

Like Unto His Glorious Image

by G.W. North

The sermon explains how the Holy Spirit brings the Spirit of Christ into believers, enabling them to live a life of liberty from sin and death through the death and resurrection of Christ.

Scripture: John 3:6, Romans 6:4, Romans 8:2, Romans 8:11, 1 Corinthians 12:13, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:5-6, Colossians 3:3-4, 1 Peter 1:3

Topics: "Transformation in Christ", "Identification with Christ"

Description

G.W. North emphasizes the transformative power of Christ's death and resurrection in the life of Paul, illustrating how Ananias' laying on of hands allowed Paul to receive the Holy Spirit, leading to his complete renewal. This act signified not just a change in Paul but a profound identification with Christ's death to sin, enabling him to live a new life free from the dominion of sin. North explains that this identification is essential for all believers, as it connects them to the redemptive work of Christ, allowing them to partake in His death and resurrection. The sermon highlights the necessity of the Holy Spirit in this process, as He empowers believers to live in accordance with God's righteousness. Ultimately, North conveys that true salvation involves both the death to sin and the life of Christ operating within us.

Transcript

When Ananias laid his hands on him, all the raging turbulence within Paul ceased at once and for ever. He received into himself the Holy Spirit and, by Him, the spirit of Christ, which could not be imparted by Him in the days of His flesh. Thereby He brought His death, the complete works and effects of it, to Paul, to his whole spirit, soul and body. It was profound. Paul became a new man. The Lord did not bring His bodily death to him, He brought and applied the effects and accomplishments of it to him: the man Paul still lived. Christ brought in to him that death which He accomplished for him while yet breathing in the body of His flesh on the cross, His own personal death to sin on behalf of man. To Paul it was as final in the spirit/soul realm as physical death is in the bodily realm, and more permanent. Short of physical death it was as the commencement of a new life to Paul. Christ's death was a great personal triumph, but not just for Himself, He died for others also: for everyone who was to be a partner with Him of His life and a member of His spiritual body. That death therefore had to be made available to them. For this, God sent the Holy Spirit, for He is the Spirit of the life which was in Christ Jesus while here in the flesh (as well as in eternity) enabling Him to live on earth dead to sin. He came because He had to, there was no other way we could be made members of the same body (in which He wrought the miracle) and live and walk in the same element in which He lived and walked. Jesus was the man of the Spirit, He lived entirely in the Spirit,

physically and spiritually, and His physical body was the medium in which He wrought the miracle for His spiritual body of many human members. If any man saw the truth of identification and unification with Christ it was Paul. He saw the fundamental necessity of it, both for God and for man. He also fully realized that, apart from these things, the whole plan of redemption would not have been proposed, for it could not have worked; redemption is set upon and proceeds from identification and unification of Christ's people with Himself. The whole idea of substitution, necessary as it was, had to resolve itself into identification or all would fail. Substitution teaches 'instead of me', identification declares 'as me'. Paul saw, that as Christ had accomplished everything as a whole and at once, every basic thing had to be done in him as a whole and at once also -- not piecemeal. He understood why human beings were made as they were, and fully grasped the deeper meanings and desires of God which underlay the words of God spoken in the beginning, 'let us make man in our image after our likeness'. Everyone, and everything to do with each one's salvation throughout the whole of life here and hereafter was proposed, conformed and predestinated by one person and one act in eternity and we all were justified into that pre-arranged and prepared position.

Paul's failure had lain in the fact that, being unregenerate, laws contrary to the law of his mind were working in his members, warring against him. He had thought and wished and willed good, but the members of his body did otherwise; they seemed to have a will of their own. Powers not under the control of his mind were working in him, in his mind, in his body, throughout his whole system, in his mind particularly; all nature was under sin's dominion. There was a law operating in all his members which he could neither change nor control; he was corrupt through lust. He realized that the body must be brought to a death. For this reason, and to do this thing, Christ comes into us. He broke the power of the law of sin and death, which would have dominated over his will in His own body, and because He wants our bodies to be conformed to His body He comes into us to bring all those contrary powers and activities in our members to death. In love and holiness He makes us partake of His essential death, the greater one, so that being planted together in the likeness of His death, we should be also of His resurrection.

The Great Man that He was, He had to become as mere man and be raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; the Spirit of life quickened His dead body because of His and the Father's righteousness. He had to be raised because He had conquered sin. It would have been sin if He had not been raised -- He deserved it. In us the death of Christ and the quickening of the Spirit work together. Christ's death to sin must permanently abide and work in us; if that death did not operate in us sin would work in our members instead. In the same way, because of righteousness, the Spirit must abide in us also, for it is He who brings to us the Spirit of Christ who operates in us this same law of liberty from sin and death. It is only right that all who will have the death to work in them should have the life too, otherwise it is impossible to be and to do righteousness. This is the only way a person can be kept free from sin; this is that death into which we are baptized and buried and planted. Like everything else of major significance in spiritual life it is a two-way experience -- we are baptized into it and it is baptized into us.

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