

The Breath of God

by J. Sidlow Baxter

The sermon explores the significance of the breath of God, which is the Holy Spirit, and its role in distinguishing man from other creatures and imparting personality, independence, and immortality to man.

Duration: 45:38

Scripture: John 20:19-23, Romans 6:4, Romans 8:9, Romans 15:29

Topics: "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the miraculous creation of the human body by God. The preacher describes how the body is intricately designed with various organs and systems, functioning with precision and harmony. The preacher also highlights the call to sanctification and the filling of the Holy Spirit, which brings inward deliverance from sin, cleansing of the mind, spiritual understanding, and transformation of character. The sermon concludes by mentioning that although the apostles had new life in Christ, they did not experience the fullness of blessings until Pentecost.

Transcript

...life, and man became a living soul. One of the big questions which has long vexed the human mind is, how did the human race begin? That vexed question, however, would no longer be vexatious to our scientists and philosophers, if only they were prepared to put away prejudice and listen to the Bible. Now I have good reason for saying that, because outside the Bible, no one has ever yet come up with an answer about man's origin that is really credible.

Surely, of all absurdities, the absurdest is the materialistic nonsense that the vast universe, with all its intricately organized laws and forces and coordinated operations, just happened out of blank nothing. How any intelligent man can believe that absurdity is a conundrum to me. And so is that next-door-neighbor absurdity, the evolutionist idea that man somehow evolved by sheer chance through long geological ages from a primitive tadpole or the like.

Brethren and friends, how inane are such extravaganzas compared with the majestic, reasonable cosmogony and anthropology of the Bible. Our Bible tells us, both in general statement and in particular description, how the human race began. The general statement is in Genesis 1, verses 26-28.

Then, in chapter 2, verses 4-7, there comes the follow-up which describes individually how God brought into being the very first man. And Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into

his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Note especially that our human race began with the breath of God.

Jehovah God breathed. And how full of meaning that is. It at once distinguishes man from all other creatures on this earth.

All the animals lower than man were created simultaneously in their various categories. They did not originate in one single primeigenial. The lions did not all come from one original carnivory.

The oxen did not all come from one original bovine quadruped. The whales and the porpoises and the dolphins did not all come from one original aquatic cetacean. That sounded good, isn't it? The eagles and the falcons and the nightingales did not all come from one original avian progenitor.

The creepers and crawlers did not all come from one original beetle. No, all those more or less sentient creatures had their beginning together in one multiple act of creation. No special breathing of God was necessary for the kind of existence which they were to have.

With man it was otherwise. He was one on his own. See how chapter 2 verse 20 isolates him.

It says, And Adam gave names to all the cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found unhelped meat for him. Thus is man's differentiating singularity emphasized.

There is not his like or his equal or his counterpart in any of the non-human creatures. But now look at the text again. Jehovah God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

As many of you will know the plural, the Hebrew is in the plural, the breath of life, indicating a triunity of life in one self-conscious being. That is, body life, soul life, spirit life. By the body we have world consciousness.

By the mind or soul we have self-consciousness. By the pneuma or spirit we have God consciousness. Man therefore is a remarkably complex microcosm.

Man is a fusion point of the three realms, the physical, the psychical, and the spiritual. In the physical there is the life of sensation. In the psychical there is the life of intelligence.

In the spiritual there is the life which is capable of God. The animals lower than man do not have spirit life, and therefore they do not have any moral awareness or God consciousness. Nor does their soul life have the intellectuality or knowing power or reasoning faculty or spacious comprehension which the human mind has.

Even before the evolution theory had been so largely disproved as it now is, and when it was at the height of its scientific self-confidence, one of its chief champions, the late Professor Huxley, had to admit that between the brain of the highest animal and that of the lowest man, there is an impassable gulf. And if that is true of the brain, how much more so is it true of the mind. Moreover, the differentiating breathing of God into man infused certain distinguishing qualities of life which lift man into a significance over all other living creatures on this planet.

It imparted to man what we call personality. Now the lower animals do not have personality. They have their differing instincts and peculiarities.

Also, to a degree, they have a certain individuality. But they are not persons capable of creativity, of fellowship, of self-communication, of invention, of worship, and of love. Man, and only man, is a person.

Furthermore, that divine breath communicated to man a life which is independent of the physical body, a life which outlives the physical and makes man super-physical or immortal. In the case of the lower animals, when the body ceases to function, body and soul die together, the mind instantaneously becoming extinguished into absolute non-existence. With man, that is not so.

Though the mortal body may die and disintegrate, the human mind, which has inhered within the body, lives on beyond the body in an uninterrupted, undiminished consciousness and personal continuity. But now look at the wording of the text again and marvel at what it conjures up to the mind. Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground.

Now, that act of God must have been prior to the breathing which made the clay come alive. Did God then make a clay statue of a man's face and form and figure? If so, was it solid or was it hollow in preparation for the interior organs which were to be set functioning within it? We are not told, so we can only surmise. Perhaps there was only a moment between God's fashioning and finishing that clay structure and then his breathing it into a living organism.

But whether that be so or not, we stand here in the presence of a super miracle. One instant, that lifeless clay form is there with face, features, ears, eye sockets, nostrils, trunk, arms, hands, legs, feet. The next instant, as the vitalizing breath of God interpenetrates it, the brown clay becomes soft, sensitive flesh.

The figure lives, it moves, it sees, it hears, it responds, it speaks, it walks, it smiles. It has a heart that beats, and lungs which inhale and exhale, and brain and bone and muscles and arteries and veins and blood vessels and capillaries, and an exquisitely intricate nervous system, and all the other wonderful viscera of the human body, all functioning now with faultless precision and harmony. It must have been a sight to make the angels gasp.

For, remember, this was a brand new product of God. The angels had never seen a man before. Yet there was something even more astounding to all but God.

That vivified anatomy was not merely a galvanized automaton or a mechanized robot with only involuntary motion. It was indwelt and energized and controlled and activated by a new mind which suddenly cohered within it, making it independently and intelligently self-mobile. There lived and moved and thought and spoke a body-conscious, self-conscious, God-conscious human being, the first human being on earth, with intellect, volition, and feeling, having a mind superior to all others on earth, and reflecting the very mind of God Himself.

What a crowning mystery of divine power and design man is. Don't you agree? Look again at our text. Jehovah God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

That breath of life, beloved friend, is the Holy Spirit. That may be easily deduced from various scriptures. Let me call attention to two Hebrew words.

The first is the Hebrew word ruach in English lettering, r-u-a-c-h. Ruach. It means breath, but it is the word which is everywhere used in the Old Testament when the third person of the Godhead is called the Holy Spirit.

He is the breath, the ruach of God. For instance, in Genesis chapter 6 verse 3, My spirit, ruach, the breath, shall not always strive with man, and so it is in every other Old Testament passage where the Holy Spirit is named as such. The Holy Spirit is the divine ruach, the breath.

The other Hebrew word is, please don't try to remember them, the other Hebrew word is neshama, which also means breath. Perhaps the difference between the two words is that ruach means the breath as exhaled by the breather, whereas neshama means rather breath as inhaled by the receiver. And that's why in Genesis chapter 2 verse 7 the word for breath is not ruach, but neshama, because it is the divine breath breathed into and received by man, the receiver.

Interestingly enough, and don't think I'm going to become complicated, but in Job chapter 33 verse 4 both those Hebrew words are used together in parallel reference to the Holy Spirit. This is what the text says, The Spirit of God, ruach, hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty, neshama, hath given me life. So the breath of God is the Holy Spirit, a living person.

Just as our Lord Jesus is the living word, so the Holy Spirit is the living breath. Just as the universe was created through Christ who expresses God, so is the universe vitalized by the Holy Spirit who communicates God. Just as our Lord Jesus is the continuous revealer, so the Holy Spirit is the continuous renewer.

Just as our Lord Jesus is the light that lightens every man, so the Holy Spirit is the breath which quickens every man into life. Now this has a profound bearing on the attitude of modern science to space. Until recently space was thought to be emptiness, but modern science has settled it once for all that the seemingly boundless space or expanse in which all material objects exist is the very opposite of energy.

Space, as we call it, is everywhere full of energy or some medium of energy which it is difficult to define. A usual name for it has been ether, the ether of space. But what is ether? Oh, if only science had ears to hear what the Bible testifies.

Is not the ether of space the vital communicant between the purely spiritual and the materially phenomenal? Is not the ether of space the omnipresent Holy Spirit, the all-pervading, all-penetrating, all-vitalizing breath of God? He is the seemingly inexplicable medium of energy which keeps this universe going. Well, friends, all these and other reflections, which I have with compassion for yourselves omitted, lest I keep you too long, all these and other reflections stir in our minds as we ponder the words of our text, and Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Only one thing about this would I add just here, and it is this.

When God breathed that life-inspiring breath into man those thousands of years ago, it originated on this earth the revelation of the most wonderful love story ever known. It is the story of God's love for man. All of us who know anything about ancient Greek folklore are familiar with the story of Pygmalion, the long-ago king of Cyprus, who made an ivory image of a beautiful maiden and then fell in love with it.

He prayed to the god Aphrodite to breathe life into it, and the request was granted, whereupon the beautiful image of the maiden became a lie, and King Pygmalion married the maiden. Well, of course, that is myth, pure fiction. Whether like certain others such it had any derivation from the book of Genesis is doubtful speculation, but in sharp contrast what Genesis tells us about God's breathing into man's nostrils the breath of life is fact.

And as that clay image became a living beautiful human being, God loved his beautiful new human creature. Yes, God dearly loved man and crowned him king over all the earth, and God has loved man ever since. When crafty Lucifer succeeded in injecting the toxin of sin into man's mind, thus infecting the bloodstream of hereditary humanity, the image of God in man became blurred, and the original beauty of the human male and female became disfigured.

But the love of God for his precious creature never changed. Nay, that love became the agony of concern which brought God the Son from the sapphire throne in the heaven of heavens to that never to be forgotten gory cross on lonely Golgotha. As Michelangelo saw the face of an angel in a lump of stone, so God still sees in man what he once was and what he may yet become through redemption and regeneration.

At the immeasurable cost of Calvary, God paid the price which redeems, and offered the sacrifice which atones, and shed the blood which absolves. Marvel of marvels, the creator who in the beginning made man in the likeness of God is the God who now through incarnation assumes the likeness of man. Mystery of mysteries, the God who in Eden breathed man into life is the God who on Calvary bleeds to save man from the second death.

Through the cross and resurrection and ascension and intercession of Christ and through the coming down of the Holy Spirit to us at Pentecost, God has shown fallen man the way back to the divine heart and love. Indeed, he has shown us the way to a new likeness to himself through our being inwardly transformed by the Holy Breath, the Holy Spirit, into the lovely image of Jesus, the incarnate Son of God himself. But now secondly will you turn with me to the gospel according to John.

The gospel according to John chapter 20 and the paragraph running from verse 19 to verse 23. Have you got it? John 20 verse 19. Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them, Peace be unto you.

And when he had so said, he showed to them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, I should say so. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you. As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed, he breathed on them and said to them, Receive ye the Holy Breath, the pneuma, the Spirit.

Yes, he breathed on them. Whose breath was it? It was the breath of Jesus. Who was that risen Jesus? He was and eternally is the God-man Saviour.

What was the breath? In symbol it was the Holy Spirit. For in so breathing on them, our Lord added the explanatory word, Receive ye the Holy Spirit. When did he exhale that breath upon them? It was on the day of his resurrection, the first day after the seventh day Sabbath, that is the eighth day.

Is there significance in that? I believe there is, though I won't go into this. Look up the octaves of scripture. Wherever eight is used symbolically in the Bible, it is the number of climax and new beginning.

We need not unduly press that, but certainly this is true, that when our Lord breathed on those men in that barred and shuttered room on the day of his resurrection, it was the beginning of a new humanity in Christ. The first humanity in Adam began when, in the words of Genesis 2.7, Jehovah God breathed into man's

nostrils the breath of life. The new humanity in Christ began when, in the words of John 20, verse 22, Jehovah Jesus breathed on them and said to them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit.

The humanity in Adam was the first creation. The humanity in Christ is the new creation. That is why 2 Corinthians 5, verse 17 says, If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation.

Now that leads to some deep reflections. When our Lord breathed upon those disciples, his act was symbolical of what happened soon afterwards at Pentecost. When that wonderful effusion at Pentecost swept down on those disciples, suddenly transfiguring them inwardly and transforming them in such a wonderful way.

For those apostles on whom the Spirit came, that was a wonderful further experience of the Holy Spirit. So far as the three thousand souls who were converted on that historic day of Pentecost, it was the beginning of a new life. But for those apostles on whom the Spirit had just descended like a rushing mighty wind and the sloven tongues like as of fire, for them it was not the beginning.

In their case it was a second decisive experience. When I make that remark, remember I am not just theorizing, I am stating facts. I am not just pressing a point of view, I am simply being true to the scriptural data.

And that has to be said so deliberately because there are some dear brethren to whom even the most cautious and reasonable mention of a second and distinctively deeper work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian believer is strangely irritating. To such I would say, as I often say to myself, no pet prejudice should ever be allowed to blind us to the obviously actual, especially when we are dealing with the written word of God. I am not here concerned with any particular theory of sanctification, but I do want to know, and I'm sure you want to know, the real facts and the truths which go with those facts.

Who then can honestly deny that for those apostles on whom the Pentecostal effusion swept down, it was a second and distinctively basic spiritual crisis? Remember, those men were already believers in the one true God. They were already disciples of the Lord Jesus, believing on Him as the promised Messiah-Savior. What is more... Please turn the cassette over now.

Do not fast-wind it in either direction. They were already disciples of the Lord Jesus, believing on Him as the promised Messiah-Savior. What is more, they were His specially selected and particularly endued apostles, to whom He had communicated the healing power of the Holy Spirit, and He had sent them forth to heal all manner of sickness and to cast out unclean spirits.

Only a few weeks before Pentecost, He had said to them, already you are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you. And after His resurrection, we are told, He opened their minds that they might understand, as they never had before, the meaning of the scriptures. These men were born again Christian demeanors, yet these were the men on whom Jesus had breathed, saying, Receive ye the Holy Spirit, and on whom that mighty sanctifying breath had now come at Pentecost.

When I was just a young Christian, I heard an old Methodist holiness preacher call out, All born again Christians have been to Calvary, but many of them have never gone on to Pentecost. It has clung to me ever since. I think there is true perception in it.

Although Calvary and Pentecost must never be separated from each other in our thinking about the so great salvation which our Savior has wrought for us, neither should we lose sight of their distinctive

difference from each other in what they represent to us. It would seem as though Calvary and Pentecost respectively represent to us the two main aspects or components of the salvation which is ours in Christ. Calvary speaks of something done for us.

Pentecost speaks of something done in us. Calvary speaks of the blood which cleanses from guilt. Pentecost is the fire which purges from sin.

Calvary is the place where the old life ends and the new life begins. Pentecost is the place where the new life becomes life more abundant. Calvary brings us our exodus from the Egypt of condemnation.

Pentecost marks our Isodos into the Canaan of in-wrought sanctification. Are you following? Say yes. This, of course, might be more thoroughly elaborated, but we have said enough for our present purpose.

Those apostles of long ago already had the newness of life, Romans 6 verse 4, but until Pentecost they did not have what Paul calls the fullness of the blessings, Romans 15 verse 29. To be honest and frank, does not that parallel with much Christian experience today? Brethren, it is one thing and a very blessed thing to be born of the Spirit, John 3 verse 8. It is a distinctly deeper and further experience to be continually filled with the Spirit, Ephesians 5 verse 18. Clearly, according to the New Testament epistles, we are all meant to be filled by the Holy Spirit, not only for preaching and missionary service and special occasions, but continually amid the daily round and the common tasks in the office, the workshop, the warehouse, the home, etc.

That new life which came to you and me at our conversion as a regenerating infusion is now meant to become a sanctifying suffusion of our whole being. That is God's intention for the new humanhood in Christ. The epistle to Titus chapter 3 verse 6 says the Holy Spirit has been shed on us abundantly, which of course indicates that we are meant to experience the Holy Spirit abundantly, and the deep most purpose of it is to effect within us such a sanctification of heart and mind that they are developed in our character, an unmistakable likeness to the Lord Jesus.

Mr. Chairman and brethren, less and less do I trust the present day emphasis on the emotional in Christian experience, but more and more do I long to see the truly Spirit-filled life expressing itself in metamorphosis of character into unmistakable likeness to Jesus. The Christian life is not lived in the emotion, it is lived in the intellect and the will, and it is a life of faith, and a life of faith which has an interior witness to it by the Holy Spirit. That is the preeminent intention in the Pentecostal breathing, apart from which all the pneumatica and charismata and glossolalia are tinkling symbols.

Yes, let me repeat it, the deepest purpose of the infilling Holy Spirit, the heavenly breath, is no mere inducing of emotional transport or sensory ecstasies. The deep most purpose of the filling by the Spirit is in raw holiness and the transforming of our character into the image, the lovely image, of our adorable Lord Jesus. But now, let me have a... Oh, we're doing famously, yes.

You're not getting tired, are you? Say no. Now, thirdly, will you turn with me to the Prophet Ezekiel? Ezekiel, chapter 37, with its strange vision, the valley of dry bones. If you read the account observantly, I think you will soon agree that the most notable feature in it is the outbreathing again of the divine breath.

The breath enters into those dry bones in such ways as to dramatize prophetically how the future resurrection of Israel as a nation will be effected. I know, of course, that there are some who so literalize this Ezekiel vision as to make it mean an actual resurrection of dead bodies. According to Jerome and

others, it pictures the resurrection of all mankind at the last judgment.

And yet, friends, it simply cannot mean that because in verse 11 we are plainly told, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Still others have seen in it a bodily resurrection of all Israelites right down from long ago Jacob to the end of the present age, all suddenly resurrected so that they can all together occupy the promised land. That also is quite untenable because we are equally clearly told that those dead bones were, in picture, the living Israelites of Ezekiel's day.

I quote, Behold, they, that is the then people of exiled Israel, they say, our bones are dried, not the bones of the bygone and the dead, but of the living and the present then. Our bones are dried and our hope is lost. That is, as a nation, this is what they thought, as a nation, we are dead and done for.

Get into their mind. The national capital, Jerusalem, had fallen. Jehovah's glorious temple had been burned to the ground.

The princes and nobles had been expatriated. The people in their thousands had been slaughtered and the bulk of the others had been dragged away into foreign servitude. Eclipsing all earlier calamities, this at last, as it seems, was the finally disintegrating blow.

This was the end of all for Israel as a nation, so they thought and said. Any talk now of a restored national prosperity was just as futile as talking about resurrecting bleached skeletons or a valley full of dry bones. That's the background to the vision.

And when this vision of the dry bones is taken in conjunction with other prophecies of Israel's coming restoration under Messiah's scepter, there can be only one meaning. There is an ultimate resurrection for Israel as a nation. What happened prefiguratively to those dry bones is yet going to happen in actuality to the elect nation as such.

So with that in mind, look now through the ten verses which narrate the vision. The notable feature is that where the, follow me carefully here, where the words breath and wind occur in our standard English translation, it's that Hebrew word ruach again. The word which everywhere in the old testament is used in the title holy spirit.

Let me point this out as we read through these verses. Ready?

The hand of Jehovah was upon me and he brought me out in the spirit of Jehovah and set me down in the midst of the bones and he caused me to pass by them round about and behold there were very many on the face of the valley that is they were unburied and lo they were very dry that is they were so bleached as to make any thought of resuscitation seem preposterous and he said unto me son of man can these bones live and I answered oh lord Jehovah thou knowest again he said to me prophesy over these bones and say to them oh ye dry bones hear the word of Jehovah thus saith the lord Jehovah to these bones behold I am causing breath Hebrew ruach the spirit I am causing the spirit to enter you and you are coming alive it's all in the present sense as though it was dramatically happening before

the very eyes of the prophet and you are coming alive and I am causing ruach the breath the spirit to enter you you are coming alive and I am laying sinews upon you and bringing flesh upon you and covering you with skin and I am putting breath ruach again I am putting the spirit within you and you are coming alive and ye shall know that I am Jehovah so says Ezekiel I prophesied as I was commanded and as I prophesied there was a noise or loud voice and behold a shaking or rattling and the bones came together

born to his bones and as I beheld lo the sinews and the flesh came upon them and the skin covered them above but not yet was their breath ruach the spirit in them then said he to me prophesy to the wind aye but it's ruach again prophesy to the spirit and say to the spirit thus saith

the lord Jehovah come from the four winds or breath ruach the spirit and breathe upon these slain that is the slain nation Israel that they may live so I prophesied as he commanded me and the breath Hebrew through act the spirit came into them and they live and stand upon their feet an exceeding great army that is prepared for conquest what a vision and even more what a prospect it is my own carefully weighed persuasion that we are now probably nearer than most of us suspect to the world astonishing event foretold in Zechariah chapter 12 verse 10 I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit the spirit of grace and of supplication and they shall look upon me whom they pierce and they shall mourn for him as one mourner for his only son have you ever

tried to imagine the instantaneous and utter revolution in thought and attitude which will occur in every Jew on earth when amid the regal splendor of his second coming our lord appears to the covenant people and they all see the Calvary star still upon him all the prostrating astonishment bewilderment remorse shame contrition response and study new understanding in that intensely solemn hour the great heavenly paraclete the divine breath the ruach the holy spirit the spirit of grace and supplication will come upon them there can be only one answer in every Jewish heart and family there will be nationwide repentance gratitude and adoration at his feet that is the day of days when the valley of the dry bones vision will burst into fulfillment for the outpoured spirit of grace in Zechariah

is the spirit who in Ezekiel is the revivifying breath Jehovah will breathe his life restoring spirit upon all Israel there will be nothing less than a total national regeneration an aggregate of millions and millions all individually regenerated at the same time Isaiah chapter 66 verse 8 asks whoever heard of such a thing shall a land be born in one day shall a nation be brought forth in a moment and Zechariah 3 9 answers yes because Jehovah says I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day it will happen when the holy spirit has the breath of God enveloped the elect nation at the second coming of Christ and dear Christian brethren that is the next wonderful breathing of the new creating divine breath in human history and I believe it's going to happen soon I've still got a few

minutes I'm only keeping to notes you know for your sakes and my own does it bother you when I uh does it bother you when I use notes say no and now beloved friends in closing let me briefly return to this matter of the breath in Christian experience the regenerating new breath is in every born-again Christian for as Romans 8 verse 9 says if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his but there is indeed that deeper breathing of the spirit symbolized by our Lord's word to the apostles receive you the holy breath the pneuma the spirit that breathing as I said became actualized in the Pentecostal effusion and that further deeper experience is not only taught recurrently in the new testament it is seen again and again in old testament type turn for example at least you needn't

turn I'll read it for you it's just a brief reference to Genesis 17 listen to this and when Abram a-b-r-a-m when Abram was 90 years old and nine anybody here this morning 99 I would doubt it when Abram was 90 years old and nine listen dear elderly ites who are now present it's never too late for a major spiritual experience when Abram was 90 years old and nine Jehovah appeared to Abram and said to him I am El Shaddai God all-sufficient walk before me and be complete that is complete in obediently walking before me and I will make my covenant between me and thee and I will multiply thee exceedingly this is when he was 99 in New Testament phraseology this was a new call to set apartness to complete yieldedness as

we would say to entire sanctification and going with the call was the promise

of enablement I am God all-sufficient although there was the promise of a spacious new fruitfulness I will multiply thee exceedingly but the arresting peculiarity is that in calling Abram to this new walk of sanctification and fruitfulness God said neither shall thy name anymore be called Abram but thy name shall be Abraham Abraham God put the aspirate into the name representing the breath and Abram's wife came into the blessing too and God changed her name from Sarai to Sarah ah have you got it in both cases God put the aspirate and it's the aspirate both the Hebrew hey and the English h God put the aspirate in both their names indicating this deeper breathing of the spirit along with this there came the crowning surprise to Abraham 99 years old and to Sarah 89 both of them procreatively

as good as dead there came that for which they had longed all through their married life a son of their own the miracle baby Isaac the biggest blessing of our life always comes when we know that deeper breathing of the spirit I would say to all you younger folk at Filey get that aspirate into your Christian experience wait on God for that deeper breathing of the heavenly breath seek that envelopment by the Holy Spirit which sanctifies the mind and imprints the image of Jesus on your character in these days of spiritual superficiality on the one hand and excessive absorption with charismatic efflorescences on the other hand I would say to you keep your eye on the really central truth about the spirit-filled life namely an inward renewal into true Christ likeness I would advise you avoid

the clamorous and the excitable and the novel get through to the real remember true sanctity always goes with true sanity in writing to young Timothy Paul has a noteworthy phrase holiness with sobriety there's nothing more beautifully sober than a sanctified Christ-like life do not be swept off your feet by the novel and the noisy by careful bible inquiry and solitary frequent interview with God get to know the deeper work of the Holy Spirit in you don't wait for some flashy emotion leave that to God but let him really get you and when he's really got you you won't need to beg and pray and plead and wrestle the Lord never never leaves a surrendered vessel empty I'm through but let me add this final word just here I am neither commending nor condemning the so-called charismatic movement

nor any of the various so-called Pentecostal groups we love them all if they are lovers of our Lord we love them dearly don't we and if some of you are here you must try to love me as well the fact is I'm not thinking about any movement or teaching particularly I simply want to emphasize in your minds that there is this call to sanctification and there is this deeper breathing of the heavenly breath there is a mind renewing experience of the Holy Spirit infilling of us yes and these are its principal features one an inward deliverance from selfism and egotism and the power of sin two a penetrating cleansing of the very thought springs of the mind and desire and three an expansion of spiritual understanding and four an outwardly observable transformation of character into the image of our

holy Lord Jesus oh Mr Chairman and brethren oh for that deeper breathing oh for that deeper experience of the heavenly holy breath of God if only we Christian believers might be living in that then I believe the winds of revival might begin to blow again in dear old Britain let this be our prayer breathe on me breath of God fill me with life and you that I may love what thou dost love and do what thou would do breathe on me breath of God now make me wholly thine let all this earthly part of me glow with thy life divine

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