidance is promised to us in this mother of course. Jesus gave us the promise.

John 16:13. Howbeit, when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth. For he shall not speak as from himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he also speak, and he will show you things to come.

Now, there is the promise of Jesus. It is a specific promise, and sure we can look for help, because the lordship of the Spirit implies not only the liberty and the leading of the Spirit, but this personal guidance, not leading in a general way, but personal and individual guidance in the pathway of our life. We can be open to God as a channel, open to the world, but unless the Spirit of God is directing the flow, we can waste so much time and so much energy.

For he has the master plan, and he knows exactly where he wants people at any specific time. He knows what he wants them to do, and if we're in his hand and looking for his plan, then he will certainly guide us. Some of you may have read the books that Albert Schweitzer has written.

You may have read something concerning him. Have you ever read how he was led to the wilds of Africa? What impelled him to go? He was walking one day in a city in his own land, and he saw a statue of a negle, and of course he was quite a clever man, Albert Schweitzer, intellectual, a philosopher, great musician, a great man in every way. But as he saw the statue of the negro, God spoke to his heart, reminding him of how the negroes had been downtrodden.

And in a moment he said, it should never have been. But the Spirit of God said to him, what are you doing about it? And he didn't have any peace until he turned his back upon everything, and went out there to darkest Africa, directed in the flow of his life by the Spirit of God. The world would say, well what waste? Imagine that mighty intellect being buried in the forest of Africa.

But it is not waste when the Spirit of God directs the flow of the life, and guides us in our ministry toward other people. It's a lovely thing to know that God is prepared to do that, isn't it? But we are to be prepared on our part to look for the plan of God. God has a plan for every man.

God has a plan for you. And if you are living in direct partnership with the Holy Spirit, one of the first things required is that being obedient to his purpose. You should be looking for his plan.

Now it is required of a guide that he shall know the way. I suppose that's pretty obvious, isn't it? He shall know the way. I remember a fellow guiding me once along a canal bank in the dead of night.

He said, I know everything along this canal bank. I know what every pool and puddle is. Just then we stepped into a real beauty.

That's one of them, isn't it? Well he knew it was there, and I did too by that time. It is required of a guide that he should know the way properly. This knowledge is possessed in absolute perfection by the Holy Spirit.

His omniscience, the all-wise one, knows every step that we shall take. And if we are willing to be guided, he knows the way. We don't, but he does.

We look on into the future. We'd like to tear away the veils that obscure it sometimes, and take a peep behind the scenes. God in his wisdom and providence doesn't allow us to do that.

But the Spirit of God knows every single thing, understands every mile of the journey, and knows exactly what it is we should do. And his timing is perfect. Haven't you found that in your own life? The timing of the Spirit of God, how perfect it is.

We had a dear man speak to us at BTC this week, a missionary from Indonesia. And he was telling us how once out there, when he couldn't speak the language, he was taken in some form of conveyance, tricycle, I think. The man peddling like fury and taking him along in this contraption.

And they went on and on and on, and he lost his way. Couldn't speak the language, couldn't say anything to the man who was taking him on. And well, he was in quite a spot of trouble.

Trying to get the chap to stop, and he wouldn't, till at last he pulled up alongside a school. And the man, the missionary thought, well now, whatever will I do? He went into this school, and he saw a young man standing there, native. He spoke to him in English, and found the boy could answer him in English.

He was the principal's son. And when he asked this missionary what work he was doing, and got the reply that he was serving the Lord, why he said, I've been praying for a long time, for years as a matter of fact, that God would send someone along to tell me about Jesus Christ. And here in that city of teeming thousands, the spirit of God in his timing was perfect.

Brought to the very door, the one man in all that city, who could meet the need of this one, who was seeking for reality, and seeking for God. God's timing is perfect. It's when we interfere with our timing, that things go wrong.

It's a good thing to remember this, in our dealings as Christians with other people. When I was first saved, I was so enthusiastic, I wanted to grab everybody by the back of the neck, and just stuff it down, you know. Why couldn't they see it? Ridiculous.

They should see it. They didn't. And oh, the kind of scrapes I used to get into.

Till God had to teach me that his timing is perfect. And if I'm willing to wait, to look for his plan, he'll never lead me astray. My dear friend, in this service tonight, if you're a Christian, you want to live in partnership with the Holy Spirit, remember, you must commit the whole thing to him.

You don't bring him your plan, and ask his blessing. You come to him for his plan, and try to obey it. It is required of a guide, that he should have the interest of his followers at heart.

And I'm sure this is true of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes it isn't appreciated at the time. It's when you look back, that you can see the purpose that God had, in doing what he did with you.

Think of the vision which came to Peter, that Orthodox Jew. A vision of a sheet laid down from heaven, with all manner of creatures in it. And a voice saying to him, Peter, arise and eat.

And immediately he said, not so Lord. You can't say not so, and Lord in the same breath. If it's Lord, it is so.

Imagine that, not so Lord, you can't say that. But Peter said, not so Lord, he said, I've never eaten anything unclean. But came the voice, what God hath cleansed, let no man call unclean.

He couldn't make this out. And while he mused, see the timing of the Holy Spirit. Acts 10, 19 and 20.

While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, fearing nothing, for I have sent them. When he got to his front door, here were Gentiles waiting for him.

Peter was an Orthodox Jew. It's just as well that he got the vision of the four-footed creatures, and heard God say, that what he had cleansed, he was not to call unclean. For in the sight of the Jew, of course, the Gentiles were unclean.

And as he went on to follow and obey, looking for the plan, in the middle of his preaching in the house of Cornelius, the Spirit of God fell down upon the Gentiles, and baptized them. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to magnify the Lord. And Peter stood looking on in amazement, to think that God would have done this.

Yes, but the preparation was beforehand. You see, when the Holy Spirit guides you, He has your best interests at heart. You might not appreciate it at the time, but when you look back, you can see how good He was to you, just to take you in that particular way.

It is also required of a guide, that he should make full provision for every contingency. Imagine a guy taking people over the Alps, and not taking with him his alpenstock, and the ropes that are necessary, and all the paraphernalia. He must make full provision for every contingency.

And so it is with the Holy Spirit. You can never take Him by surprise. There are no emergency acts with the Holy Spirit, no afterthoughts, no measures that He has to take to try to meet an unforeseen contingency.

He knows the end from the beginning. What a glorious partnership this is, isn't it? And how we can really trust God, as we give ourselves over to His dictates. You think of how He acted in the case of Saul of

Tarsus.

The Holy Spirit knew there was a need in the Gentile world. So our Saul of Tarsus is journeying toward Damascus. There shone a light from heaven now shining the sun in its midday brilliance.

And he was struck to the ground in blindness. And he heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he answered, Who art thou, Lord? What wilt thou have me to do? And Jesus said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the bricks.

And so you think that is the starting point of Saul's spiritual experience. Not a bit of it. Certainly he was converted then.

Certainly he was changed. But it began in his infancy. It began in his boyhood.

The Spirit of God was working, preparing beforehand. Till at last the time comes when his man is challenged and his man is not disobedient to the heavenly vision. A Hebrew of the Hebrews, yes, but a Roman citizen.

A Hebrew-speaking Jew, yes, but a Greek-speaking Jew too. Trained at the feet of Gamaliel, yes, but rubbing shoulders with a gentle population in the city all the time, unlike Jesus, a man of the country. Educated, yes, because he must meet an educated race.

And don't you think it is wonderful that the Spirit of God beforehand prepares him for that climactic experience when he reaches the crisis on the Damascus road and then goes on from there, deeper and deeper, three and a half years in Arabia, being prepared yet more and more for the new vision which God had given him. The Holy Spirit makes provision for every contingency. And then you remember there comes the time in Acts 13 and verse 2, As they ministered unto the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work of the ministry whereunto I have called them.

The moment has come for thrusting forth. But long before this moment, there were days and weeks and months and years of preparation. And the Spirit of God is like that.

He's working in every heart, in every life. But as we seek for his plan, he'll reveal it to us, not in its fullness, not the great big blazing revelation, but enough light to let you know you're on the right track. And as you obey him, here a little, there a little, line upon line, precept upon precept, as your poor old earth-born eyes are able to take in the heavens and glory, he tempers it to meet your limitations until you find yourself one day in a large place with God.

But you haven't got there in a moment, believe me. What is contingent upon us? Surely the seeking for his plan. Take time to ask God to reveal himself to you.

Don't be impatient. What are you praying really? Thy will be done with my help, or my will be done with thy help. I wonder sometimes.

You may listen a lot to talk about guidance, about how the Spirit of God can guide people and lead them in their life, and give them a plan and a pattern. It's lovely to listen to that. But one moment of positive experience of a guidance and a direction in your own life will do far more for you than hours of listening to other people.

Why should we not seek for the plan of God? Why should we not ask him to reveal himself to us? It's far better when he does it personally, and does it to us. It may not mean much to other people, but oh, it means a lot to us. He's come to meet with us.

I think it's dear old Walt Whitman, in one of his poems, who talks about going on one occasion to listen to an astronomer who was lecturing about the stars. And he was awfully dry, very involved. And Walt Whitman, halfway through, got thoroughly disgusted, got up, left the lecture hall, wandered out into the country, and feasted his eyes upon the stars.

And he said, well, they're there, all right, anyway. In spite of everything I've heard tonight, there they are. And it's a grand thing when you can get to that point, isn't it? You listen to people testifying about the way Mr. Lord led them, it seems awfully confused to you, we are thinking.

All twisted and distorted. But when you find in your own life, sure and there and there again, the finger of God, what a mighty blessing it is to you. You can sense that somehow you're in this business with your senior partner, and he's prepared to acknowledge you.

Oh, in some small way, I know, but he's prepared to acknowledge you. Of course, his main business is to glorify Jesus. But he doesn't mind you getting a little bit of blessing along the journey of life.

Looking for his plan. Are you doing it? It's required of us, if we are to live in partnership with him, we must know what that plan is. A life obedient to his purpose, listening for his voice, that's important too.

Someone wrote a book many years ago on the silence of God. It was quite unnecessary. God has never been silent.

He's always found a way to speak. Always. And he's speaking now.

God speaks in creation. The heavens declare the glory of God. The firmament showeth his handiwork.

Day after day utterance speech. Night after night showeth knowledge. There is no speech, nor language, where their voice is not heard.

Their line is gone out to the ends of the earth. God speaks through creation. God speaks through conscience.

Sometimes we wish that he didn't. But he does. For conscience is the bosom hell of guilty men.

It is the echo of the voice of God in the corridors of the soul. Conscience is the arbiter and the arbitrator. Conscience within is God's finger pressing upon your life.

God can speak through conscience. I'm not saying for a moment that the voice of conscience is absolute. For some people say you should follow your conscience, but they follow their conscience like a man following a wheelbarrow, pushing it wherever they wanted to go.

That isn't very satisfactory. But there is a function of conscience which gives to us the echo of God's voice. God speaks through conscience.

God speaks through circumstances too, through the confluence of circumstances. God speaks through channels. He did so in the Old Testament, in the New Testament days.

God speaks through his son, through Christ. God who at sundry times and in divers manners speak unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days, in the last of these days, the days of this age, spoken unto us in son. His son, the embodiment as the living word of the voice of God.

And is that all? Oh no. Whatsoever he shall hear, said Jesus, concerning the comforter, that shall he speak. The most important discovery a Christian can ever make is that God is prepared to speak to him personally.

Why don't we hear God then? Because so often we are not attuned to his voice. Once we learn how to be attuned to his voice, we can discern his stones and know that he is speaking to us personally and individually. When I was quite a young Christian, I'd only been saved about six months, I went to tea once to a little place called Clanshamlet in Wales.

I'll never forget that night because just after someone asked the blessing, the ceiling fell down on top of the table. And it prayed so beautifully, Lord for what we are about to receive, make us truly thankful. And we got the lot.

But although that was an unexpected happening, I remember that evening for a different reason altogether. When the good hostess had cleared up all the mess and set the table a second time, minus the ceiling above us, an old gentleman walked across to me. I never met him in my life.

But he laid his hands on my shoulders and I can see his dear old bearded face now. He looked like an old prophet. And he looked straight into my eyes, piercing eyes they were too, probing deep.

I was just a young Christian. I'd never been treated like that before. I didn't know how to react or respond to begin with.

And then he said in a most solemn voice, my boy, I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but I am prophesying now that you will go to the uttermost parts of the earth and God will make you a minister in his church. I never heard such a thing in my life. But I felt my whole being as if there were electric shocks going right through me, up and down my spine.

I'll never forget it. And from that moment, God continued to speak to me. I was working at my workbench, apprenticed to a trade, busily working away.

And a voice said, thou shalt not always do this thing, for I will trust thee forth. And I turned round like John to see the voice that spake with me and there was no one there. I wanted to be a teacher.

That was my profession. I'd made up my mind about that long, long ago. My mother was a schoolteacher.

All the family were teachers. That was the profession for me. But it could not be.

The eldest of the family, I had to go out and try to keep the rest. My father said, I could never afford to let you have all that you want, just now anyway. That was the greatest disappointment in my life.

But what happened? God, you see, had a plan for me. And I can tell you tonight, I would rather be a teacher in the house of God than any place in the world. For because of the hand of God upon my life, and these indications and intimations that God was moving and working, my heart was prepared to obey him.

And when at last the plan was revealed, I was ready to go. In six weeks time, from the moment I received the intimation that my wife and I were called to New Zealand, we had sold up everything and we were on the mighty ocean, journeying towards this country. In six weeks time.

Why? All the way along, I knew in my heart what that old man had said to me. There were some things I didn't know. I didn't know, for instance, that when I was 18 years of age, there was a prophetic message given through the lips of a prophet in a council meeting concerning me.

I wasn't told this. But the message was, my hand is upon this young man. I will thrust him forth to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Care for him. When I was in Middlesbrough, years after that, I received this letter from the president of the church telling me, when you were a young fellow of 18 years of age, this is what we received by prophecy. Now, he said, you're being asked to go to the uttermost part of the earth.

If we send you any further afield, you'll be on your way back. And to me, it was a remarkable thing. How God comes to prove himself to you.

I say again, it's one of the greatest discoveries you could ever make, that God is prepared to speak to you personally. But you've got to listen for his voice. Where can we listen? This is educated listening.

Like the listening of the physician, as he puts on the stethoscope, and he is waiting and listening. It's educated listening. Like the listening of the lifeguard, as he listens for the cry of distress, it's educated listening.

Like the listening of the music teacher, when he teaches us here at BDC on a Wednesday morning, it's educated listening, and patient listening too. And there's a listening for God, which is educated listening. Where can we do it best? Well, I suppose we would say, in the great silences of the secret place, where all voices are hushed, and God has a chance to speak.

That, you would say, is the very best place where God can speak to you. Amen, I agree, but don't bind God down to your little secret place. Have you ever read the practice of the presence of God by Brother Lawrence? If you haven't, you should.

Now there's a book, what wonderful thoughts God gave to that man. Where did he get them? On his knees in the presence of God, the door closed, everything still, no, while he was washing the pots and the pans in the monastery, and doing the dishes, and the hard tasks allotted to him. And at first, his heart was grieved, because he saw his brothers going off to the silences with God.

And sure, he was compelled to work away, but God spoke to him amidst all the clang, and the clatter, and the clash of the dishpans. God was speaking to him. Educated listening, God can talk to you anywhere.

God talked to me once in a bus, as I was going along there. God spoke directly to me by His Spirit, and showed me two young people in the assembly. I heard the voice of God speaking to me.

God told me what was transpiring. And the next morning, I went to the home, and as I got to the home, I said, so-and-so, and so-and-so, and so-and-so. And the woman's face went as white as a sheet.

She said, who told you? I said, God told me last night, when I was coming home from Darlington in the bus. And God did. Surely, we could expect that God will direct us, and lead us, and guide us, if we are

willing to listen.

Now, there's a lot of negative listening going on. There's the listening of eager impatience. Have you ever experienced that? Why doesn't the Lord tell me what He wants me to do? Why doesn't He? Why doesn't God show me as well? Oh, dear me.

Why doesn't God get a move on? That's what we mean. Isn't it so? That's negative listening, the listening of eager impatience. You resemble a little girl, you know, who's all excited, hopping up and down, one foot to the other.

She was off to a party. Time couldn't come quick enough. Sit down, dear, said the mother.

Sit down. It's all right for you, she said, but my mind won't sit down. That's half the trouble with us, when we try to listen for God, and for His voice, to get our minds to sit down.

That isn't it. It takes time to wait on God, and takes time also to understand His voice, and to comprehend the fact that He is speaking. There's a listening of morbid introspection.

Where the focus is not on God at all, but on the self. We don't understand that it is so. The trend is not upward, but inward.

And we can't hear the voice of the Spirit, for listening to the voice of the self. Frustration and depression always lie there. What does the Spirit of God say in the book of Revelation? He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit said.

Your poor old fallen nature will always condemn you, and accuse you, and bring up things out of the murky past. It confronts you with them. And if, by chance you've forgotten something, the devil is there quick enough to remind you.

Isn't it so? And there we are, just wallowing in remorse, and in fear, because of the past which God has forgotten and blotted out. How foolish it is. And if it isn't that, then it's the present.

Our condition. Where we have failed God. Why we fail God.

When we fail God. And so it goes on. It's all very well to ask the Holy Spirit to illumine your understanding, and to penetrate into the deep places of your life.

And when He does show you something, get rid of it then. For don't be forever fondling it, or handling it, and considering it, as though it's something that somehow, in spite of everything, you wouldn't like the Holy Spirit to take it away. You'd be lost without it.

There are people like that. They love to be martyred. And they love to get people all fussed up concerning them, because they are going through things which are so hard, and so difficult.

What a lot of nonsense that is. If we would only take the time to listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit, we do some positive listening then. Some constructive listening.

And the amazing thing is, when you hear His voice, and you do His will, He looks after the rest. And the things that worry us, and trouble us, they simply fall into place. Now this isn't theory.

This isn't idealism. This is reality. This is fact.

This is experience. This is life. And I wouldn't dare say it if it were not so.

But I know it is so. Praise the Lord. And there's the listening of natural inquisitiveness.

Quite a lot of this about too, I find. People who want to know the will of God, don't want to know the purpose of God, they have a desire to know it. Not that they might do it, but that they might consider it.

God will never meet you unhappily. Never. He that willeth to do his will shall know it.

And there's no other way. Listening for His voice, it's necessary, if we are to live a life obedient to His purpose, listening to what He has to say. He has many ways of speaking, as we pointed out.

God has spoken to me time and time again, to a simple testament. And I thought, my word, that hits me just where I live. I've been so surprised, I didn't expect it.

A simple word of testimony, but oh my. God has met me sometimes through a little child, not once, but on many occasions. And made me sit up and take notice, to examine myself afresh, to see where my faith is, when I've heard little children say some amazing things.

God can speak to us through almost anything, and by almost any means. But our hearing must be attuned and sensitized to know it is God speaking. We shall never develop partnership with the Holy Spirit, unless we have educated listening.

And that certainly takes time. Then, living for His service, that's part of the program too. Placing ourselves completely at the disposal of the Holy Spirit, where He can do what He wills with us.

And it's all right by us, as long as He's doing it. Are you having a great time at the convention? Are you seeing souls being really blessed, and because of your ministry and your preaching, my things are happening. And you can sense the revival in the air.

What a wonderful place. And the Spirit of God says, you will go down to a desert. That's what He did to Philip.

He even got him there without any traveling expenses, down to a desert place, to meet one soul. But I guarantee Philip was just as ready to go to that desert place, to meet one, as he was to stand before the great concourse of people, and see God moving miraculously, and giving signs and evidences of confirmation of his own ministry. Now that's the kind of thing, living for His service, whatever it might be, refusing to be cluttered up with trivialities.

Refusing to waste your time on non-essentials. Living for His service. What kind of service? Well, there is the service of duty.

Many people have got as far as that. They do it because it's their duty to do it. We were talking in BDC this morning, about being kings and priests.

And I said, we should pray as priests, first of all, because it is our duty. You don't need more than that, to bring a sense of obligation upon you, if you're a Christian. But then there is the service of devotion, which is slightly higher, isn't it? We are living for His service, because we are devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ, whom the Spirit of God loves and adores.

But the highest form of service of all, is the service of delight. Where you do it, because you are delighted to do it. Because it's a joy to do it.

And you look sometimes at what you are doing, and you think, my, a few months ago, I couldn't have done this at all. Whether duty or anything else, but now it's a delight to do it. That's living for His service.

The service may not be perfect, but it's spontaneous. And He accepts it for what it's worth. This is part of the process.

I know of a man who came home from an evangelistic campaign, a minister. And you know, his little boy was so excited before his daddy arrived home, he didn't know what to do with himself. Running around, you know, and, well, just couldn't wait until the time came.

And when his daddy came, well, he ran down the path to him, and flames leaved to his father's arms, and, oh, there was a great fuss. His father came in and was trying to talk, of course, to his wife. Little boy was there, what can I do for you, daddy? Tell me, daddy, what can I do for you? What can I do? I want to do something for you, daddy.

And he just wouldn't let him alone. So in sheer desperation, his father said, well, you can get me a glass of water, dear. Off he went like a shot.

They came back with his glass of water, one little grubby thumb right inside it, you know, spilling the water everywhere, and wiping the rest off his little jersey. How did he do his father? His eye is just gleaming, you know. Oh, we were so glad to do something for daddy.

And his father drank in every drop of it. And he said, what can I do next, daddy? Oh, would you, God, we were like that. Wouldn't it be lovely? Wouldn't it be wonderful? He doesn't like that, you know.

Far from it. But there's a place to which we can get, in the will and purpose of God, when our service becomes so spontaneous and so delightful to us. Look, we wouldn't do anything else.

We wouldn't have it any other way. When people talk about sacrifice, sacrifice! They've never seen a glimpse of the glory. That's the trouble.

They haven't understood all it means to us. Sacrifice, don't mention it. Why, it's wonderful to serve the Lord like this, spontaneously and freely.

This is part of the process of partnership with the Spirit of God, looking for His plan, listening for His voice, living for His service, life obedient to His purpose. A life observant of His purity. Oh yes, you can't get away from that.

Don't think for a moment that all He requires is that you will go as hard as ever you can, doing what you can for Him, and serving Him to the best of your ability. No, a life observant of His purity too. The first reference you have in the Bible to the Holy Spirit shows you that He is there, it's implied at least, as the Dove of God.

And when you read of Jesus being baptized, the Spirit of God descended upon Him like a dove, the emblem of peace and of purity. And I believe that God intends that that purity should be imparted to us, us Christian men and women. It isn't just enough to say, well, we've got hold of the plan of God and we're going to fulfill that plan.

No, there must be something of His purity imparted to us too. Now there's a position to be examined, first of all. Remember the exhortation of the prophet in the Old Testament? It's still necessary today.

Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. That is necessary. And when we have done what we can in this respect, what next? Pray with the psalmist.

Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me, and know my thought. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and then lead me to my despair and distress, not a bit of it.

And then lead me in the way of the lasting. That's the way of God every time. Search me, try me, test me, prove me.

And when you've done that, then lead me. Now, Evan Roberts is associated with a great revival of religion in Wales. There was a time when Evan Roberts was praying as a young man, bend the people, Lord.

Oh, bend the people, Lord. That's all he could pray. One night, God put His finger on him, broke him down completely.

He wept out his heart before the Lord. And all he could say was then, Oh, Lord, bend me, bend me, bend me. Plead me, O Arglwyd, in the Welsh language.

Oh, Lord, bend me. Then things began to happen. That was my experience after my conversion.

You know, I'd lived the kind of life, I didn't know exactly what I was supposed to be getting excited about when people accepted my testament that I was saved. Isn't it wonderful? Well, I suppose it was, too, in a way. But, you see, I was saved in cold blood.

That was the trouble. No preaching, nothing at all, just stood up and accepted Christ as my Saviour. Background? Well, I mean, I never cursed in my life.

Never touched a drop of intoxicating liquor. Never even had a cigarette between my lips. Never.

Never been to a theatre. Never been to a dance hall. Imagine that.

It's a pity I had to be saved. And I used to wonder when I heard, when I would hear people testifying about, Oh, the terrible dark past. I used to wish that sometimes I had a past like that, because I read in the Word of God that He loves much who is forgiven much, you know, and I couldn't understand it.

And I said to the Lord one day, Oh Lord, just show me what it is then. Why have you saved me? Oh, if ever I regretted a prayer, I regretted that one. You know, before the end of the week, I was in absolute desperation.

Before the month was up, the devil was trying to get me to commit suicide. It's as serious as that. And oh, ever since then, I can tell you I blessed the Lord that He ever saved me.

And while I may not have been living in that kind of thing, God showed me my heart as He could see it. And what a revelation it was. Bless His wonderful name.

And after He had done that, I was able to say to Him, Now lead me in the way of everlasting. Don't let me linger with these things. Be preoccupied with them.

Have a morbid curiosity about them. Don't let me be taken up with them at all. But oh, cleanse them.

Remove them. Give me thy purity and lead me in the way of everlasting. And thank God, that's what He's longing to do.

Then not only is there a position to be examined where we are concerned, but there is a prerogative to be exercised. In Romans 6 and 12, you have that. Listen to it.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that he should abate in the lust thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead. And your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

This is our God-given prerogative. Don't keep on submitting your members over to the ways of evil. But once and for all, enroll yourself under God's banner.

It's our prerogative. And we can do this. You have the right to say yes or no to the flesh or to the Holy Spirit.

The unsaved man hasn't got that, but you and I, we do have it. And when you can submit to the Holy Spirit, who is sure in active control, not only the good things, but the bad things as well. It's marvelous how He comes to take control.

The good intentions, the good desires, the holy thoughts, yes, but the bad things. The bad habits of life, the failures of life, the sins of life, those as well. I remember a servant of God who was a great preacher, but he had a terrible temper.

Oh, I've heard great men that could pray wonderfully, but they were terrible liars. You see, you can get a terminology and a phraseology which is meaningless. And this poor man of God, he was so upset about it, always afraid that he would lose his temper.

He should have lost it once and for all, of course, but he just couldn't get to that place. And he was afraid someone in his congregation would discover that he had lost his temper. And oh, one day he was sitting in his vestry there, and so grieved about it.

He'd been trying to pray, been there for hours, and eventually he fell asleep. And in his dream, he thought the Lord had come right into his vestry. And in his dream, of course, he looked around and he saw everything topsy-turvy.

And he got up in a hurry, tried to dust things and try to arrange things and put things tidy. And then he heard the voice of the Lord speak to him and say, leave it, leave it. And when he left it, he turned to look at his Lord.

And when he saw Jesus and looked around, everything was in perfect order. And never from that day forward did that man lose his temper. Just like that.

You have to imagine you are conscious of things in your life that seem to hinder your fellowship with God. Things perhaps have come to you out of the past, things that militated against you in the present. I want to say to you tonight that you can commit those things to him too.

And you'll find he'll take them, he'll become responsible for them, and he'll lead you in the way everlasting. It's our prerogative to say either yes or no to the Holy Spirit. When we say yes, he works on our behalf.

When we say no, the flesh gets the ascendancy. And if you sow to the flesh, you shall of the flesh reap corruption, says the Apostle Paul. Then there is a purging to be experienced.

You remember the statement of John the Baptist in Matthew 3 verse 11? I indeed baptize you with water, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire. The word with you'll notice is in brackets or in italics rather in your Bible. It's not in the original.

When you are baptized with the Holy Ghost, you're baptized with fire. And the fire is to purge. And I'm glad to know tonight the fire can purge things that water cannot cleanse.

And that's most essential for us. To know the Holy Spirit as fire is part of our partnership. Burning, purging, probing, deep down within, get into grips with those things that we know are in our hearts and lives.

In the revival days in Wales, men and women saw the tongues of fire alighting upon the heads of people. They were visible. And when those tongues of fire came and sat upon people, immediately they were struck to the ground.

It was a wonderful manifestation. But there's something more important than that. That the fire of God should burn deep within.

Spirit of burning, my heart, be fine. Spirit of burning, come deep within. Spirit of burning, purge and cleanse.

Burn up the dross. This should be the longing of a man or a woman that wants to live in partnership with the Spirit. For if you are trying to do that, remember there is purity which is the spirit of God.

Which he demands. And the standard is his and not ours. You know when the great fire of London broke out, it not only destroyed those tremendous areas of buildings, but it burned out the plague.

And when the fire of God comes, it does the same thing for you and me. We say if this keeps on, there'll be nothing left. Oh yes, there will.

The essential thing will be left. And all the rubbish consumed. That's always the way of the Spirit of God.

I'm told that down there in the South Pole, there was an occasion when they camped. And they tried to light a fire and they kept the fire going for a week after week. And when they eventually pulled up and went away, within a week or two there were flowers growing out of that ground.

Marvelous, isn't it? And I sometimes think that we can become so frozen over, so isolated, so narrow in our activities and witness that it takes the fire of God to melt through and cause the flowers of grace to appear. But he's able to do that. He's longing to do it.

There is a purging to be experienced. So a life observant of his purity is essential. That is the blessed thralldom to which we are bound and committed.

And oh, thank God it is so. Isn't it lovely to live a clean life? Isn't it a beautiful thing to know that your thoughts are pure? Isn't it grand that you can walk through this world without a blush of shame? That's

something. It's something worth having.

When we consider the filthy, immoral world, the atmosphere in which we live day after day, what a glorious thing it is that God can find in the hearts and lives of a few of his people at least, that purity which he only can impart, that purity that keeps them clean in the midst of all the filth so that it doesn't touch them. Oh yes, partnership with the Spirit, it involves that too. And then finally and briefly, a life dependent on his power.

There are three emblems of the Holy Spirit which speak to us of the power which is always at our disposal. Now you can use your own power if you want to. It won't get you very far.

You can't run very far on leftovers. You run out so often, run out of energy, run out of power, run out of ability. But you can draw upon this never failing source of supply and know it is always there at your disposal.

One of these emblems is that of the oil of enlightenment. 1 John 2 verses 20 and 27. But ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

And again, but the anointing ye have received of him abideth in you. This unction or anointing has its roots in the Old Testament. Kings were anointed, priests were anointed, prophets were anointed.

Yes, but wait a minute, we don't come into a category just yet. Lepers were anointed. Lepers were anointed.

That's where you and I come in. And thank God we can take our stand there at least. Leprosy is a type of sin, a polluting disease, a progressive disease, a disease that cut men off from fellowship and isolated them, a painful disease, a paralyzing disease.

And God knows we understood something of it when we lived like that. But the leper could be cleansed. And he could be cleansed according to a divine instruction.

First the blood must be applied. And wherever the blood was applied, the oil could be applied. And the process has never been reversed.

Wherever the blood is applied to a human heart and life, the oil of God's Spirit can be applied to the unction from the Holy One. And I like to think that after they anointed the big toe on the right foot of the poor old leper and his thumb and his ear, they poured the rest of the oil upon his head and it ran all down over him. What a wonderful configuration of this mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the life of a believer.

The first thing it does is to get our thinking straight. And that's important. God can give us the ability to think straight concerning spiritual things.

There was a man in my wife's home assembly, and he got saved. He was a real softy. You wouldn't get tuppence for him.

Why? He couldn't hold a proper conversation with anybody. He didn't have the intelligence. But God baptized him with the Holy Ghost and sent him out to South America as a missionary.

And he's one of the most successful missionaries you could ever find. Who did that? God did it. You have to know things straight.

That's what the anointing is for in the first instance. You don't need any man to teach you. The anointing which you have received of Him, it abides in you and teaches you of all things.

That's the purpose of it. The oil of enlightenment gives us power to think straight. Then the clothing of enduement.

Luke 24, 49. And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you. But carry ye in Jerusalem, until ye be endued clothed with powerful manner.

In this partnership, there is a clothing with the power of the Holy Spirit. These people whom Jesus took, they were separated as servants of God. They were instructed as people in the school of Christ.

They were commanded to go forth as witnesses. But first of all, it was intended that they wait to be clothed with the power from heaven. My friends, God still requires the same thing of you and me.

A supernatural visitation of His almighty power into your life and mine. They had it at Pentecost. It revolutionized them.

Moody knew it. It revolutionized him. Then he had the experience.

It changed his life. Thank God, the mothers of Harry, too. Daniel, Rolands, of Flange, Dreyfus.

As he was there in that holy communion service and came to the words in the collect for the day. By thine agony and bloody sweat. Without the uttermost awful words, they would have brought hell upon them.

Can't be stopped. Without advertising, without anything. They came screaming in from the hills and from the valleys.

Packed this church. It was too small. There were three times as many people outside as inside.

We got out of them, into the graveyard, out into the field. The mockery of the Bible says that, oh yes, these men of God need something. How about this endowment with power from on high? In partnership with the Holy Spirit, there is still the opportunity to be clothed, endued with this very same power from heaven.

The clothing of endowment. And because we live a life dependent on his power. There is also another figure used by the Lord Jesus this time.

It is found in John 7 verses 37 to 39. It concerns the rivers of refreshment. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his inmost being shall flow rivers of living water. But this he spake of the Spirit. Now there are four conditions which are laid down here by our Lord.

Which a man must fulfill if he is ever to know anything at all about these great rivers of refreshment. First, it is an absolute must in order to know this experience. Without it, it is no use coming.

If you are not a thirst for God, a thirst for power, a thirst for the Holy Spirit, it is no use coming at all. Secondly, he must come if he is a thirst. Let him come unto me, said Jesus.

It is a specific command. And it is no use going anywhere else. No one else has the power to confer upon you.

No one else has this dynamic to give to you. No one save Jesus Christ. I can recall some years ago, someone who turned up at our main church office in Wellington and spoke to the young lady who was there in the office.

He asked her, do you know of any people in your church who need to be baptised with the Holy Ghost and fire? Why, yes, she said, I know quite a number. Well then, if you care to give me their names and addresses, I can do something for them. Indeed, the Lord has given me this gift that I can impart the Spirit of God to men and women.

And I'm open to do this any morning, say from 8 o'clock on until about 12 o'clock. Just get in touch with me, will you? Poor fellow. May God bless him and help him to think straight.

There is no one who can give us the Holy Spirit but the Lord Jesus Christ. And we must go direct to him and look to him because he has commanded it. Let him come unto me.

Then thirdly, he must believe. He that believeth on me. He who has a settled persuasion concerning the promise which has been made.

Unless you believe, you're like a wave of the sea tossed to and fro with no certain approach to God. Let not that man think that he will obtain anything from the Lord. He must believe.

And fourthly, he must receive. But this speak he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive. Where these conditions are fulfilled, the promise is confirmed in experience.

Praise God for the promise. Look at it. Rivers, not a foolish little trickling streamlet.

Rivers and rivers of living water. Not some old stagnant pool that stinks to high heaven. Not that.

But rivers of living water. And notice, out of, not merely into. Out of, a channel open to God and open to the world and erected by the Spirit.

Out of shall flow a continuous outflowing of blessing. This is the promise. And upon this promise, we can take our stand tonight.

None daring to make us afraid. I remember some years ago when I lived in Australia. They were telling me that there was a time in South Australia when a vast area of land was quite arid and nonproductive.

But they turned into it the stream of the mighty Murray River. And the result, they grow the finest oranges in the world. In my opinion anyway, the finest oranges possible.

Why? Because the river flowed into it. The river of living water. And wherever the rivers of refreshment come, there will be production.

There will be fruitfulness. There will be results. We can stand upon this promise.

So there is a thralldom involved in this partnership with the Holy Spirit. We are bound with golden chains to a life obedient to his purpose. A life observant of his purity.

A life dependent on his power. And I was going to add a life consistent with his passion. But we have no time to develop that thought tonight.

To this life, we are committed, each one of us. Let us then keep in touch with the Lord. And we will always be in fellowship with the Spirit.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. May God bless his word to each heart, to each life. For Jesus Christ, our Redeemer saved.

Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/27/SID27139.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/doc-greenway/thraldom/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net